

**ANG****Bayan**

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Editorial

Use armed force against the US-Arroyo regime's fascism and terrorism

The Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army call on all revolutionary forces to further intensify and expand armed struggle nationwide. They call on the Filipino masses to expand and elevate the level of mass struggles against the US-Arroyo regime's intensifying fascism and terrorism.

Only by dealing all-sided and heavy blows on the US-Arroyo regime can the people's intense desire to put an end to its brutal rule and punish the ringleaders and key implementors of its fascist policies be fulfilled.

Everyone who exposes and opposes her regime is now at the receiving end of Arroyo's ruthless repression, especially those who are most ardent and militant in their struggle. She desperately wants to crush the armed revolutionary movement and silence the legal progressive mass movement, including the broad anti-Arroyo opposition. Her desperate desire to remain in power until 2010 or beyond pushes Arroyo to rely completely on the military and the flagrant use of violence coupled with all-out deception, lying, bribery and fraud.

The fascist regime continues to implement large-scale and brutal military operations not only in suspected revolutionary mass bases in the countryside. Even urban poor communities

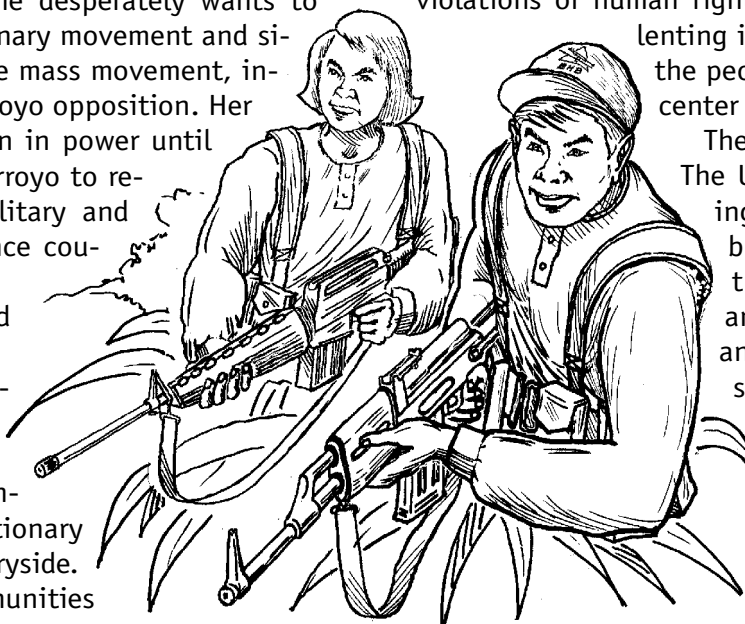
and schools where progressive and democratic organizations and parties enjoy popular support are being saturated with military troops. Military forces conducting operations pursue and harass activists and terrorize residents from supporting these organizations.

Simultaneously, there is a relentless campaign of killings that targets leaders and members of progressive parties and organizations of workers, peasants, women, youth, lawyers, doctors, churchworkers, human rights advocates and media workers.

A growing number of international institutions, organizations, governments and renowned personalities have been conducting investigations, expressing grave concern and condemning widespread repression and violations of human rights. But the regime is unrelenting in its fascist attacks against the people despite its being in the center of international attention.

The people rage for justice. The US-Arroyo regime's continuing and intensifying fascist brutality and terrorism fan the flames of people's resistance. No less than Arroyo and her armed minions are showing the people that the path of armed struggle is a necessary means of struggle.

It is the NPA's obligation to do its utmost and respond to the Filipino peo-



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ple's demand to put an end to and punish the criminal ruling clique in the face of the regime's unbridled fascism. The NPA holds Gloria Arroyo, as commander-in-chief of the reactionary armed forces, and her key accomplices principally accountable for the killings and other fascist crimes.

It is the NPA and the revolutionary movement's main task at present to intensify guerrilla warfare to frustrate and resist the Arroyo regime's fascism. They must seize the opportunity to recruit thousands more Red fighters, strengthen the people's army and launch tactical offensives. Simultaneously, the NPA must continually consolidate and expand its guerrilla fronts and mass base, establish organs of revolutionary political power and advance agrarian revolution and the revolutionary mass movement in the countryside.

By intensifying people's war, the revolutionary forces and the Filipino people show that they cannot be easily cowed and are prepared to fight and defeat fascist brutality and terrorism.

The NPA must seize the initiative and maintain it. This can be done by launching tactical offensives more frequently than the enemy's attacks against the people's army in all regions, provinces and fronts, especially in areas where the revolutionary forces are bigger and stronger. It must prioritize tactical offensives that have immense political impact, can seriously upset the enemy's plans, annihilate their weaker units and seize their weapons. It must likewise prioritize the arrest and punishment of the most rabid fascist forces of the enemy, especially those directly involved in the killings, abductions and torture.

Successive and strong head blows combined with even more body blows delivered by the NPA, alongside widespread and intense mass protests and other forms of struggle by the Filipino people will shatter the pillars of the regime and lead to its collapse.

AB



NPA launches military actions to celebrate 38th anniversary

The New People's Army seized at least 16 high-powered firearms, killed five enemy troops and wounded four others in military actions launched in various parts of the country from March to the first week of April. Two fascist butchers were also meted punishment. Two of the tactical offensives were launched on March 29 to commemorate the NPA's 38th anniversary.

