

14 militants given life terms

by UPI

MANILA, Philippines -- Fourteen Muslim rebels convicted in a 2001 tourist group abduction that left five hostages dead have been sentenced to life in prison in the Philippines. Four other defendants were acquitted following the trial, which began in 2003, the BBC reported Thursday. More than 80 people were originally charged in the abduction but most were not captured. Four other defendants were killed in a prison break and another was cleared earlier of all charges. The Abu Sayyaf rebels had kidnapped about 20 Filipinos and Americans from a resort and held them in the jungle for a year, the BBC reported. Three of the captives were beheaded by the militants and other two died in a military rescue operation, the British network said. The Abu Sayyaf group also is suspected of being responsible for a 2004 ferry bombing that killed more than 100 people -- the Philippines' worst terror attack ever.

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