

The Status of Rebel Returnees in the Municipality of Casiguran Sorsogon: A Case Study

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Abstract:- The existence of insurgency in the Philippines has lasted five decades and it is one of the world's longest-running armed conflicts. The revolution had evolved into a social movement, with an array of above-ground parties collaborating with an underground guerilla force to conduct an unending insurgency against the Philippine government, with units stationed across the nation, from Luzon to Mindanao, Palawan to Samar. The present administration wishes for long-term peace in the country. With the government's serious goal of putting an end to the country's communist insurgency and improving the lives of former rebels through various interventions, one of the most effective programs that provide long-term benefits for its recipients is livelihood aid. The study was facilitated through the case study approach that focused on the lived experiences of rebel returnees during and after the surrender. In this descriptive-qualitative study, recognizing the specific phenomenon, the researcher also prepared and used interview guide questions, and interview protocols, in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, and recorded the one-on-one interviews with the participants. The statement of the rebel returnees was presented and analyzed thematically. A survey about their lives indicated how many tough experiences they had in the mountains, and they didn't want to go back or remember the problems they had. Despite the fact that they are currently experiencing problems in the transition phase following the surrender, they think they have already changed in their lives, in contrast to before. The study concludes that the constant role of the government to assist the former rebels in overcoming the problems they have now encountered as a result of their surrender, particularly in looking for jobs and also ensuring their safety from the threat posed by their former companions.

Keywords:- *rebel returnee, new people's army, insurgency, reintegration, ex-rebels, social movement, ECLIP beneficiaries.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippines' insurgency has lasted five decades, making it one of the world's longest-running military confrontations. The revolution had matured into a social movement, with above-ground parties partnering with an underground guerrilla army to wage an ongoing war against the Philippine government, with units stationed across the country, from Luzon to Mindanao, Palawan to Samar. Despite the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) best attempts to subjugate the NPA, as well as the government's over 40 rounds of peace talks, both the NPA and the CPP's political branch, the National Democratic Front (PDF), remain active (Broome, J., 2021).

On June 28, 2018, National Secretary Adviser Hemogenes C. Esperon, Jr., specified that the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army is proscribed as a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union (PS, 2018). Likewise, according to Asia Report (2011), the remnants of the NPA pose a serious threat to soldiers, police, and anyone it considers a military informant or collaborator, although recruiting highly educated cadres is difficult and critical for mid-level commanders is difficult to replace. Every year, hundreds of people are killed in the war, including more than 350 NPA regulars and government security agents in 2010.

To address the problem, the present government administration adopts and enhance the program to convince the majority of members of the CPP- NPA to surrender, and this led to President Duterte signing the Administrative Order No. 10, 2018, establishing the Enhanced Community Livelihood Integration Program (E-CLIP) for NPA rebels and Militia ng Bayan (MB) members who quit and surrender to the Philippine government. E-CLIP is a program for reintegration (Lupao, &Cawi, R.D. 2019).

Similarly, the creation of NTF-ELCAC through Executive Order 70 in 2018, for a Whole-of-Nation approach to defeating the Local Communist Terrorist Groups. A National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) was created to synchronize the utilization of the government's instrumentalities of power with the capabilities of private sector stakeholders to finally end the 50-year long deceit, lies, and atrocities committed by the communist terrorists against the people (NSC 2018).

In addition, the public expects the government's program for rebel returnees to be effective. According to Momblan, G., (2019), the number of CPP-NPA who surrendered on Panay Island has already reached 137 since the commencement of the Enhanced-Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) in 2016. But according to the report of Broome, J., (2021) the NPA's ability to survive is not only down to factors like the enduring appeal of communism among rural communities and the Philippines' indigenous peoples but also because there are clear incentives for the government and the AFP to prevent its total collapse. As long as the sustained conflict is mutually beneficial for all sides involved, it is difficult to see an end to the insurgency by 2022.

Furthermore, on the initiative of Governor Chiz Escudero, the Provincial Government of Sorsogon restored normality to a total of 20 members of the New People's Army (NPA) who have surrendered to the 22nd Infantry Battalion (22IB) and the 9th Infantry (Spear) Division (9ID) in Sorsogon thanked the Philippine Army and the government as a whole for helping them start a new and peaceful life showing that the government's sincerity in helping former rebels has been encouraging their comrades still with the movement to also return to the fold of the law. "Peter", said he was deceived by the terrorist group's false claims which is why he hesitated numerous times in going down from the mountains to surrender (Calipay, C, 2021).

