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Editorial

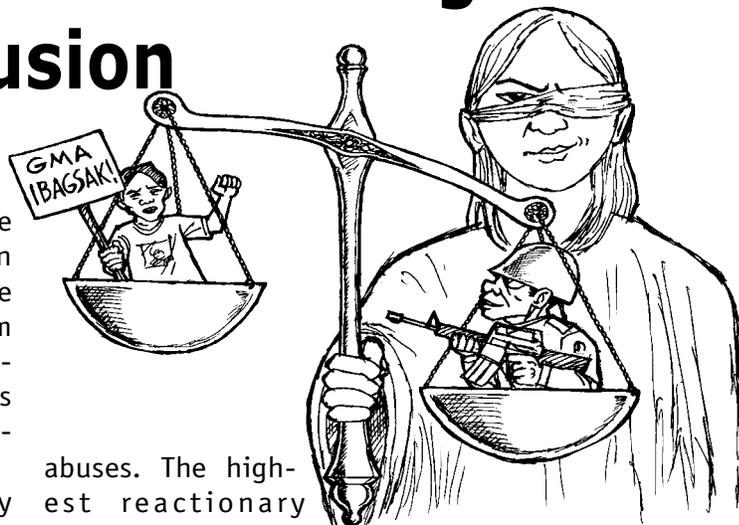
Supreme Court and Malacañang: A treacherous collusion

Devious political objectives lurk behind the series of Supreme Court decisions on the calibrated preemptive response (CPR), Executive Order 464 (EO 464) and Presidential Proclamation 1017 (PP 1017), notwithstanding the benefits the people's democratic movement may derive from these. Couched in democratic language, the decisions in fact suppress opposition to Gloria Arroyo's rule and pave the way for her extended hold on power.

The backhanded decisions absolve Arroyo of any responsibility and shield her from charges of violating her own constitution

With the many brazen cases of fascist abuse and civil rights violations that occurred in the implementation of Arroyo's proclamations and orders, the Supreme Court cannot deny that she has committed many constitutional violations in her attempt to suppress the truth and the democratic forces, the opposition and the people. Confronted with all this, the Supreme Court has been forced to give her a slap on the wrist, at the same time saving face and credibility by not openly favoring Arroyo.

The Supreme Court has disregarded the substance of Arroyo's policies and actions by saying that they lie well within her authority as president. It has in fact upheld the fascist essence of policies and laws used by Arroyo to quash the truth and suppress the people. It has turned a blind eye to the roots of the problem—the President's abuse of power—and has instead merely chided law enforcers for committing



abuses. The highest reactionary court has even advised Arroyo on how to use state power with finesse in suppressing the truth and the people's struggle.

The Supreme Court insists on Arroyo's "right" to declare a "state of national emergency." It has not censured Arroyo for usurping martial law powers in the absence of an outright declaration of martial law. In fact, the court has upheld Arroyo's "right" to take "appropriate steps"—including calling on the military and police—to "curb rebellion." It deems warrantless arrests illegal but remains silent on the illegal arrest of Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran and unlawful arrest orders for five other progressive Congressional representatives and other personalities opposed to Arroyo.

The Supreme Court has also upheld Arroyo's "executive privilege" to forbid government officials, military and police personnel from attending public hearings and investigations. Included in the information the President can withhold from the public

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are presidential conversations and correspondence with top government officials and the proceedings of cabinet meetings.

The Supreme Court claims that the state has the right to break up street demonstrations that have no permits. It has advised Arroyo to invoke Batas Pambansa 880 enacted by the fascist Marcos dictatorship to suppress rallies and prohibit people's assemblies in Mendiola, EDSA, the US Embassy and other places specified by Malacañang, mayors and the police. Malacañang, however, "complies" with the highest reactionary court's advice strictly on its own terms. Thus, it has invoked the state's "constitutional right" to continue its campaign of suppression and repression and has not relented in dispersing demonstrations, clamping down on the mass media, making arrests and prohibiting government functionaries from attending Senate and Congressional hearings.

Nevertheless, it is also correct to view the Supreme Court decisions as a partial victory, especially with its unfavorable judgments on warrantless arrests, control of

the mass media and blanket prohibitions on government officials' attendance in public hearings. The decisions can now be used to demand the release of persons who have been illegally arrested, assert the people's right to free expression and assembly, and investigate and prosecute Malacañang, AFP and PNP officers involved in corruption, crime and covering up for the regime.

