

**ANG****Bayan**

Pahayagan ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas
Pinapatnubayan ng Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo

English Edition
Vol. XXXIII No. 14
July 21, 2007

www.philippinerevolution.org

Editorial

Broadly and vigorously oppose the HSA

The Arroyo regime began a new stage in its increasingly fascist rule when it obstinately pushed for the implementation of the Human Security Act (HSA) despite widespread protests.

Through the HSA, erstwhile known as the anti-terrorism law, the Arroyo regime does away with the reactionary constitution's formal guarantees against violations of basic human rights and further rams through its fascist and terrorist policies and acts and those of its brutal military and security forces. Cases of warrantless searches and arbitrary detention are bound to rise now that the agents of the fascist state have been handed a legal justification to commit them.

The HSA runs roughshod over international humanitarian laws. It contravenes the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

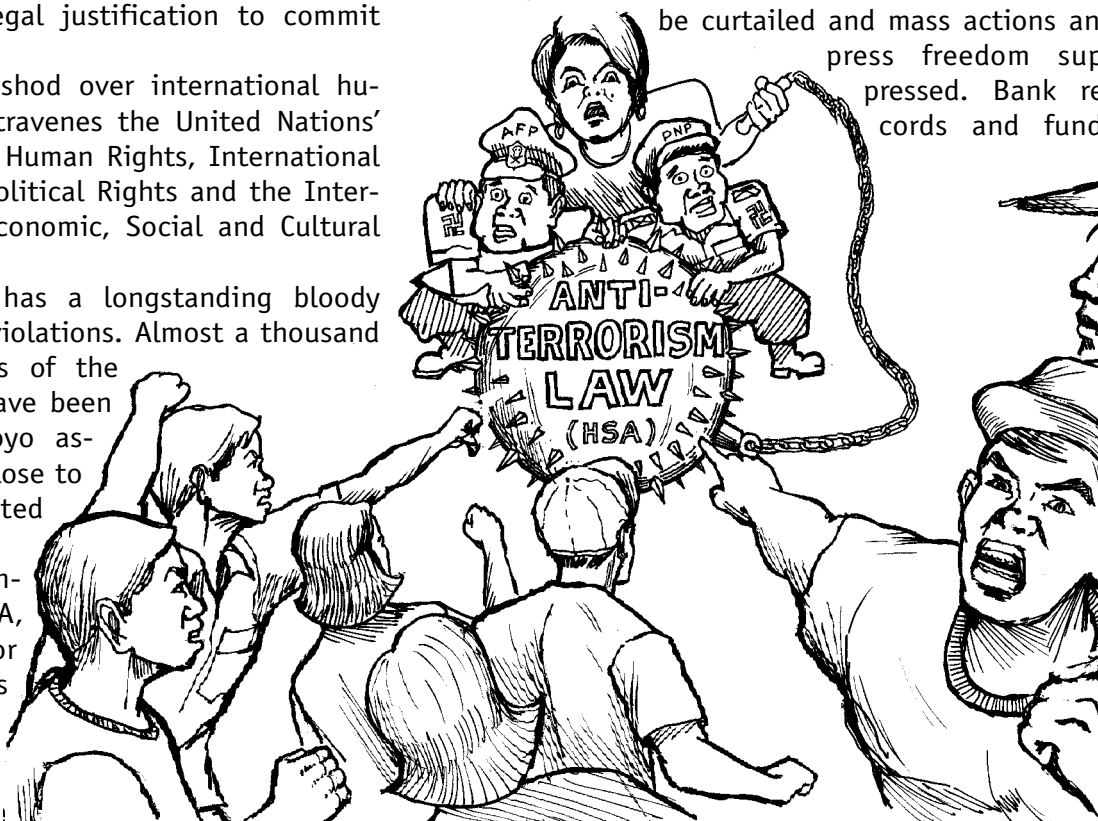
The Arroyo regime has a longstanding bloody record of human rights violations. Almost a thousand activists and supporters of the democratic movement have been killed since Gloria Arroyo assumed power in 2001. Close to 200 have been abducted and remain missing.