With the government's real goal of putting an end to the country's communist insurgency and altering the lives of former rebels through a variety of interventions, livelihood aid is one of the most effective programs that provide long-term consequences for its recipients. At least 14 former rebels in Sorsogon received Kabuhayan Starter Kits from the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) Sorsogon Provincial Field Office.

Likewise, with the support of the Sorsogon Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, the awarding of livelihood assistance amounted to Php 250, 796.25 in the form of jigs, tools, and equipment for their preferred livelihood projects were granted to the former insurgents from different parts of the province. With grateful hearts, the rebel returnees thanked the government for their starter kits as they now live free of fear and apprehension and with hopes to start their lives anew (DOLE 2021).

Moreover, a technique for recovering self-esteem and individuality. The governor will continue to carry out the plan and develop lateral partnerships with national government agencies to provide social services that are a combination of Sorsogonans' peaceful goals. This study aims to identify the present condition of former rebels as well as the issues and problems they encounter before and after the surrender.

II. RELATED LITERATURE

Humans are irrational and have incorrect perceptions, which lead to violence. Without taking the cost into mind second, the decision is unlikely to please the war leaders. It's affordable and might come in handy. Third, even the most rational leaders may find themselves in conflict with one another. There are no studies that show that a peace agreement is required for success as long as the purpose is legitimate. Ending civil wars, it is clear, however, that rebel organizations have specific objectives in mind. Since the civil war began, a resolution has been conceivable because the government and the rebel organization share a common goal, as long as the organization's expectations and objectives are realized. This is the place to go if you're looking for peace and quiet. Estrera and Wei Liang Lai (2017)

According to Von Hassel (2021), The rebel is a warrior and an artist. As a warrior, he struggles for the sake of man's freedom in preserving the dignity of human life and the law of moderation within the limits of his capacity as a man. As an artist, his desire for unity and meaning seeks to bring the beauty of human dignity to life. Creating a canvas of action that paints the reality of the rebel's acceptance of and desire for his struggle.

The person returning then may be substantially different from the person who left. As Hammond (1999: 229) writes, 'whether a returnee comes back to his or her birthplace or settles in an entirely new environment, he/she considers return to be more of a new beginning than a return to the past'. This is especially so given the protracted nature of so many contemporary displacement situations. Younger generations who came of age while displaced might have weakened connections to ancestral lands and may even be 'returning' to a place they have never lived. Macdonald Anna, Porter Holly (2020)

Rebels' perspective, however, physical safety is more important than these livelihoods Sen, R. (2021) Rebels quit extremist groups only when they know that they can disarm without getting killed in the process.

In the study of Sen, R. (2021) in course of several rounds of interviews, current and former Maoist rebels in North and South India shared that they were not able to quit the insurgent organization even if they wanted to. This was because they feared that they could be killed post-retirement, unarmed and defenseless, by either their former enemies or by their former comrades, while the Indian state would lose nothing for failing to protect them.

How does rebel governance influence rebel fragmentation? Civilians matter for a rebel group's (and potential nascent rebel group's) survival since they can provide access to e.g. information or labor. Additionally, civilians can influence the loyalties of low-ranking combatants as they are often recruited from the civilian population and thus hold close ties to civilians. Rebel governance constitutes a unique interaction between civilians and rebel groups, seen both in the ability of the governance group to integrate into local communities and

gather its support as well as through the systematic and regulatory control of the behavior of civilians. Roozendaal (2021).

In the study of Jacknik (2021), the process of withdrawing firearms from members of armed organizations, disconnecting such ex-combatants from their groups, and assisting them in securely returning to regular society DDR has the ability to provide considerable peace dividends to conflict-affected communities. As it has progressed, UN DDR has widened its scope and currently includes as one of its strategic aims the establishment of links with political processes.

Kerali and Macdonald (2020) the literature on Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) returnees in Acholi land, northern Uganda tells us that those who returned from the rebel group are likely to experience stigma and social exclusion. While the term is deployed frequently, 'stigma' is not a well-developed concept and most of the evidence we have comes from accounts of returnees themselves. Focusing instead on the 'stigmatizers', this article theorizes stigmatization as part of the 'moral experience' of regulating post-war social repair.