It is but proper for the democratic forces and the Filipino people to use these decisions as grounds for asserting their democratic rights. They must also thoroughly expose and vigorously oppose the more essential and treacherous agenda and schemes behind these decisions, such as giving free rein to government to disperse rallies on the basis of BP 880.

These deceptive court decisions provide a glimpse of how Arroyo could smuggle in her much coveted charter change through legal loopholes. The Supreme Court's role in the Arroyo regime's legal manipulations to push "chacha" must be vigilantly watched and opposed. The current collusion between

Malacañang and the Supreme Court—whose members are mostly Arroyo appointees—is bound to become more evident as the "chacha" issue unfolds. There is a pending case before the Supreme Court against "people's initiative," a signature campaign led by "Sigaw ng Bayan" fully supported by Malacañang as the favored means of changing the reactionary constitution.

Arroyo is aggressively pushing "chacha" to change all the rules and nullify all past legal cases against her. Even the possibility of another impeachment attempt would be eliminated and the "partial gains" derived from the Supreme Court decisions rendered useless.

Arroyo's longed for new constitution will legalize her much-desired term extension and pave the way for her autocratic leadership, the curtailment of civil liberties and reinforcement of fascist structures and the total surrender of the Philippines to imperialist plunder and military intervention.

Arroyo and her loyal lackeys in the Supreme Court will definitely allow "chacha" to push through "in a constitutional manner"—whether through "people's initiative" or a constituent assembly.

Such cunning moves and preparations must be fully exposed and opposed. The struggle against such maneuvers is inextricably linked with the intensification of the people's struggle against the corrupt, puppet and fascist Arroyo regime.

The democratic mass movement and the entire revolutionary movement must prepare for such a turn of events. There is no better way to prepare than to further advance the revolutionary movement and armed struggle and to further expand and strengthen the struggle of the broad mass movement and anti-Arroyo united front. **AB**

	
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NPA seizes 17 rifles in Bulacan raid

THE New People's Army (NPA) seized 17 rifles in a raid on a Philippine Army-CAFGU detachment in Barangay Pinuangan, Obando, Bulacan on April 22. Seized were ten M14s, two M16s, three carbines, two Garand rifles, ammunition and communications equipment.

The guerrillas accomplished the raid without firing a single shot and withdrew aboard three motorboats.

Guerrillas seize 5 firearms, kill 3 enemy forces in Leyte and Samar ambushes

RED fighters seized five rifles and killed three enemy forces in two separate ambushes in Samar and Leyte on May 6. Three other enemy soldiers were wounded.

The NPA seized five M16s in an ambush on a team of policemen on patrol along the border of Bonghon and Malaintos towns in Eastern Samar province. A policeman was killed and another wounded.

In Leyte, two soldiers were killed and two others wounded in an NPA ambush on 19th IB elements aboard a Toyota Town Ace van between Barangays Casilion and Boga Boga in Villaba town.

8 enemy troops killed in NPA ambush in Bicol

RED fighters ambushed troops belonging to the 22nd Infantry "Cadre" Battalion of the 901st Bde 9th ID twice in April, killing eight soldiers and CAFGU elements and wounding four others.

The latest ambush occurred in Mauraro, Guinobatan, Albay on April 23 where four enemy elements were killed and a rifle was seized. A guerrilla fighter was also wounded.

The ambush site was merely a kilometer away from the 65th IB Alpha Coy's camp. By the time enemy reinforcements arrived, the NPA had already withdrawn to safety.

The NPA Celso Minguez Command had already ambushed the same unit, killing two soldiers and two CAFGU elements in Barangay Batang, Irosin, Sorsogon on April 20. The enemy forces were conducting strike operations when they hit a land mine detonated by the NPA. Four enemy elements were also wounded. The guerrillas were able to withdraw without suffering any casualties.

Organize Barrio Defense Units

The Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army are calling for the widespread establishment of Barrio Defense Units (BDU) to serve as a significant auxiliary force for people's war in the Philippines, along with strengthening and expanding people's militias and fulltime NPA guerrilla units.

