

# DATELINE PHILIPPINES

## 10 Rizal monuments around the world—Gordon

NATIONAL hero Dr. Jose Rizal is recognized in many parts of the world for his intelligence and heroism, earning him at least 10 Rizal monuments in four continents around the world, Senator

Richard Gordon said. At the commemoration of Rizal's 148th birthday, the senator

paid tribute to the national hero. "Jose Rizal showed us that even if we were colonized by foreign nations, we can refuse to be bound by them, by having a vision and strengthening our values. He showed that Filipinos could excel and compete with the best," he said in a statement.

"Jose Rizal was the first Filipino to break the walls in his mind, walls which were built by the foreign invaders. Other countries also recognize his heroism and have chosen to erect monuments in his honor," he added.

Gordon pointed out that Filipinos should be proud that other nations recognize that Rizal's short but meaningful life is an

ideal model which shows that a person can achieve far beyond what he may seem to reach if only he has a vision and strives hard to achieve it.

He welcomed the development of a Rizal Park in New South Wales, Australia as a fitting tribute to Rizal's heroism. (Earlier, the Department of Foreign Affairs said a 2.2-hectare property in the city of Campbelltown, New South Wales will be developed to become the Rizal Park in Australia. It was through the initiative of a group of Filipino-Australians and their friends who petitioned the city council of Campbelltown to name it Rizal Park. Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd gave

A\$120,000 for the initial construction of the park while the Campbelltown city council will provide another A\$140,000.)

Aside from the park being built in Australia, he said there are monuments in Rizal's honor in Madrid, Spain; Wilhelmsfeld, Germany; Jinjiang, Fujian, China; Cherry Hill Township, New Jersey; San Diego, California; and Seattle, Washington; Reforma Avenue in Mexico City, Mexico; La Molina in Lima, Peru; Litomerice, Czech Republic; and Singapore.

Guided by the values inculcated by Rizal, Gordon started the Bagumbayan Movement which seeks to rediscover and revitalize the Filipino identity by having a vision grounded on values and empowered by volunteerism.

He explained that the Bagumbayan movement aims to regain the Filipinos' sense of responsibility, to reinvent the government that it may faithfully perform its duty to serve and protect the people, to fortify law and order, and to build a strong and growing economy.

It also strives to prioritize education, provide adequate health care, create jobs, assist people in securing homes and land, strengthen the family as the foundation of the nation, and protect and preserve the environment for posterity. (*Inquirer.net*)



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## RP to deploy 336 UN peacekeepers to Syria

by CYNTHIA BALANA  
*Inquirer.net*

MANILA—The Philippines will be sending 336 troops to join the United Nations peacekeepers in the Golan Heights in Syria in what is going to be its biggest overseas deployment in almost a decade, the Philippine mission to the UN in New York said on Tuesday, June 23.

In a report to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hilario Davide Jr., Philippine permanent representative to the UN, said a composite battalion of Filipino peacekeepers will be deployed in September to serve with the UN Disengagement Observer Force (Undof) in the Golan Heights.

At the same time, Philippines will also be sending military observers to support the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (Unmogip), which is supervising the ceasefire in the contested state of Jammu and Kashmir, Davide said in the report.

Davide said the deployments to the Golan Heights and Kashmir were upon the invitation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). It is being carried out under the UN Standby Arrangement System (Unsas) that the Philippines formally signed during the visit to Manila last year of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

He said the Golan Heights deployment was considered significant since this would be the first time the Philippines will deploy a sizeable unit since 2001 when it deployed over 600 peacekeepers to support the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (Untaet).

"In our own little way, we would help keep the peace in that part of the Middle East," Davide said.

Undof was established as part of diplomatic efforts to ease the tensions that followed the 1973 Yom Kippur War that saw Israel successfully defend territory in the Golan Heights that it seized from Syria during the 1967 Six-Day War. The Agreement on Disengagement that both sides signed in 1974 called for an area of separation and two equal zones of limited forces and armaments to be supervised by a UN observer force. ■



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