This study explored how Vietnamese returnees from Australia developed their career after returning to Vietnam. The findings revealed the returnees faced a range of barriers hindering their career progression amongst which 'the rigid working culture' was the most significant and 'stereotyped perceptions about Australian qualifications' was an emerging issue due to recent changes in the economy and society in Vietnam, three main strategies that the returnees utilized to negotiate their employability including being 'navigator', being 'rebels', and being 'retreatist'. Pham, T. & Saito, E. (2020).

The UN in Somalia (UNSOM) is supporting the Government of Somalia to implement the National Program to assist disengaged Al-Shabaab combatants in reintegrating back into society. This offers a rare window of opportunity to further deplete Al-Shabaab's ranks by offering security and alternative livelihoods. Religious mentoring and ideological rehabilitation represent a crucial component of this process. Four transitional sites receiving (ex-)combatants are currently operational across the country. (Google Journal (2021) Building Rule of Law & Security Institution)

As the members of these groups lay down their arms and return to a peaceful existence, the effectiveness of their transition to 'normal' lives can be critical in preventing the re-emergence of conflict and violence. Former combatants face numerous challenges and hardships such as criminal violence, political violence, and economic hardship that, if not properly addressed, may increase the likelihood that the number of international returnees is increasing in emerging economies. If not properly addressed, may increase the likelihood that some of them become involved in criminal work, political violence, or other activities that undermine peace. Henao, Meernik, & Mendoza (2021)

Former guerillas increase robberies, regardless of whether they are in or out of reintegration, but homicides decrease for guerrillas in reintegration. Ex-combatants often settle in municipalities with more crime. Controlling for reverse causality, ex-combatants only increase crime if they are not in reintegration, while in reintegration they may reduce crime. Peña (2020).

The return of foreign fighters and their families to the European Union has mostly been considered a security threat by member States, which consequently adopt repressive measures aimed at providing an immediate, short-term response to this perceived threat, returnees from falling back into terrorism and break down barriers of hostility between citizens in the long term. Amidst these different strategies, this paper seeks to identify which methods are most desirable for handling returnees. Rigotti, C. & Barboza, J.Z (2021).

In the study of Meernik & Henao (2021) The success of a government-led reintegration program for former non-state armed organizations can be crucial in avoiding conflict and violence from resurfacing. Former soldiers endure a variety of difficulties and problems, including criminal violence, political violence, and financial difficulty. These issues, if not adequately addressed, may raise the probability that some of them may become involved in criminal activity or political violence.

Edrolin (2021) in the Philippines, insurgency movements have been around for so long a time. Organized movements, such as the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and New People's Army (NPA) and National Democratic Front, have been into armed conflict with the Philippine Government in their attempt to overthrow it. Struggling to topple the constituted government and sustain their force, these movements The returnees, who were once political offenders, underwent rehabilitation under the government's E-CLIP program to facilitate their reintegration into the society and incorporation into the government's peace and development program. How successful the government's program is in fully reintegrating the returnees into society can be known by the returnees themselves and the people directly involved in the program (Best, 2016). Thus, this study qualitatively explores the political, social, psychological, and economic experiences of the returnees when they were still insurgents and also now that they are under the program of the government.

Compared with the genesis of a policy shift from traditional combatant focused to community focused reintegration programmed is in turn premised on the transition from security centered perspectives to a human resource lens. In this threat-resource continuum, the return process of former combatants is eased by providing recovery possibilities in terms of vocational training, micro-credit, education, and infrastructural reconstruction within a community context. Odder, S. (2011)

As one individual put it, well, returnees who have been successfully reintegrated into the community, well, it all depends... on how their families have treated them. For example, by giving them land to cultivate, they will give you the love of the family, share things with you, and the returnee will know that he is loved and cared for. MacDonald and Kerali (2020)

E-CLIP is the flagship program of the Duterte administration that seeks to reintegrate former members of the CPP-NPA-NDF and the Militia ng Bayan into mainstream society. The program aims to effect social healing and national unity through a whole-of-nation approach towards a higher objective of achieving just and lasting peace. It provides social equity to former rebels (FRs) by devising sets of benefits and services for those who decide to lay down their arms and return to the folds of the law. These benefits do not serve as an end, but rather as a means to aid the FRs in securing a foothold in reforming their lives. Del Rosario (2021)