In Masbate. Three elements of the PNP Special Action Force were killed April 3 in an NPA ambush in Barangay Lahong, Baleno. The policemen were part of a reinforcing unit sent to pursue an NPA unit that attacked and disarmed the guards of the Filminera Resources Corp. in Barangay Bariis in the adjacent town of Aroroy earlier that day.

Red fighters meanwhile imposed the death penalty on SP04 Ruben Caña last March 17. Seized from SP04 Caña were an M79 grenade launcher, an M16, an M1 Garand, two carbines, two shotguns, an M14, two .22 caliber pistols and assorted ammunition. According to the Jose Rapsing Command of the NPA-Masbate, Caña was meted the death penalty for murder, arson, cattle rustling and robbery. His most serious crimes involved gross violations of human rights.

In Abra. Three policemen were killed and another seriously wounded in an ambush launched by the Agustin Begnalen Command (NPA-Abra) last March 29 in Barangay Pacoc-Talampac, Lacub. According to preliminary reports, the ambush occurred at 11:45 in the morning and lasted for about 15 minutes.



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angbayan@yahoo.com

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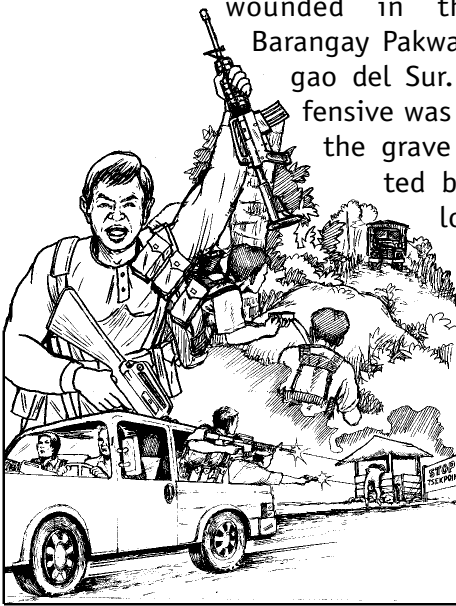
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The Red fighters safely withdrew. The enemy, however, continued firing until they were picked up by a Huey helicopter at about 4:30 pm. The ambush was retaliation for the grave human rights abuses committed by the military against local residents.

In Surigao del Sur. Seven high-powered rifles, seven VHF radios and a laptop computer were seized by the NPA last March 20 in a raid on a logging company in Sitio Mendezona, Raja Cabunguan, Lingig. NPA guerrillas caught the company guards by surprise. Not a single shot was fired during the raid and neither side suffered any casualty.

At about 6:00 a.m. on March 29, NPA guerrillas harassed a CAFGU detachment inside the compound of the Surigao Development Corporation, a logging concession owned by the Puyat family. Afterwards, Red fighters ambushed a truckload of reinforcements from the 58th IB. Three CAFGU elements were wounded in the ambush in Barangay Pakwan, Carmen, Surigao del Sur. The tactical offensive was in retaliation for the grave abuses committed by owners of the logging concession which spans 33,000 hectares.



In Samar. NPA guerrillas seized an M16 rifle last March 23 in an attack on a PNP checkpoint in Sitio Talahib,

Trinidad, Calbayog City. Two policemen were killed in the attack. The Red fighters withdrew safely.

In Northern Samar. An NPA team meted the death penalty on Sgt. Jose D. Baccol of the 52nd IB in Barangay Bugay, Las Navas last March 11. Baccol was an agent of the Military Intelligence Group assigned to the towns of Las Navas, Catubig and Pambujan. He organized and handled military informers in these towns and was responsible for numerous cases of harassment and killings of members of legal organizations and residents in the area. He was also responsible for several raids conducted since 2001 against NPA camps in Las Navas and Catubig. Baccol's punishment has elated the people.

AB



Permanent People's Tribunal verdict

Arroyo: Guilty as charged

Loud cheering greeted the verdict of the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) last March 25 on the charges filed against Gloria Arroyo and George W. Bush in The Hague, The Netherlands. Before more than 300 people, the Arroyo regime and its accomplice, the Bush government, were pronounced guilty of three serious crimes against the Filipino people.

Over three days of continuous trial, the judges heard testimonies from experts, victims and their families and studied boxes of evidence before ruling against Arroyo and Bush on the following crimes:

- Widespread and systematic violations of civil and political rights, extrajudicial killings, abductions, massacres and torture
- Widespread and systematic violations of economic, social and cultural rights
- Widespread and systematic violations of national sovereignty and independence

Continued on "PPT verdict," on page 4

Bigwas—a heavy blow dealt against the much-despised regime

Sine Proletaryo has released a video titled *Bigwas* to commemorate the NPA's 38th anniversary. Sine proletaryo is the video arm of the CPP Information Bureau.

Bigwas shows the determination and readiness of the NPA to intensify tactical offensives throughout the country in response to the Arroyo regime's intensifying violations of human rights. The video features interviews with leaders and spokespersons of the revolutionary movement nationwide.

The video is distributed in VCD and DVD formats. It may be viewed and downloaded at www.philippinerevolution.net and from the popular website YouTube. Music videos of the songs *Pagbati* and *Panaghoy*, original compositions used in the soundtrack, may also be viewed and downloaded from the same websites.

AB



"PPT verdict," from page 3

The recently concluded PPT session on the Philippines is the second in its history. The first session took place in 1980. In its first session, the PPT found the Marcos dictatorship and the US government guilty of systematically violating the sovereignty and the human, democratic and socio-economic rights of the Filipino people.