Two days after the implementation of the HSA, a militant urban poor leader in Tacloban was killed by death squad elements. On the eve of the HSA's implementa-

tion, a 72-year old peasant leader was mercilessly killed in Compostela Valley by Arroyo's butchers. Six national minorities were abducted and detained for two weeks last June by soldiers conducting military operations in Abra. Since April, the abduction of Jonas Burgos by ISAFP agents and the shameless coverup of the crime by the highest officials of the military and Malacañang have hogged the headlines.

By wielding the HSA, the Arroyo regime will become even more ruthless in its use of state power. Surveillance, warrantless arrests and detention without charges will rise. Freedom of communications will

be curtailed and mass actions and press freedom suppressed. Bank records and funds



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belonging to anyone accused of being a terrorist may be seized. All of these will be done in the name of suppressing terrorism—which in the regime’s narrow view covers all forms of people’s protest.

The terrorist tag the regime puts on all progressive forces will encourage death squads to step up political killings and abductions. Torture, repression and other forms of brutality against the progressive forces and the people will become even more prevalent.

Broad and vigorous people’s protests against the HSA is the proper response to this detestable law. Democratic people’s organizations, progressive parties, victims of state terrorism, human and civil rights organizations, oppositionists and all who value freedom and democracy must unite and fight the fascist HSA.

The key to mobilizing the broad masses lies in enlightening them on the dangers posed by the HSA. We must utilize all means of propaganda, such as the parliament of the streets, the mass media, the internet and various other forums to reach out to the people

in schools, communities, factories and offices. The courts and other venues can be used to expose the HSA’s fascist and anti-people character and objectives.

All forms of protest must be launched to show the broad masses’ intense anger and resistance to this fascist law. The treacherous killings of unarmed activists and civilians and the coverup of these crimes under the HSA show the Arroyo regime’s utter cravenness. It is bound to retreat with its tail between its legs once it is confronted by the strength and determination of a united people.

International organizations and agencies as well as citizens of other countries must be encouraged to express their solidarity with the Filipino people in the struggle against the HSA and to condemn all forms of fascist repression.

Widespread and intensive tactical offensives by the New People’s Army form a thunderous response to the HSA, seek to punish the Arroyo regime and its minions and put an end to the regime’s increasingly fascist rule. **AB**


Growing resistance to the HSA

Resistance to the Human Security Act continues to grow. The New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) expressed its concern last July 17 over the law’s very broad definition of terrorism and the heavy punishment it prescribes even for relatively light offenses.

It also criticized the HSA for allowing the detention of suspects without sufficient protection and for allowing detainees’ rendition to other countries known to use torture for as long as these governments guarantee “fair treatment” of the suspects.

Independent observers to the Joint Monitoring Committee which supervises compliance by the NDF and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) with the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) have called on the Arroyo regime to indefinitely postpone the implementation of the HSA to give way for its review and possibly be amended or repealed by Congress.

Aside from its inconsistency with the Bill of Rights of the 1987 constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, they said it does not offer solutions to the country’s home-grown insurgencies that have deep-rooted socio-economic and political roots in the lives of the people. They added that the HSA will further prejudice the peace negotiations or completely end the entire peace process. They also worried about the safety of NDF



Vol. XXXVIII No. 14 July 21, 2007

Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English editions.

It is available for downloading at the Philippine Revolution Web Central located at:

www.philippinerevolution.org.

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angbayan@yahoo.com

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Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines

personnel in the JMC secretariat and other consultants and resource persons who might be branded as communists and subjected to attacks as has happened to the several victims of extrajudicial executions. The NDF-nominated observers are Supreme Bishop Tomas Millamena of the Philippine Independent Church and Marie Enriquez of Karapatan. The GRP nominees are Mercedes Danenberg and Mary Aileen Bacalso.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales appealed to Arroyo last July 9

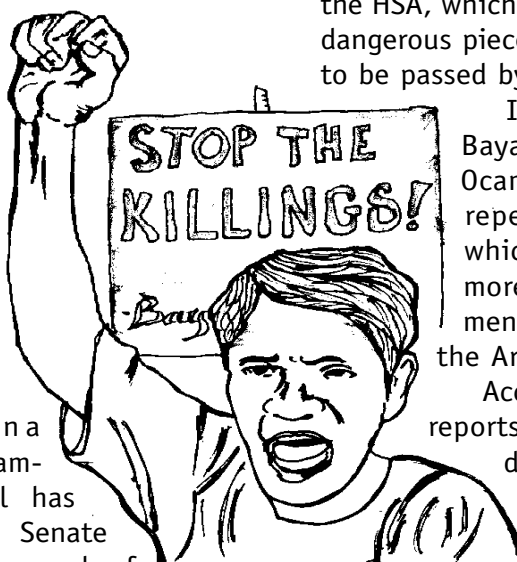
to review the HSA. The CBCP made the announcement through a pastoral letter released after the CBCP 95th general assembly.

