

2 kidnapped U.S. citizens held hostage in Basilan

Written by Administrator
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Philippine soldiers find the passports of kidnap victims Gerfa Yeatts Lunsman and her son Kevin Eric. They were seized last month.

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Two U.S. citizens, who were seized on July 12 along with a male relative on an island off this city, are being held captive in the mountains of Basilan, senior

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military official said.

Maj. Gen. Noel Coballes, commander of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, cited intelligence information that Gerfa Yeatts Lunsman, 42, and her son, Kevin Eric, 14, are being held by a kidnapping syndicate with links to the Abu Sayyaf.

It was not immediately known if Lunsman's relative Romnick Jakaria is a captive of the same group.

Coballes, however, begged not to reveal the exact location of the kidnappers, saying efforts to recover the victims were ongoing.

The Lunsmans, who reside in the U.S. state of Virginia, were on a vacation here when they were seized along with Jakaria on Tigtabon Island by 14 armed men onboard two pumpboats.

\$10-M ransom

The kidnappers contacted the Lunsmans' family in the U.S. three days after the incident and demanded, reports said, \$10-million ransom.

According to a security source, the group is also holding captive a nine-year-old boy snatched in Titay, Zamboanga Sibugay on March 16.

It initially demanded P25-million ransom for the boy but later reduced it to P10 million and sent a video clip as proof of life to the boy's family.