The PPT panel of judges was headed by Belgian Fr. Francois Houtart, director of Centre Tricontinental, an international institution assisting social movements throughout the world. Fr. Houtart said they received voluminous evidence and testimonies that proved that Arroyo, Bush and their accomplices were guilty of the crimes they have been accused of.

In hearings last March 21-23, the PPT reviewed the Filipino people's history of poverty and resistance since the first PPT session. The judges said they saw no improvement in the political and socio-economic situation in the country. Moreover, the hardship suffered by the Filipino people has worsened in the past 27 years.

They said this situation pushes the people to resist and organize themselves into progressive and democratic organizations. These organizations are now the target of the Arroyo regime's brutal and bloody campaign of harassment and killings.

The judges also pronounced the Bush regime guilty because human rights violations and crimes committed by the Arroyo regime are inextricably linked to US economic and military policies and to the war on terror declared by Bush in the Philippines and other parts of the world.

The PPT also pointed out that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has a central role in the

campaign of harassment and killing. According to the judges, it serves as the primary instrument in repression and in implementing extralegal operations guided and funded by US security and counter-insurgency agencies. Arroyo's reliance on the US and on a US-trained armed forces is the key to her regime's continued stay in power.

They stressed that Oplan Bantay Laya (OBL) is but the latest form of the counter-insurgency program started under the Marcos dictatorship and that it is the product of more than three decades of failed attempts to quell the people's resistance.

In its judgment, the PPT pointed to the Arroyo regime as the perpetrator of political killings, abductions, torture and other forms of violence against activists and the rest of the Filipino people. The PPT's view comprises one of the more advanced analyses from the international community. The complainants said it has exceeded their expectations.

The PPT will automatically submit its judgment to the European Commission, United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and other international institutions and governments. The PPT has recommended the immediate removal of the Philippines from the UNHRC due to the Arroyo regime's largescale human rights violations.

The PPT had sent official invitations to the Arroyo and US governments but they refused to attend the trial. They instead disparaged the court and attacked the integrity of the participating judges. National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales showed his gross ignorance when he called the PPT an international communist kangaroo court.

Meanwhile, the families of the victims, human rights and progressive organizations and personalities lauded the PPT's judgment. AB

Alston submits preliminary report to UNHRC

Prof. Philip Alston formally submitted his preliminary report to the UN Human Rights Council last March 28. Compared to his earlier report read before he left the Philippines last February, he now pinpointed the military and police as undoubted perpetrators of the killings of activists. He said the policies of the ruling regime

and the mindset of the military and police serve as the root causes and framework for the extrajudicial killings.

According to Alston, the "political war" launched by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is quickly leading to the use of guns against the progressive forces. The most telling evidence of this is the

110-page AFP order of battle he acquired that listed the names of numerous leaders and members of progressive organizations that have been classified "illegitimate" and must be "neutralized." Many of those included in the list have become victims of political killings.

Alston said that the two most

important causes for the extrajudicial killings are the slander and branding of people's organizations as fronts of the CPP and "enemies of the state;" and the government's counter-insurgency strategy that encourages extra-judicial killings of activists and other "enemies."

He also pointed to the Arroyo regime's hypocrisy on the issue of solving the extrajudicial killings. He said the regime claims it is taking steps to investigate the killings, but has failed to follow through. Alston strongly censured various government organs, including Malacañang, for their pas-

sivity that practically amounts to dereliction of duty. He said Malacañang's order preventing government and military officials from appearing before legislative hearings is the biggest obstacle to any

effort to punish those who abuse their power. Alston criticized the Senate Committee on Human Rights led by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile for its outright refusal to investigate widespread violations of human rights on the flimsy pre-

text that it was not in aid of legislation.

Alston also criticized the Department of Justice for its gross ir-

responsibility and lack of interest in upholding human rights. He said the DOJ has passed on most of the cases to the police.

Alston further said that the Office of the Ombudsman which has the constitutional responsibility to investigate political killings has been unable to do so despite having a special unit assigned to such cases. It has not acted on even one of the 44 cases filed before it from 2004-2006.

A month after he released his first report, Alston added that he sees no basis for expecting the regime to solve the cases of extrajudicial killings. He warned the Arroyo regime that it will face dire consequences if it fails to solve the political killings, as opposition groups would be forced to take up arms rather than join the parliamentary process. **AB**

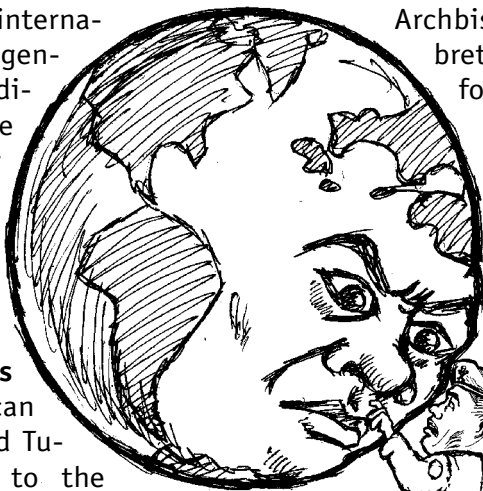


A worldwide call to end the killings!

A growing number of international organizations, agencies and prominent individuals has condemned the Arroyo regime and its policy of extrajudicial killings against its political opponents. There are mounting demands to render justice to the victims.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu has called for an end to the killings of activists and journalists in the Philippines. Bishop Tutu received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for working against racist oppression and for equal civil rights for all.