Amazona (2018) reported that former rebels in this province are upbeat about starting a new life after years of armed struggle that they consider wasted years. The former rebels signed up as recipients of the Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP) and Local Social Integration Program (LSIP) of the province meant for rebel returnees. Under the program, surrenderers receive livelihood and cash assistance. They were given PHP15,000 immediate cash aid on top of the PHP50,000 livelihood assistance and varied amounts depending on the type of firearms surrendered, in these situations, the returnee's identity is used against him in the competition for limited or valued resources.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- The findings of this study will be beneficial to the following entities:
- **Rebel Returnees** – this study will help them realize the importance of the government efforts given to the returnees particularly the E – CLIP program to regain their confidence in the government.
- **AFP personnel** – findings of this study will help the AFP organization to be heedful or vigilant about why people in the community join the CPP-NPA and for them to know the root cause of their willingness to join such an organization.
- **NPA's – new people's army** – findings of this study will help them go back to the mainstream of society and understand what are benefits of joining rebel groups are.
- **Barangay** – findings of this study will help them understand their role since they are the ones pestered by these rebels, threatening them if they will not give support to the group.
- **Local Government Unit** – this study will open their minds that supporting these people and benefitting in return during an election is not a good attitude towards a good leader.
- **Lawmaking body** – this can be used by them as baseline information in making laws to encourage other members of the CPP-NPA who has doubt to the programs of the government.

- **Provincial Social Welfare Development Office (PSWDO)** – findings of this study will help them realize that the processing of the requirements to avail of the benefits thru ECLIP must be lessened to speed-up claims of the beneficiaries where the problems take place.
- **Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)**- findings of this study will help them to know the problems of the returnees when it comes to firearms remuneration, particularly on the types of firearms surrendered by the returnees.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study mainly focused on the analysis of the lived experiences of Rebel-returnees and to further enlighten the purpose of the study the researcher gave light to the following specific objectives.

- What are the lived experiences of the former Rebels during and after the surrender?
- What are the challenges encountered during the process of surrendering?

V. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, the qualitative research method, specifically the case study, is used. Case studies, according to Pressadademia.com, are centered on an in-depth investigation of a specific person, organization, or event to uncover the reasoning underlying basic concepts. A case study is a detailed investigation of a person, organization, or event. Case study research is defined as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bound systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case themes, as cited by Alpi and Evans (2019). In a case study, the unit of analysis might be numerous cases (a multisite study) or a single case (a within-site case study). The researcher conducted an in-depth evaluation and analysis of the experiences of the rebel returnees in the study by direct observation, processes, and interviews. The participants in this research are former insurgents who are now active members of their society. Because the study covers sensitive persons, convenience sampling was utilized to identify them.

A. Data Gathering Tools

An interview guide is prepared composed of open-ended questions to avoid leading participants and to gain as much information on the phenomenon as possible. The interview guide will be reviewed carefully and guided by other qualitative researches. The questions will be answered by the rebel returnees.

B. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher is required to follow the process before the conduct of study needs to seek the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies and after that, pursue the study in order to capture the true experiences that his peers had gone through. In order to attain the study's goal, the researcher produced an interview guide and also need to double-check

and validate it. Following that, the interview process began, and all interview transcripts are aggregated and evaluated.

C. Treatment of Data

The major data for this study came from a recorded one-on-one interview with participants from former rebels in the Municipality of Casiguran Sorsogon. The result of the interview or the so-called transcripts will be supported by the secondary data that came from available resources like journals, thesis, published research, and other printed and online materials. Such information will be derived from local and foreign studies.

D. Ethical Consideration

The researcher needs to coordinate within the target research site and identify the person in authority or with jurisdiction for a communication letter. Prepare an interview guide questions and also, the interview protocol certificate in compliance with RA 10173, likewise, guide and observed the office protocol of PSWDO during data collection. Request the assistance of a psychologist if available during the interview, as well as inform the participants about the flow of questions and always consider their rights, especially when it comes to asking questions; if it is not convenient for them, they can decline to answer. Moreover, the voluntariness of the participants will be the utmost priority of the researcher to ensure full compliance with the data privacy act of 2012. Personal approval from the respective participants will be secured to ensure the credibility of the data.