Like the militia, the BDU will be part of the masses' core of self-defense forces and will assist in the organized and total mobilization for people's defense during enemy attacks. The added proliferation of BDUs at present will be a valuable factor for further swelling the ranks of the NPA and advancing people's war. The BDUs will contribute greatly especially at the current stage where the armed revolutionary movement is exerting all efforts to reach the middle substage of the strategic defensive with the goal of advancing towards the next substage and the next higher stages.

Forming the BDU

The BDU, as with the people's militias, is an NPA combat formation whose members are drawn from among the people, and is under the barrio Party branch's direct leadership. The BDU is set up in consolidated barrios where people's organizing committees already exist, or where fullblown people's associations have been set up, along with the people's militia and barrio Party branch.

The BDU is tasked with supporting the militia's work. The BDU is next in line to the militia among the NPA main combat units' reserve forces. In setting up the BDUs, the majority of the people can contribute to defending their communities, enhancing the expansion of the people's army and mass mobilization for war and consolidating the military organization among the people toward the formation of a citizens' armed force.

Anyone of sound body and mind, who is at least 18 years old and is willing to abide by NPA regulations and discipline is qualified to become a BDU member. A BDU team consists of three to five volunteers for each *purok* or sitio or other barrio division based on defense needs and the barrio Party branch's decision. As with other NPA recruits, BDU recruits

To "BDU"... Page 4

Peasants in Cagayan Valley face hunger and ruin with Gloria Rice

The Arroyo regime boasted in 2004 that the hybrid Gloria Rice was the solution to widespread poverty and hunger in the countryside. Cagayan Valley's experience, however, shows that the so-called "rice for the masses" has brought nothing but greater hunger and ruination.

Before Arroyo assumed the presidency, only 5,000 hectares of Philippine ricelands were planted to hybrid rice, according to the Department of Agriculture. Under the Arroyo regime's Agricultural Modernization Program, the DA targeted 600,000 hectares planted to hy-

brid rice, bankrolling this with a P20 billion annual budget.

The regime claimed that Gloria Rice would liberate the country from rice importation. By February 2004, there were 100,000 hectares planted to Gloria Rice.

Of the various hybrids of Gloria Rice—Mestizo, SL-9/SL8H, Magilas 500, Gigante and Rizalina 28—it was SL8H that peasants in Cagayan Valley planted over vast tracts of land in 2005.

The regime took advantage of the destruction wrought by typhoon Igme to the peasants' ricefields in the entire region to push

Gloria Rice. After the typhoon destroyed more than a billion pesos worth of rice especially in Cagayan province, hybrid corn, vegetables and rice were surreptitiously distributed to the populace. The DA and merchant-usurers sold the seeds to farmers at the discounted price of P550 per bag. The desperate peasants were forced to obtain Gloria Rice and other hybrid seeds on loan because they were the only seeds made available by the usurers after the calamity and no other help was forthcoming from

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come primarily from revolutionary mass organizations in the barrio. They are determined to work in the armed revolution even as they continue their daily economic production activities. They undergo the necessary ideological education and politico-military training. The barrio Party branch ensures the BDU's political and ideological education and defines its policies and program.

The BDU, militia and defense committee

The militia is the NPA's center of gravity in the barrio. The militia is responsible for providing the BDU's politico-military training, coordinating with and mobilizing it to support the militia and the barrio's organized defense. The BDU's team leader and/or vice-team leader may be called to attend the militia command's meetings. The NPA platoon operating in the area can likewise directly command the militia and BDU.

Unlike the BDU, the defense committees of revolutionary mass organizations in the barrio are not NPA guerrilla formations. These committees are definitive structures within revolutionary mass organizations to ensure the latter's security. Whenever necessary, the militia and BDU may tap these defense committees for barrio defense and the broader mass mobilization for war, in coordination with the local Party branch and concerned leaders of the barrio revolutionary mass organizations. AB

Tasks of the BDU:

1. Ensure the security of mass organizations and the barrio against enemy agents and traitors.
2. Ensure the barrio's security during enemy operations.
3. Assist in the barrio militia's tasks, including the maintenance of peace and order against bad elements.
4. Serve as a monitoring arm in the implementation of antifeudal and other policies of the people's democratic government against class enemies.
5. Serve as marshals for the local masses mobilized for mass actions.
6. Serve as the militia's partner in supporting the NPA's needs in rear areas, such as camp maintenance, provision of medical care for patients, assistance in the preparation and actual implementation of NPA military actions and other tasks assigned by the NPA guerrilla forces operating within the guerrilla front.
7. Serve as a reserve force for NPA guerrilla units. AB

the government.