Archbishop Tutu supports the struggle for justice for the victims of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines and the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) hearings on the criminal cases against the US-Arroyo regime. In his message of solidarity for the PPT,



Archbishop Tutu said that "as we speak, our brethren in the Philippines who are struggling for justice and welfare are being killed."

He strongly conveyed to the Arroyo regime the message "Stop sowing terror among the people crying out for justice in your country. Stop using the war against terror as an excuse to oppress and kill your countrymen."

AHRC. The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) censured the Arroyo regime for claiming that its "economic gains" prove that the Philippines has a "stable democracy". The AHRC is a Hongkong-based human rights advocacy group founded in 1984.

The AHRC also criticized the Arroyo government for repressing those who oppose the government's actions and policies, and for manipulating the political and legal system to justify its illegal deeds. The AHRC said no true democracy exists in the Philip-



piners because the killings, abductions, torture and attacks against activists occur almost daily.

Report to the UNHRC. A delegation from the Philippines submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva, Switzerland last March 19 a report titled "Let the stones cry out!" The delegation was led by representatives from the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), Philippines Ecumenical Bishops' Forum, United Church of Christ in the Philippines and Moro Christian People's Alliance. They were joined by representatives from the United Methodist Church in the US. The World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) sponsored the delegation's participation in the UNHRC meeting.

The report covered cases of human rights violations in the Philippines, especially the extrajudicial killings of anti-Arroyo individuals. The delegation attached to their report a collective call for justice for thousands of Filipinos who are suffering grave violations of human rights under the government's counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism strategy.

IPU. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an international organization of 140 legislatures including that of the Philippines, will expand its investigation of the detention and harassment of progressive party representatives to include cases of killings and abductions of activists. An IPU team will arrive this April to investigate the human rights situation in the country.

Although the team has yet to arrive in the country, three pro-Arroyo senatorial candidates have already slandered it by announcing that the IPU had no right to conduct an investigation in the Philippines.

Canadian churches. Canadian churches petitioned their parliament to investigate extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. The petition was issued in response to a call from Philippine church leaders for solidarity against the killings.

FIDH. The Fédération Internationale des Droits de L'homme (FIDH or International Federation for Human Rights) chose the Philippines as the venue for the release of its 2006 annual report. The FIDH is an international alliance of human rights groups founded in 1922 and based in France. It includes 141 groups from more than 100 countries.

The FIDH chose the Philippines because human rights violations have escalated at the fastest rate here compared to other Asian countries. **AB**

Two Cagayan peasant leaders brutally killed

Two peasant leaders and two members of progressive organizations are the latest victims of the Arroyo regime's fascist campaign from March 10-April 4.

April 4. The bodies of Arthur Orpilla and Dionisio Battad, both 50 years old and residents of Bagunot, Baggao, Cagayan were found stuffed in garbage bags under the Magapit Bridge in Lallo, Cagayan. Orpilla's body bore numerous stab wounds while Battad's had gunshot wounds.

Orpilla and Battad are both members of Anakpawis and Kagimungan ti Cagayan Valley, a sister organization of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP). According to the KMP, Orpilla and Battad received threats from the military before they were abducted and killed.

The KMP added that Orpilla and Battad went to a 17th IB detachment on March 27 and never made it home. The military requires Bagunot residents to report to the detachment in the morning before going to work and in the evening before returning home.

April 3. Six armed men abducted Lourdes "Nanay Ode" Rubrico, 61, in Barangay Sta. Cruz, Dasmariñas, Cavite. Nanay Ode is the president of Umaga Federation under the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) in Cavite. Nanay Ode was listening to a reading of the *pasyon* at about 2:30 pm when the armed men dragged her into a brown van with license plate XRR-428.

March 14. Killers under the 4th ID shot dead businessman and active Bayan Muna member Godofredo Garay, 46, in his home in Purok 4, Wasian, Rosario, Agusan del Sur. After the killing, the AFP spread lies that the NPA killed Garay.

That same day, two masked men aboard a motorcycle killed Cipriano Ligaspo, 43, a few meters away from a military camp in Masapia, San Andres, Bunawan, Agusan Del Sur. Ligaspo, who was shot 16 times was on his way home to Sta. Monica, Bunawan Brook, Bunawan.

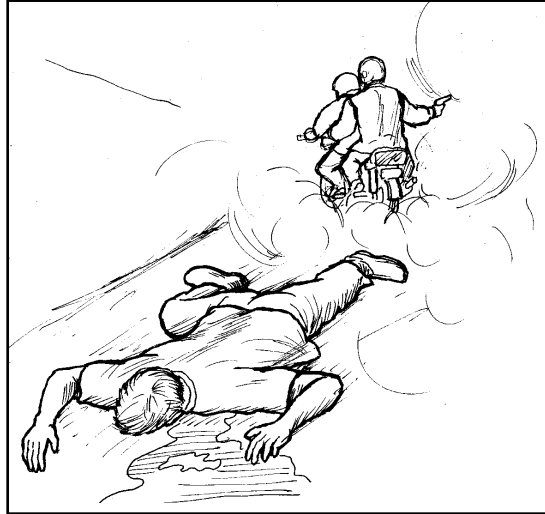
Before he was killed, Ligaspo was harassed repeatedly and threatened with death by the military. The military accused him of supporting the NPA. Last February 20, soldiers arrested Ligaspo, his brother and five other peasants. They were transported by

military truck and detained at the 36th IB headquarters in Scaling, Barangay San Roque, Bislig City, Surigao del Sur where they were photographed and videotaped. They were separately investigated without a lawyer and subjected to psychological torture. They were released but were threatened with death if they continue to support the NPA.