E. Research Locale

This study is conducted in the Province of Sorsogon, particularly in the Municipality of Casiguran where the Barangay Sta Cruz, is located. Specifically, the research was conducted on the former rebels of the said area.

VI. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

• Thematic Result

This part presents the themes extracted from the stories of the Seven (7) participants. After the interview narratives reflection, three (3) major themes emerged: (1) Experiencing difficulties and sleeping like a sleeping chicken, (2) Uncertainty for personal security after the surrender, (3) Difficulties in searching for Jobs and long processing for the ECLIP benefits. The themes were constructed from the narratives of the research participants.

➤ Theme 1: Experiencing difficulties and sleeping like a sleeping chicken. (Objective no. 1 what are the lived experiences of the former Rebels during and after the surrender?)

After careful analysis and reflection of the narratives, the sleep difficulties encountered by the participants are the first theme that emerged.

Participant 1. Who has experience difficulties while in the mountain says:

Ang karanasannamin ay talagang napakahirap. Tulad ng pag-akyat ng bundok pataas at pababa. Kung saan kami ay natutulog na parang tulogmanok doon dahil sa hirap at sakrispisyong,

perodahilsamgabagay natalagang naiintindihannamin ay napakahirap kaya ayawna naming balikanyun. (Our experience was very difficult. Like climbing a mountain up and down. Where we sleep like sleeping chickens there because of hardship and sacrifice, but because of the things we understand it's so hard that we don't want to go back to that). This is supported by Participant No. 4 who elaborates:

Malaki ang pagkakaibanayung dati aynandiyang kami sakabundukan parang daig pa satulogmanok at diyosnaminiyan ay yung M16, ang armalite, yung baril namindahilyun ang tinuturo doon, dahilyun ang doktrinasa amin. Pangalawa, seyemprenabubuhay kami sagawaing masa, sa masa talaga kami, hindikatuladngayon, that time, the day, itong panahon naitoni Pangulong Duterte, dahil nakikitana natin and destroyed tapos nagbabatalagayung bilang ng NPA kasi maramina ang nagbalikloob. Kawawangayon kaya ngatuloy-tuloy kami nanananawagannatalagang magbalik-loobna kasi kawawaunang-unanamakapiling ang pamilya. (There is a big difference that we used to be there in the mountains as if we were more than a sleeping chicken and our god of that is the M16, the Armalite, our gun because that is what is taught there because that is the doctrine to us. Secondly, of course, we live in mass work, we are really in the masses, unlike today, that time the day, this time of President Duterte, because we have seen and destroyed and then the number of NPAs has decreased because many have surrendered. It's a pity now that's why we keep calling for real conversion because it's a pity, first of all, to be with the family). While participant No.2 experiencing difficulties says:

Kapagumuulanwala naman kaming matuluyang dependesa masa kung papatuluyin kami o hindidahil kung takotsilahindi kami papatuluyin pero kung ang masa ay namulatmaalam ang pinaglalaman ay bukaspalad papatuluyin nandyan din yung nakatayotulog ka lalon kapag mahigpit ang operasyon ng militar.

(When it rains, we don't have a place to stay depending on the masses whether we will be accommodated or not because if they are afraid, we will not be accommodated but if the masses realize that they know what is being fought they will be accommodated there are also those who are standing asleep especially when the operation is strict of the military.)

Participant no.7 also state that;

Mahirap man sir! kasi grabeng sakripisyo man minsan walang tulog grabe ang lakad gabi hanggang umaga, wala pang pagkain kapag maraming operations, minsan isang beses lang sa isang araw.

It's hard sir! because even if it's a great sacrifice, sometimes there's no sleep, it's hard to walk from night to morning, there's no food when there are many operations, sometimes only once a day.

The collected and shared responses of the different participants show that they have almost the same

difficulties experienced during the times that they were active as members of the CPP-NPA. According to Martinez (2018), the main reason for Ka Danica's surrender was the difficulties she had as a rebel. "Things grow tough to live with, especially when your body deteriorates due to a lack of food, clothes, and shelter." Ka Danica surrendered and was detained for six (6) months by the (DSWD) Department of Social Workers and Development. Debriefing, counseling, and physical rehabilitation were all part of her treatment. Aside from that, she stated that the best parts of surrendering were the government's amnesty and the chance to be reintegrated into their society. Furthermore, she added that surrendering was easy because the officials were friendly and courteous. She now considers herself fully and efficiently reintegrated into society. She is presently living with her family on a daily basis. The stated study was carried out in another province of the Philippines.