The merchants jacked up the price of the next batch of Gloria Rice seeds to ₱1,250 per 20-kilo bag.

In the guise of helping typhoon victims, the government used the calamity to inflict another disaster—hybrid seeds—with the connivance of merchant-usurers.

Like other hybrid seeds, Gloria Rice requires enormous amounts of fertilizer and pesticide to ensure a harvest. Generally, the so-called rice "for the masses" requires at least five sacks of Urea (at ₱750 per bag), four sacks of Triple 14 fertilizer (at ₱800 per

bag) and 100 ml of Planergy per hectare—a total of nine bags and three packets of fertilizer. The rice plants also have to be sprayed with BLP Stopper pesticide four times during the entire cropping season. The cultivation of Gloria Rice is also time-consuming and laborious compared to native varieties.

The regime's promised harvest of 200 cavans per hectare did not materialize, especially with the backward agriculture and severe lack of infrastructure in Cagayan. During the last cropping season in Cagayan and other provinces in the region, peasants who planted Gloria Rice suffered huge losses due to the hybrid's poor growth and the costly and labor-intensive produc-

tion process. The peasants were left with thousands of pesos in debt they could not pay.

Gloria Rice has mired the peasants deeper in debt, while bringing windfall profits to foreign agricultural corporations selling fertilizers and pesticides, to their merchant-usurer agents and to the Arroyo regime which upholds their interests.

Can Gloria Rice truly solve widespread hunger and landlessness? The experience of peasants in Northern Luzon proves otherwise. As long as agriculture in the country is in shambles under imperialist rule and the reign of bureaucrat capitalists like Arroyo, millions of peasants will remain poor and hungry. AB

22nd Cordillera Day celebration

Gloria Arroyo found guilty

The Cordillera People's Tribunal judged the Arroyo regime guilty of state terrorism and national oppression. The Cordillera People's Tribunal was formed by representatives of national minority leaders and various sectors in the Cordillera. It was the highlight activity in the 22nd celebration of Cordillera Day held on April 23-24 in Ag-agama, Western Uma, Lubuagan, Kalinga.

It was the second time the Cordillera minorities held a tribunal. The first one was held in 1989 when Conrado Balweg, leader of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA) was pronounced guilty of collaborating with the Aquino regime in implementing "total war" and assassinating civilians, including Ama Daniel Ngayaan, respected Kalinga leader and one of Macliing Dulag's comrades in the struggle against the Chico dam during the Marcos dicta-

torship.

The Cordillera people charged Arroyo with seven crimes:

1. Violation of the national minorities' right to their ancestral lands and sources of livelihood by allowing the entry of large-scale destructive mines and dams;

2. Violation of the peasant minorities' rights by pursuing agricultural liberalization and allowing the entry of imported vegetables, killing the local vegetable industry;

3. Commercialization of national minority culture through various tourism festivals;

4. Violation of the urban poor and workers' rights to livelihood through low wages, denial of job security and the demolition of their homes.

5. Government neglect and denial of health, education and other basic social services;

6. Militarization; and

7. Political repression of the Cordillera people's progressive movement and the assassination of its leaders and members.

To prove the charges, delegates from various provinces rendered testimony and presented evidence in the form of native songs, poems and plays reenacting various events such as surveillance of legal offices, the military's murder of a peasant in Mountain Province; and the assassination of three activist leaders—Romeo Sanchez, Jose "Pepe" Manegdeg and Albert Terredaño. Sanchez, Bayan Muna Ilocos coordinator, was killed in March 2005. Manegdeg, a human rights advocate, and Terredaño, a union leader, were killed in November 2005.

With the weight of evidence bearing against Arroyo, the tribunal pronounced her guilty and sentenced her to be removed from power and face the charges against

her. The tribunal declared *fetad* (total mobilization for people's war) against Arroyo as her just and fitting punishment. Tribal leaders and warriors from various Cordillera provinces affirmed the tribunal's judgment by performing a war dance. The tribal warriors tore Arroyo's effigy to pieces with their spears.

The delegates paid tribute to the Cordillera martyrs after the trial. Sanchez' children vowed to continue their father's struggle, while Terredaño's widow called for justice for her husband's murder.