March 10. Five soldiers from the Naval Intelligence Special Group (NISG) arrested pedicab driver Al Jakirani, 17, as he was waiting for passengers at the Isabela City pier. He was dragged aboard a navy boat that sailed towards Zamboanga City. He was arrested because his name sounded similar to that of a certain "Abu Usman" who is implicated in the Golden Harvest kidnapping in 2001. Jakirani was just 11 years old then.

Jakirani was tortured while being investigated.

His medical examination revealed that he suffered fractures and wounds to the chest and abdomen. Jakirani narrated that he was mauled thrice and electrocuted in the genitals while being investigated.



Jakirani's real name is Al Jakirani Y Alih which is a far cry from the name of suspected Abu Sayyaf leader Al Hari Jakiri y Alidjan also known as Abu Usman. Despite this error, Jakirani remains imprisoned.

The Suara Fatimats (Suara Women), a Moro women's organization condemned Jakirani arrest and detention saying his rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Revised Penal Code have been violated. Suara Fatimats called for the immediate release of Jakirani and punishment of the soldiers who arrested and detained him. AB

Military kills 9-year old child

The Communist Party of the Philippines strongly condemned fascist military troops for killing nine-year old Grecil Galacio by last March 31 in Purok 6, Barangay Kahayag, New Bataan, Compostela Valley and spreading malicious lies that she was a "child soldier" of the NPA.

Grecil and her younger brother Gary, 6, were bathing in a creek at 8:00 a.m. when a few minutes later, soldiers attacked the sitio where a team of Red fighters was resting. Grecil's parents, Gregorio Galacio and Virginia Buya, ran away from their house carrying two of their smaller children.

The soldiers gunned down Grecil as she was fleeing in panic. She was hit in the right elbow and left temple.

To cover up and justify their

crime, the AFP spread a huge lie that Grecil was an NPA guerrilla. According to Brig. Gen. Carlos Holganza, the soldiers saw Grecil bearing a weapon, a claim that has been vehemently denied by her mother Virginia. She said, "My daughter is so small, just nine years old. Then they say she was NPA?"

The CPP lambasted the military for desecrating Grecil's corpse by putting an M16 rifle and ammunition beside it before taking her picture. Barangay Capt. Eulogio Almasa and neighbors of the Galacio's said that Grecil did not have any weapons when she was killed.

Almasa also asserted that neither Grecil nor any of her family was a member of the NPA. Grecil had just finished Grade 2 at Simsi-

men Elementary School.

The merciless killing of Grecil proves once again the brutality of the AFP, its lack of respect for the welfare of civilians, including children, and its gross disregard for international conventions that protect non-combatants.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal condoled with the victim's family and said the NPA will do its utmost to serve justice and punish the fascist soldiers for their brutal killing of Grecil.

Grecil's killing, the desecration of her body and the lies about the circumstances of her death are but part of the many longstanding atrocities committed by the military. The military will do anything to weave lies and slander the NPA, even at the expense of the lives of defenseless children. AB

Ka Satur released

The Supreme Court ordered the temporary release of Rep. Satur Ocampo last April 3 after 19 days of detention at the Western Police District as it studied Ocampo's petition to dismiss the charge of multiple murder filed against him at the Regional Trial Court in Hilongos, Leyte. Ocampo and his lawyers considered the order a big victory and proof that the case filed against him was weak and defective.

Upon his release from prison, Ocampo asserted that the cases filed against him were malicious and fabricated. He lambasted the blatant harassment directed against him and his party Bayan Muna, saying these are all part of the Arroyo regime's plan to blame him and other progressive forces for the military's campaign of extrajudicial killings, and obstruct the campaign and imminent victory of Bayan Muna and other progressive parties.

During the Supreme Court hearing last March 30, Ocampo's lawyers exposed as lies the charges against him. First, they showed that Ocampo was imprisoned at the time when he allegedly ordered the killing of 15 suspected military spies within the NPA in Leyte. Second, they accused the military of fabricating evidence by transferring the same skeletal remains to various "mass graves" to be used in different cases. Ocampo's lawyers revealed that the 67 skeletal remains allegedly dug up in Inopacan, Leyte were previously used from 2001-2005 in various cases against local activists. Documents acquired by Bayan Muna show that 1st Lt. Rembert Baylosis of the 43rd IB filed charges against local activists based on skeletal remains allegedly dug up in Baybay, Leyte.

The RTC dismissed the case in 2005 for lack of merit.

The skeletal remains of five alleged victims (Domingo Eras, Gregorio Eras, Leonardo Eras, Juanita Aviola, and Concepcion Aragon) were first unearthed in Monterico, Baybay, Leyte in 2000, and again unearthed in Mt. Sapang Dako, Inopacan, Leyte in 2006. The same witnesses were used in the dismissed case in 2000 and the current case against Ocampo.

The Supreme Court also asked why is it that the victims' families waited 20 years before filing a case against Ocampo now that he is running for Congress. A Supreme Court justice said this is very surprising and perplexing.

In his summation, Chief Justice Reynato Puno mentioned that the Supreme Court may review if there is sufficient merit for the filing of charges against Ocampo.