➤ Theme 2 Uncertainty for personal security after the surrender

(Objective No.1- what are the lived experiences of the former Rebels after the surrender?)

Further analysis of the narratives exhibited the theme: Insecurity for their safety after they surrender;

▪ Participant No. 1 expressed:

Sa tulong ng pamahalaan ay talagangmedyo doon lang kami nagkaroonnakampanti. Basi doon ay talagang hindi natin matitiyak ang kaligtasannamin doon ang pagbaliknaminbahay ay talagang hindi namin masisigurona kami ay kampa tinasaaming gabahay dahil lamna ng mgakasamahamin kami ay sumuko, unti-unti nakaming iniisa-isa ng mgakasamanamindati perodahilsapag-iingat saaming sarili ay talagang kami ay nanatilisaming gabahay, unanasa area pa kami.

(With the help of the government it was really quiet there we just had to be complacent. Maybe there we really can't guarantee our safety there when we return home, we really can't guarantee that we are comfortable in our homes because our colleagues already know that we have given up, little by little we are being taken by we were together before but due to taking care of ourselves we stayed in our houses, first we were still in the area). This was further explained by the other.

▪ Participant no. 2

Former Rebel (FR) coordinator perohindi ibigsabihin mapayapa para yung nararamdamannamin sa usapinse guridad bilang FR nandiyan pa rin ang pag-aalangan at hindinamin lam bakaharap mosasakyan o kasabay namin sapaglalakadyung dating kasamahannamin dahil sila ang patakaransaloo once nagsurender ka kasonamin yun sakanilana karaannayun hindi yun maaalis. (Former Rebel (FR) coordinator but it doesn't mean peace for those of us who feel the security issue as FR

there is still hesitation and we don't know if our former colleagues are in front of you in the car or walking with us because they are the policy inside once you surrender It's our case with them in the past, it can't be removed).

In the study of Sen, R. (2021) Several sets of interviews revealed that current and former Maoist rebels in North and South India were unable to leave the insurgency group even if they wanted to. This was because they were afraid of being slain after retirement, unarmed and defenseless, by either former enemies or former comrades, while the Indian state would suffer no consequences for failing to protect them.

In addition, based on the report of Lopez, A. (2020), when some former communist New People's Army (NPA) warriors decided to abandon the ideology they formerly championed, they discovered that the new route they chose was nonetheless fraught with problems and perils. "Despite the threat from our old colleagues, we are resolved to continue our battle with our newfound life," stated alias Siloy "a former warrior of the NPA's Guerrilla Front (GF) 4A in Agusan Del Norte. Similarly, Lt. Col. Julius Cesar C. Paulo, commander of 231B, emphasized the government's all-inclusive approach to assisting former NPA militants. "Our joint efforts restore hope to our FRs who were previously lost, especially when they were enslaved by the destructive and damaging ideology of the Communist NPA Terrorists (CNTs)." "The government, the army, and the other authorities are always ready to welcome you back," Paulo stated. (PNA)

Moreover, with the support of the Sorsogon Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, the awarding of livelihood assistance amounted to Php 250, 796.25 in the form of jigs, tools, and equipment for their preferred livelihood projects were granted to the former insurgents from different parts of the province. With grateful hearts, the rebel returnees thanked the government for their starter kits as they now live free of fear and apprehension and with hopes to start their lives anew (DOLE 2021).

Likewise, the Army officer emphasized the government's appeal for NPA members to surrender and return to mainstream society, stating, "Let us learn from the experiences of those former rebels who are now with the government, how their lives are better now. Partlow, M.J. (2021).

➤ Theme 3 Difficulties in searching for Jobs and long processing for the E-CLIP benefits (Objective 2- What are the challenges encountered during the process of surrendering?