A monument was inaugurated in Cagaluán, Pasil, Kalinga in memory of Ama Ngayaan who was abducted and killed by the CPLA on October 5, 1987 in Cagaluán. His remains have never been found. The memorial will serve as a reminder of Ama Ngayaan's sacrifice and role in the Cordillera national minorities' mass movement for the defense of land, life and

livelihood.

The Cordillera Day celebrators also called for the scrapping of the 1995 Mining Act, a stop to militarization, ethnocide, political repression and Oplan Bantay Laya. They likewise exposed and opposed charter change.

On the last night of the celebration, the cultural group Dap-ayan ti Kultura ti Kordilyera presented "Panagsubli" ("The Return"), a play dramatizing the issues and problems confronting the Cordillera people and enjoining them to take action and resolve them.

About 4,000 delegates from various parts of the country attended the celebration. Almost 70 delegates from Taiwan, Belgium, Malaysia, Japan, US, Canada, Australia, Germany and Denmark also participated. **AB**

Oil prices shoot up anew

Crude oil prices have been hovering around \$75 per barrel for almost two weeks at the New York Mercantile Exchange, the highest in history. Earlier, crude oil prices reached \$60 per barrel in August 2005 due to oil companies' speculation and price manipulation in the wake of the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina in the US.

In the Philippines, the price of premium unleaded gasoline has reached P37.39 to

P39.26 per liter. Diesel is priced at P32.79 to 34.42 per liter, and kerosene at P35.60 to P38 per liter.

Oil companies are using as pretext the tensions brought about by the threat of a US invasion of Iran due to the Iranian government's refusal to suspend its nuclear-based electric power development program. The US fears that Iran will use it to build nuclear weapons.

In truth, it is the oil giants' greed that is the real culprit behind the relentless increases in the prices of petroleum products. Chevron's profits reached \$4 billion in the first quarter of 2006, a whopping 49% increase from \$2.7 billion the previous quarter. Chevron is the world's biggest oil company.

Chevron, Exxon Mobil Corp. and Conoco-Phillips had combined profits of \$15.7 billion in the first quarter of this year, 17% higher from the first quarter of 2005. In fact, the three companies posted gross revenues of \$64

billion in 2005.

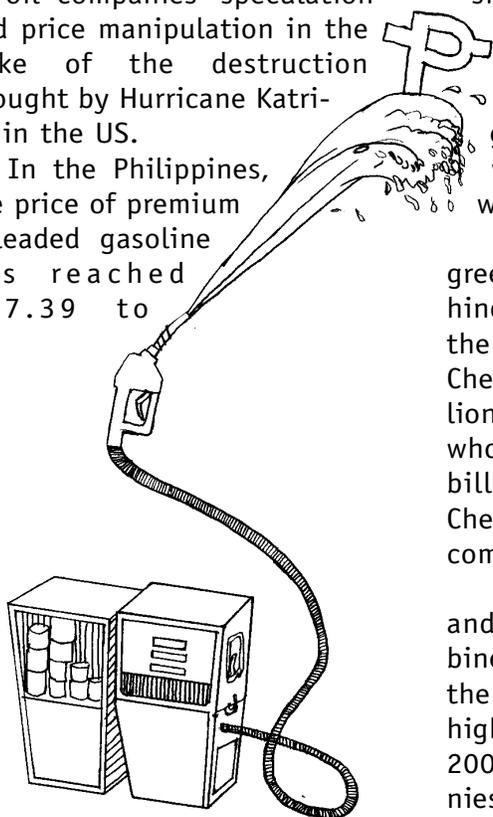
They registered combined profits of \$191.5 billion in the first quarter—exceeding the combined gross domestic products of 189 countries, including Chile, Denmark, Peru and Venezuela.

Spiralling oil prices in the Philippines have already triggered a minimum 30-40 centavo hike in the price per kilo of agricultural products such as rice, chicken, pork and tilapia.

This has prompted progressive representatives in Congress to call for the scrapping of the Downstream Oil Deregulation Law and the imposition of price controls to halt arbitrary price increases of petroleum products by oil companies.

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran likewise pushed for the enactment of a P125 hike in the daily minimum wage to offset the impact of oil price increases on consumers.