Despite Ocampo's release, NDFP peace talks consultant and co-accused Jose Ma. Sison warned that the Arroyo regime will continue to harass them.

Indeed, Malacañang and its lackeys have not relented. Miffed by Ocampo's release, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez lambasted the Supreme Court by accusing it of granting Ocampo special treatment. He ordered government lawyers to file an appeal before the Supreme Court for Ocampo's return to prison. In an effort to salvage the case, Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera broke down the charge

of multiple murder into 15 separate cases of murder—one for each of those Ocampo allegedly ordered killed.

Simultaneously, the AFP continues spreading lies against Ocampo. For several consecutive days, the military claimed that they have again unearthed another mass grave of alleged NPA victims in Hilongos, Leyte and are linking this to the congressman.

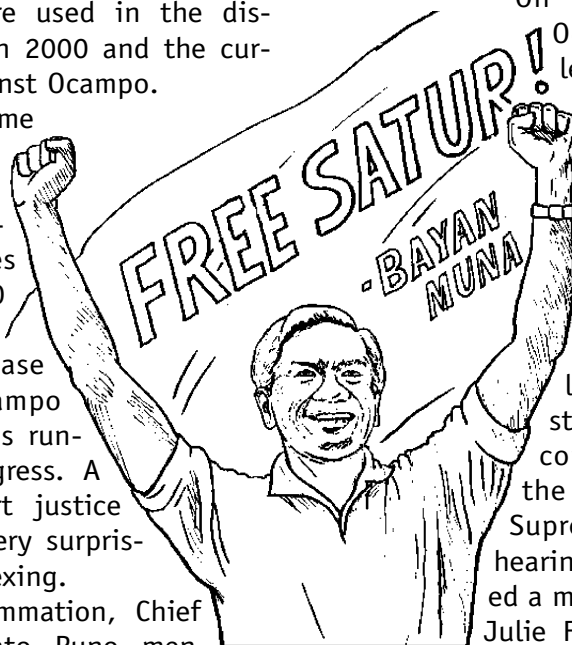
On the day of Ocampo's release, the AFP transported several residents of Hilongos for a press conference against Ocampo.

Previously, the AFP staged a press conference on the day of the Supreme Court hearing and presented a masked witness, Julie Flores Sinohin, who claimed to be a

former NPA member and "hitman." Sinohin was joined by several other masked witnesses who claimed to be widows of those he killed upon orders of Ocampo, Teddy Casiño, Liza Maza and Rafael Mariano.

Another false witness, Cleotilde Peralta Aguilar, appeared before media and claimed that the four congressional representatives used her house in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija to plan the murders.

Earlier on, Ocampo and his co-accused filed perjury charges against the regime's false witnesses. They said the witnesses' claims were impossible because Bayan Muna had not yet been organized in 1998, and the Gabriela Women's Party and Anakpawis were not yet in existence in 2001. **AB**



Malacañang plans to manipulate party-list election

Malacañang is anxious to make off with majority of the seats in the party-list election. With the administration's machinery for fraud well in place to ensure that only up to 30 opposition congressmen can win in the various districts, it is now busy plotting how to make the results of the party-list election favorable to the regime.

Aside from striving to prevent progressive parties from winning more congressional seats, Malacañang is also eager to insert pro-Arroyo party-list groups into the Lower House to ensure that Arroyo controls 2/3 of the House and will be able to scrap the impeachment case that will surely be filed against her this coming July.

To achieve this, Malacañang

has organized party-list groups so it could field them in the coming polls. A Commission on Elections regulation issued last April 4 prohibits party-list groups from making public their nominees, precisely to conceal the identities of the regime's candidates under the party-list system.

Malacañang's dirty tactics were revealed recently by a congressman Arroyo tried to bribe with ₱5-20 million to run as nominee for one of her party-list groups.

Before this, the Arroyo regime had already reportedly organized and funded at least 11 party-list groups through Undersecretary John Batara and Director Melvin Mitra of the Office of External Affairs. The two Malacañang officials had reportedly set up and are actively

recruiting members and nominees for several of these parties.

Malacañang's dummy party-list groups include AKSA, Aangat tayo, Akbay Pinoy, Agbiag, ANAD, Ahon Pinoy, Aangat ka, Babae Ka, Biyaheng Pinoy, Kasangga, BANAT and Kakusa. Among these are groups organized directly by Arroyo's key henchmen such as AKSA which was put up by Sec. Norberto Gonzales and manned by his brother. BANAT was organized by Sigaw ng Bayan, the regime's main instrument in the foiled people's initiative. The rest are manned by children of politicians and bureaucrats close to the regime.

Meanwhile, Jovito Palparan shamelessly announced his candidacy under the party-list group Bantay (formerly the True Marcos Loyalist). Bantay is a fascist organization of the CAFGU and other paramilitary groups. Palparan's candidacy is a means for him to continue with his anti-communist campaign and counter-insurgency program. **AB**

A ravenous appetite for money

Arroyo is once again using the people's misery as a pretext to steal public funds. Last March 24, Arroyo ordered the release of ₱1 billion for an anti-hunger program after several surveys showed the prevalence of hunger in the country. She did this after being heavily criticized for her claim that the poor were hungry because they prioritized luxuries over food and her hypocritical statement that she also experiences hunger. Up to 53% of the families surveyed said they experienced hunger at least once over the past three months.