▪ Participant No. 2

Ang prosesong pagbabalikloobyun hindi ka agad-agad makakuha ng trabaho kasi ano ka parang may tatak ang pangalan mo. Kasi pagkatapos ng apilyedomo may nakasulatna FR pinag-aaralan ka pa ng gobyerno kung totoo ka basakanila o isa ka pa samgakagrupomonamagiging speyakanilamahirap

at may kahirapan din najungsaan ka kukuha ng pang-araw-araw, ang first batch wala pa masyadong assistensyanabinibigaysa amin hindikatulad ng mganagsisukongayon. (The process of conversion is that you can't get a job rightaway because you look like you have a brand with your name. Because after your last name has FR written on you, the government is still studying whether you are true to them or if you are one of your groupmates who will be a spy for them, it is difficult and it is also difficult. day, the first batch did not have much assistance given to us unlike those who give up today).

- **Participant No.3**
Mulangayonkailanganmomagkayod, hanap trabahopareho kami mag-asawanaghahanaptrabahomahiraptalagamagsimula peronoong, okay naman gumandalalonanungnakuhananamin E-CLIP package nagsimula kami. (From now on, you have to work hard to find a job. My husband and I are both looking for a job. It's really hard to start, but then, it was okay, especially when we got the E-CLIP package, we started).
- **Participant No.5**
Yung immediate assistance sana sir! yunsanaagad-agadmakukuhaperosanangyarisa akin, saibangkasamahan ko hindiagdnakuhanila, nakuha kasi naminyungsamasamana lahat ng pagrelease ng E-CLIP.Nandunna lahat kasi yung immediate assistance nayundapatauthomaticyunpagsurrendermokuhaaga d. (The immediate assistance is there sir! that would have been available immediately but in what happened to me, my other colleagues didn't get it right away, because we got all the E-CLIP releases together. It's all there because the immediate assistance there should be automatic when you surrender and get it right away).
- **Participant No. 6**
Syempre,matagal-tagal din ang proseso kasi yung benefits galinggobyerno ay iproproseso din. (Of course, the process also takes a long time because the benefits from the government will also be processed).

According to the report of Parrocha, A. (2018), TESDA prioritizes skills training leading to self-employment or entrepreneurship for rebel returnees immediately upon completion of their credentials. "More entrepreneurial rather than forcing them to remain (minimum) wage employees, since we cannot quickly erase the stigma," Talavera added. But if they can start on their own, setting up their own firm, there's a future there and things are moving on the ground," he continued, noting that the goal number of rebel returnees they intend to train from 2018 to 2019 is 19,800.

As to the Policy and procedure for E-CLIP In a review of the E-CLIP Policy and Reintegration Process, it offers the beneficiaries the qualification to gain civilian status because they were granted amnesty upon surrender to the government (Proclamation No. 1377 s. 2007 and Administrative Order 172), and further in the Surfacing Phase of E-CLIP Step 5C, where former NPA Rebels receive psychiatric/psychological services, counseling services, and life skills/values formation. In addition, de-radicalization was also carried out as part of this process, in which E-CLIP recipients were subjected to seminars and counseling in order to eradicate the insurgent attitudes, ideology, and doctrines instilled in them by the NPA (Lupao& Dr. Cawi 2021).

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the revelations of the rebel returnees, it is concluded that:

They joined the New People's Army not because they wanted to, but because of the communist group's strong methods, notably the current issues against the government. The main reasons for the rebel returnees' surrender are the difficulties of living in the mountains, as well as for the sake of their families, particularly those members who are already married. The majority of the rebel returnees have legally surrendered to the government, and those who have publicly surrendered have been granted amnesty and financial aid. Furthermore, the rebel returnees are deemed free since they may walk freely in the neighborhood, but they remain concerned about their safety from former comrades who may do something unpleasant to them. A survey about their lives indicated how many tough experiences they had in the mountains, and they didn't want to go back or remember the problems they had. Although they are now enduring difficulties in the transition period following the surrender, they believe they have already changed in their lives in comparison to before. They are also looking for constant government assistance in overcoming the problems they have now encountered as a result of their surrender, notably assurances of their safety from the threat posed by their former companion.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the government expedite the provision of benefits to former rebels in order to help them in starting their new lives. Moreover, the government would provide secure or temporary work for rebel returnees while they adjust to their new life situation. Likewise, the government needs constant programs for the youth, particularly out-of-school youth, such as sports and livelihood projects, so that they may spend their time on such activities and avoid being persuaded by the communist organization as their recruits.

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