Meanwhile, Piston vowed to launch weekly transport strikes starting May to force Arroyo to scrap the oil deregulation law. **AB**





Human rights violations persist in Bicol and Southern Tagalog

Human rights violations go on unabated especially in Bicol and Southern Tagalog.

The latest victims were Ronald Comercias, 26 and Jesus Bustinera, 62, both peasants from Barangay Caranday-La Purisima in Baao, Camarines Sur.

Comercias was found dead near his home after he was abducted by armed men in masks at about 9 p.m. of April 28. His body was riddled with several bullet wounds.

Bustinera was abducted earlier on the evening of April 26 by 20 masked men, all armed with high-powered weapons, witnesses said. He was found dead with several stab wounds at dawn of April 27 half a kilometer away from where he was abducted.

On April 27, Bayan Muna-Camarines Sur secretary-general Jayson Delen and Bayan Muna member Jim Mirafuentes were assassinated. Delen was killed by motorcycle-riding gunmen in Gubat, Daet, Camarines Norte at about 9:45 a.m. while Mirafuentes was shot dead in Daraga, Albay at about 9 a.m.

These assassinations occurred five days after Marilou Rubio and her brother, both Bayan Muna members in General Nakar, Quezon, were killed.

Meanwhile, the relatives of three peasants abducted on April 28 demanded that the military and police surface the victims. PNP and Naval Intelligence operatives abducted Aristedes Sarmiento, Alejandro Axel Pinpin and Riel Custodio of Barangay Sungay, Tagaytay City and two other Tagaytay residents, Enrico Ybañez, 59 and Michael Masayes, 26. Sarmiento, Pinpin and Custodio are members of Kalipunan ng mga Magbubukid sa Kabite (Kamagsasaka-Ka). Police and military personnel brought them to a safehouse, held them incommunicado and interrogated them. The relatives were surprised when the military suddenly presented the victims on television on May 1 as New People's Army members arrested for allegedly planning bomb attacks in Metro Manila.

KARAPATAN-Quezon meanwhile reported that the PNP continues to detain 14 peasants arrested on April 30 at a checkpoint in Barangay Ajos, Catanauan. Two of those arrested are researchers of the Kalipunan ng Magbubukid sa Timog Katagalugan while the other 12 are members of KOMPRA-Quezon. AB

1 dead, 5 wounded in AFP shooting in Antique
ELEMENTS of the 31st Reconnaissance Coy shot dead a 65-year-old woman and wounded five other persons, including two children at dawn of May 6 in Panpanan I, San Remigio, Antique.

Killed in the shooting was Epifania Cabaya. Her husband and four other family members were wounded. The patrolling soldiers claimed that they shot at a group of armed men, only to find out later that their targets were unarmed civilians, initial reports said. AB

2 progressive leaders abducted

TWO more leaders of progressive organizations were abducted recently and remain missing to date.

Two armed men abducted Benedicto Magdaong, 52, Anakpawis chairman in Barangay Marisol, Angeles City on May 5 at around 2 a.m.

Earlier, on April 30, four armed men seized Anakbayan leader Brian Macalisang, 16, while he was on his way to Lakewood town from Tukuran, Zamboanga del Sur. AB

Fact-finding mission denounces systematic suppression of workers

THE International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF), a lawyers' group in the US advocating workers' rights, led a fact-finding mission in the first week of May to investigate cases of suppression of the working class, other toiling masses and their supporters. The International Labor Solidarity Mission (ILSM), which consisted of 30 delegates from 12 countries conducted investigations from May 2-6 in Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Negros and Southern Mindanao where killings of union leaders and members and the suppression of workers' rights are at their worst.

After its investigations, the ILSM denounced the Arroyo regime for deliberately creating conditions for the widespread violation of human rights, especially of progressive organizations. Such brutality is a direct consequence of the Arroyo regime's constant branding of progressive organizations as communist fronts and enemies of the state, the ILSM said.

The ILSM demanded that the Arroyo government put a stop to assassinations and political suppression, and called on the international community to pressure the regime to shatter the prevailing culture of impunity and policy of coddling human rights violators.

The ILSM delegates said that the Philippines is now



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second to Colombia with respect to the number of workers killed. Sixty unionists, worker leaders and labor rights advocates have been killed since Arroyo came to power in 2001. Twenty-one or 35% of the victims were killed from September 2005 to March 2006. **AB**

Various groups assail mass media repression in the Philippines

VARIOUS local and international organizations advocating press freedom denounced the Arroyo government for the intensifying mass media suppression in the Philippines. The condemnations were aired on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day on May 3.