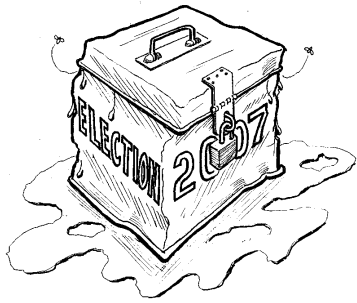
Arroyo bragged that she could eliminate hunger in just six months through food-for-work, food-for-parishes and the graft-ridden food-for-school programs. These are all dole-out programs that could never erase the roots of poverty and hunger. Moreover, with the release of funds for these programs coinciding with the election, the money for these programs will surely be used for other purposes since the campaign period is a time when her henchmen need millions of pesos to ensure their victory in the polls.

Arroyo has created the Anti-Hunger Task Force to



conceal the flow of government funds to her party's campaign machinery. She has assigned Health Secretary Francisco Duque III and Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap to lead the task force and disburse funds. Both of them have been implicated in the anomalous distribution of funds in the last election. The task force claims it will use the ₱1 billion fund to feed pre-school and Grade 1 children in Metro Manila and ten provinces. Given that the pupils are on summer break, the "benefits" will be given directly to parents, teachers and churches. As expected, the sacks of rice and packs of noodles to be distributed are all marked with Arroyo's name. Expect also that the pretentious distribution ceremonies will be attended by Arroyo's candidates. **AB**

Anomalous ballot printing



The government contract for the printing of ballots and election returns for the May elections (ER) has been awarded to the same company that printed fake ER used in election fraud in 2004.

The contract was awarded by the National Printing Office (NPO) to Grand C Graphics without the requisite public bidding. NPO Director Felipe Evardone rigged the process to ensure that Grand C Graphics would receive the contract. Evardone has been disqualifying other printing presses from entering into contracts with the NPO since last year.

It will be recalled that Evardone was involved in the scandal involving the use of government facilities to print materials for the Arroyo regime's failed charter change scheme.

Grand C Graphics is favored by the Arroyo clique because it has long been its accomplice in several schemes. It was commissioned by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) to print campaign materials for Gloria Arroyo in 2004 using government funds and it will again serve as Arroyo's accomplice in its fraudulent schemes in the coming election.

Meanwhile, Malacañang was forced to replace Evardone because of the many graft cases he faces at the NPO. He was replaced by Enrique Agana, another Arroyo campaigner. AB

NPA in ICR belies military's accusations

The Chadli Molintas Command (CMC) of the NPA-Ilocos-Cordillera Region (NPA-ICR) strongly denied a fabricated AFP story that the NPA is cultivating marijuana in the region to fund the revolutionary movement. According to CMC spokesperson Ka Martin Montana, the AFP is taking advantage of the US State Department's canard about illegal drugs. The military's accusation that the NPA is involved in the cultivation and marketing of marijuana is an old story, said Montana. He stressed that the NPA has a strict policy prohibiting the manufacture and use of drugs, and that is why no farmers plant marijuana in its guerrilla zones.

The NPA uses continuing education and persuasion in its mass campaign against the cultivation and use of marijuana in guerrilla zones of the revolutionary movement. The NPA persuades unorganized peasants to try other, more honest means of earning a living instead of planting marijuana. It tells them that however hard their life is, they will experience even greater hardships if imprisoned. It also tells them that even if they themselves do not use the marijuana they plant, it can destroy the lives of their countrymen.

The CMC said the people know that it is police and military officers who fund the illegal drug trade, coddle cultivators and sell illegal drugs in the Ilocos-Cordillera. Given the huge amounts of cash they amass from these operations, they often end up having bloody clashes. Montana added that the widespread production and selling of illegal drugs is a symptom of the rottenness of reactionary Philippine society. AB

NDF-Negros sympathizes with peasants of Hacienda Velez-Malaga

NDF-Negros spokesperson Frank Fernandez expressed sympathy for struggling farm workers in Hacienda Velez-Malaga in Barangay Robles, La Castellana, Negros Occidental. Fernandez said the farm workers have won many victories in their long struggle but all these are being withheld by despotic landlord Roberto Cuenca.

Ka Frank condemned Cuenca's move to stop the distribution of land to 122 farm workers who have been struggling for 11 years to own the land granted to them under the Comprehensive Agrarian

Reform Program (CARP). He said this proves that the reactionary government's agrarian reform is a sham. Moreover, it also highlights the stubborn resistance to any form of land reform by the big landlords in the region led by the brothers Mike and Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo.

Landlords in Negros intend to expand their landholdings to increase their sugarcane production. They expect a revitalization in the defunct sugar industry due to current high market prices and the

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Malacañang involved in lamp posts scandal

THE ARROYO regime's highest-ranking officials have been implicated directly in the scandal involving the overpricing of lamp posts put up for the 12th ASEAN Summit in Cebu last January. Aside from Mandaue City Mayor Thadeo Ouano, Lapu-Lapu City Mayor Arthur Radaza and 17 other government officials and employees, Road Users' Tax Board Executive Director Reynaldo Puno as well as Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane have likewise been implicated. Reynaldo is DILG Secretary Ronaldo Puno's brother.

Ebdane, then Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary, reportedly approved the

setting up of 30 lamp posts at Portofino, a private beach resort, without following proper procedure. The DPWH bought the lamp posts from China for only P1,400 to P11,750 each, but reported buying them for P50,000 per unit. The price per lamp post even reached a whopping P83,000-P224,000 after adding in the cost of installation. All in all, the 1,800 decorative lamp posts set up in the cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu cost P365.8 million, which each lamp post overpriced by more than 2,000%.