According to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), 77 journalists have been killed in the Philippines since 1986, forty (or 52%) of them since Arroyo came to power five years ago. Not one of the perpetrators has been convicted, the NUJP said. The latest victim was Nicolas Cervantes, 66, a commentator from Surigao City who was killed on May 2.

The Philippine Press Institute added that the Arroyo regime persists in suppressing the mass media two months after it had supposedly lifted the state of national emergency declared in the last week of February. It cited as example Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's order to file inciting to sedition charges against the Probe Team, a prize-winning television program, for interviewing a soldier involved in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

The gravity of media suppression has also caught the attention of international press freedom watchdogs who have castigated the Arroyo regime. Freedom House, a New York-based non-profit non-governmental organization said that Gloria Arroyo's attempt to cover up her crimes against the people has driven her to clamp down on press freedom and assume other dictatorial powers.

Even the US Senate has expressed alarm over the current situation of journalists in the Philippines. Sen. Richard Lugar, head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has asked the Arroyo government to arrest those responsible for killing Filipino journalists.

Ironically, it was on World Press Freedom Day that the Armed Forces of the Philippines imposed additional restrictions on media personnel covering Camp Aguinaldo. **AB**

Arroyo's "gift" to workers

An insult on Labor Day

As usual, workers received nothing but insults from Gloria Arroyo on May First. Instead of approving the longstanding workers' demand for a P125 increase to their daily wage, the Arroyo regime announced the release of a P40 billion "gift" to workers.

Like her previous promises to workers, however, Arroyo's latest "gift" rings hollow.

The P20 billion supposedly set aside for salary increases of government employees will be realized only when the salary standardization bill hurdles Congress, which will take a year more to pass the law.

There is also nothing new in Arroyo's suspension of surcharges for those who fail to pay their SSS and GSIS loans. These agencies have constantly been resorting to this precisely because they could not collect debt payments from their hard-up members.

The P224 million in alleged health benefits is too little and comes too late compared to the people's glaring needs. The amount is even more miserly compared to the P500 million allotted for the training of call center employees.

Workers have been demanding a wage increase of P125 per day and government employees a P3,000 increase in their monthly pay for the past five years, but what Arroyo has doled out was a mere pittance.

In fact, a P125 daily wage increase has practically been rendered insignificant in the face of the rapid price increases of basic goods and commodities. IBON Foundation estimates that as of July 2005, a family of six living in Metro Manila needed P635.81 to live decently. Arroyo's "benevolence" could not even dissuade Filipino workers from seeking employment abroad.

The Arroyo regime has no sympathy at all for workers. It would rather please the big bourgeois compradors who constantly resist any wage increase, claiming major losses. In fact, they rake in huge profits.

Workers nationwide condemned the Arroyo regime's feigned benevolence. They asserted their demand for wage increases, more jobs and the ouster of the antiworker and antipeople Arroyo regime in marches and rallies in various cities and town centers on May First.

About 20,000 workers and supporters converged along Recto Avenue near Mendiola, while 12,000 rallied in various areas in Southern Tagalog. Three thou-

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Batasan 5 now free to go

THE Arroyo regime ran out of excuses to prevent the Batasan 5 from finally leaving the Batasan Complex after a court rejected the additional information the Department of Justice (DOJ) submitted that allegedly implicates them in the rebellion case filed against Rep. Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran and 1Lt. Lawrence San Juan. Following Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's order on May 7 to DILG Secretary Ronaldo Puno and PNP Dir. Gen. Arturo Lomibao, the Batasan 5 are now free to go without fear of ar-

rest. Gonzalez issued the order after an emergency meeting of the National Security Council held in Malacañang to discuss the Batasan 5's plan to leave the legislative complex on May 8 despite the risk of arrest.

Branch 137 of the Makati City Regional Trial Court junked on May 4 the additional information the DOJ submitted that attempted to implicate Reps. Satur Ocampo, Teddy Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, Liza Maza of Gabriela

Women's Party and 46 others in the rebellion case against Beltran of Anakpawis and Lieutenant San Juan.

The court ruled that the rebellion charges against Beltran and San Juan were based merely on an alleged plan by military rebels and leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines in February to unseat Arroyo. The court further said that since it could not be proven that the Batasan 5 were involved in the alleged coup conspiracy, there was no case against them.

Activist leader stands firm against Malacañang

"I don't regret what I did. So why should I apologize?" This was Ma. Theresa Pangilinan's retort to Department of Justice Sec. Raul Gonzalez's threat to have her investigated by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) for supposedly acting impudently towards Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on April 22 in Indang, Cavite.

Pangilinan is one of seven graduates of Cavite State University (CSU) who chanted "Pahirap sa

masa! Patalsikin si Gloria!" (A burden to the masses! Oust Gloria!) while Arroyo was delivering a speech in front of 1,159 graduating students. Arroyo was stunned speechless for a minute with the sudden unexpected protest. Before the Presidential Security Group and the local police could quell the protesters, banners were unfurled with the printed slogans "No to Cha-cha" and "Oust GMA."

Pangilinan asserted that it was not

she but the fake president who has long been an affront to the student youth and the Filipino people as a whole for not heeding their demands.

Pangilinan graduated with a degree in Mass Communications at CSU. She chaired the Central Student Government and was the Student Representative to the Board of Regents. She also wrote for the school paper and is the secretary-general of the National Union of Students of the Philippines in Southern Tagalog.

"Insulto..." mula sa pahina 10

sand protesters joined mass actions in Bacolod City; 2,500 in Iloilo City; and 2,000 in Cebu City. In Davao City, 5,000 demonstrators gathered and 4,000 massed up in Cagayan de Oro City. Mobilizations were likewise launched in the cities of San Fernando and Olongapo in Central Luzon; Baguio City and Tuguegarao in Northern Luzon; Legazpi City in Bicol; Tacloban and Roxas cities and Kalibo, Aklan and San Jose, Antique in the Visayas; and in the cities of General Santos and Pagadian in Mindanao. **AB**

MKP open to links with NPA

A Makabayang Kawal na Pilipino (MKP) spokesperson declared his group's openness to link up and cooperation with the New People's Army (NPA) in the struggle to oust the corrupt Arroyo government.

MKP spokesperson 1Lt. Sonny Sarmiento's announcement was aired in an interview on the Probe Team television program on April 21. In response, CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said that the NPA and the Party were likewise open to cooperate with the MKP whom they consider a significant positive force within the AFP and PNP for advocating patriotic and democratic ideas.

The program also aired the voice of 1Lt. Patricio Bumidang. Like Sarmiento, Bumidang is one of the officers who took part in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny and escaped from their detention cells at the Intelligence Service of the AFP compound in January.

The MKP denounced fellow officers who have allowed themselves to be used in the Arroyo regime and AFP's disinformation and smear campaign.

Peace talks resume in Nepal

THE Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-M) and the Nepali parliament have declared a ceasefire and agreed to resume peace negotiations with each other.

The revolutionary forces had earlier dismantled a blockade on the capital Kathmandu that they had set up as part of a protest against Nepali King Gyanendra's military rule and absolute monarchy. The king was forced on April 24 to reconvene parliament after more than two weeks of widespread and intense protests led by a coalition that included the CPN-M and legal political parties.

Despite its agreement with the newly restored parliament, the CPN-M warned that it would immediately resume the blockade should parliament fail to call for

elections for a constituent assembly, one of the agreements reached by the united front that launched the protest actions.

Holding elections for a constituent assembly that would draft a new constitution is on parliament's immediate agenda, being the primary demand of the Nepali people under the CPN-M's leadership.

The constituent assembly will then decide whether Nepal would remain a monarchy or become a republic as demanded by the revolutionary forces.

Parliament cannot ignore the CPN-M's decisive role in the resolution of the current situation in Nepal because the revolutionary forces control 80% of the national territory.

Iran snubs US warning

The Iranian government ignored US warnings that it would impose sanctions should Iran continue with its nuclear technology development program. Iran Atomic Energy Organization Vice president Mohammad Saidi said that his country will pursue plans to gener-

ate electricity from nuclear energy. The US insists that Iran's real goal is to create atomic bombs.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that his government and the Iranian people are ready to face any US financial sanctions or military attack.

The Bush government has been threatening war on Iran for the past several months.

In 2002, Bush branded Iran as part of the "axis of evil" for asserting its national sovereignty. Other countries included in the "axis of evil" are North Korea and Cuba.