Since there was no budgetary allocation for the lamp posts, Malacañang maneuvered to procure

funds for them from the Road Users' Tax fund in connivance with Puno.

Ebdane now faces plunder charges for his role in the scam. Malacañang has meanwhile ordered the immediate suspension of Ouano and Radaza so they could take all the heat. The Palace maneuver was also meant to preempt a deeper investigation that would reveal Malacañang's central role in the scandal.

In a related development, up to P5 billion in irrigation funds have reportedly been illegally diverted to bankroll the campaigns of two senatorial candidates of the pro-Arroyo coalition Team Unity.

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foreseen demand for ethanol, a form of alcohol extracted from sugarcane. They have thus been zealously reclaiming lands already distributed to the peasants.

Cuenca's moves include using the Malaga Cuenca Multi-Purpose Cooperative and the Hacienda Malaga Independent Workers' Union to oppose the struggling farm workers under Task Force Mapalad (TFM).

Clerico-fascists who control TFM callously push the farm workers into drawn-out battles and delude them into believing there is hope in the reactionary regime's sham CARP. TFM was organized by Fr. Romeo Intengan and Norberto Gonzales of the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP) to deceive peasants into supporting the sham CARP, sabotage efforts to organize them under genuine pro-peasant groups and steer them away from the genuine land reform program of the national democratic movement.

Ka Frank said these moves cause divisiveness among peasants and farm workers and can only benefit the big landlords and the reactionary state. He called on all members of the TFM, Malaga Cuenca Multi-Purpose Cooperative and the Hacienda Malaga Independent Workers' Union to unite, expose and oppose their class enemy Roberto Cuenca, the deceptive promises of the TFM and the callous maneuvers of Intengan, Gonzales and the Arroyo regime to sow discord among their ranks.

AB

Philippines largest rice importer in Asia

A RECENT IBON Foundation study shows that the Philippines is the largest rice importer in Asia. From 1984-1994, the Philippines imported 151,588 metric tons of rice from various Asian countries, according to data provided by no less than the government's National Food Authority.

The problem worsened when the Philippines joined the World Trade Organization. The Philippines now imports about one million tons of rice annually from neighboring Asian countries, equivalent to an increase of almost 587%.

According to IBON, rice production fell in the past decade due to the Philippines' continuing adherence to trade liberalization and the corruption of the Arroyo regime. For example, there is a shortfall in irrigation because the regime has diverted funds intended for irrigation services to support the electoral campaign of pro-Arroyo candidates.

Moreover, landlessness among peasants will exacerbate the country's rice shortage and hunger problem in the coming years.

American troop withdrawal from Iraq set

THE Democrat-dominated US Senate and Congress declared last March 23 that majority of US troops in Iraq will be sent home by March 2008 with the rest to follow before September 2008. As added pressure for the pullout of US troops from Iraq, both houses tied the \$122 billion budget for continuing US war operations in Iraq to a definite timetable for bringing US troops home.

The move was supported by several Republican senators and congressmen who oppose the continuing war in Iraq. Its approval is a sign of the extreme isolation of the Bush government's war on terror policy. As expected, Bush threatened to veto the proposal.

Despite broad international anti-war protests, Bush has deployed an additional 30,000 US troops to Iraq. However, anti-war congressmen and senators continue to demand the pullout of US troops and an end to the war in Iraq.

According to latest reports, about 665,000 Iraqi civilians, 12,000 Iraqi security forces and 3,500 invading troops have been killed in the war. Close to \$200 million are spent daily and \$2 trillion of American taxpayers' money has been wasted on the US war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Nepal Maoists sworn into cabinet

THE Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) will hold five cabinet positions in the transitional Nepalese government. Maoists were sworn into office last April 1 as ministers of information, local development, planning and works, forestry, and women and children.

The appointment of five Maoists in the cabinet follows a peace agreement crafted after a popular revolt toppled the monarchy of King Gyanendra in May 2006. The three largest parties in the coalition that led the revolt were each allotted five cabinet positions.

Last April 2, eighty-three representatives of the CPN-M joined the 330-member Nepalese parliament. They represent the most marginalized Nepalese sectors: women, national minorities and the most exploited class dubbed the untouchables. April 3 was declared a national holiday to celebrate this momentous victory.

This coming June, the Nepalese people will elect a constituent assembly that will decide on Nepal's type of government and society. Among the issues to be decided upon by the assembly is the abolition of the monarchy, the CPN-M's main demand.

Sanctions against Iran condemned

Iranians and their allies strongly condemned the latest United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution last March 23 imposing new sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran for continuing with its nuclear program. According to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Resolution 1747 will not delay even for a moment Iran's legitimate and peaceful nuclear program.

The UN first imposed sanctions

on Iran in December 2006. In the face of Iran's determination, new sanctions were imposed based on the demands of the US and its allies Britain, France and Germany.

The resolution prevents international financial organizations and countries from providing aid and credit to Iran. Bank assets of companies and individuals supportive of Iran's nuclear program have been frozen, and the list of Iranian officials restricted from traveling

and transacting with banks has been expanded. All arms exports to Iran have also been banned.

Even as the UN imposes these sanctions, however, US, British and Israeli special services have been intensifying their sabotage operations in Iranian territory. Last March 23, fifteen elements of the British Royal Marines were arrested by Iranian security forces for illegally entering Iranian waters.