Sen. Ana Consuelo "Jamby" Madrigal has also filed a Senate bill for the repeal of

the HSA, which she called the most dangerous piece of legislation ever to be passed by Congress.

In the Lower House, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo called for the repeal of the HSA which he said is one more repressive instrument in the hands of the Arroyo government.

According to the latest reports, 28 groups and individuals have filed petitions against the HSA at the Supreme Court. **AB**



Proposed measures to stop the killings

The National Consultative Summit on Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances led by Chief Justice Reynato Puno was held in Manila last July 16-17. It was attended by progressive organizations and human rights advocates who came face to face with representatives from the AFP, PNP, NBI, CHR and other government agencies.

Activists and their supporters pushed for speedier resolutions to the growing number of political killings and asked for heavier sanctions against the regime's forces involved in the killings.

The magistrates made several recommendations, one being a special resolution calling for the protection of the welfare and lives of those in danger of becoming victims of extrajudicial killings or enforced disappearances. The resolution provides that potential victims may petition the court to seek protection.

The summit had three major recommendations:

- Revise the doctrine of command responsibility so that an officer may be charged if

circumstances show that he did not prevent personnel under his command from committing war crimes or punish them for this. The proposal also stipulates that command responsibility

can be applied to civilian authorities who have control over the military.

- Adopt the writ of amparo as part of the rules of court to protect and ensure constitutional rights, especially those that state that no one may be deprived of life or liberty without

due process of law.

- Revive the peace talks between the NDF and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).

The summit also came up with the following recommendations and resolutions:

- ensuring the presence of the Commission on Human Rights and PNP in all investigations of political killings and abductions;

- allowing inspections of military camps and other public and private facilities as part of the order for the writ of habeas corpus;

- transferring trial venues in cases when there is actual or perceived prejudice against the victim;

- revising the rules on preliminary investigation to speed up the process of issuing warrants of arrest.

Furthermore, the summit passed a resolution calling on Gloria Arroyo to issue an order to all state elements to stop all extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. **AB**





Death squads kill 2 Anakpawis leaders

Anakpawis leaders in Tacloban City and Compostela Valley have been murdered in an obvious show of contempt for a recent summit on extrajudicial killings convened by the Supreme Court.

July 20. Four men shot to death former Anakpawis member Rogelio Picoy, 50, at about 5:30 in the morning at the Tacloban City market. A bullet exited his body and hit Teresita Tadepa, 70, a fish vendor. The police are maliciously claiming that Picoy was killed by his former comrades in the militant movement.

July 17. A death squad under the Arroyo regime shot dead Charlie Solayao, 51, Anakpawis coordinator for Tacloban City, at about 1:30 in the morning in Barangay Naga-Naga while he and his wife were waiting for a ride to market to buy fish. Solayao was also the city's vice-president of Kadamay and the Katig-uban han Gudti nga Magtiring. Witnesses said a motorcycle with two men on board stopped in front of the Solayaos. One of the men alighted and fired twice at Solayao. He fired three more shots at the fallen victim. Solayao was rushed to the hospital but died ten hours later.

July 15. Elements of the 48th IB abducted Dominador Villagrancia at about 6:00 in the morning in Barangay Dikapinisan, San Luis, Aurora Province following an encounter between the NPA and 48th IB troopers. The military accused him of being an NPA supporter.

July 7. Death squad elements killed Alfonso Capiales, 72, in front of his family in their home in Purok 12, Barangay Magsaysay, Nabunturan, Compostela Valley. Capiales was the president of the Magsaysay

Farmers Association, an officer of the Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Nabunturan and Anakpawis municipal coordinator. To absolve the AFP, police made the deceitful claim that Capiales was a military informant killed by the NPA. Three days before his murder, Capiales was investigated and accused of being an NPA guerrilla by the military.

July 5. Military elements seized Dagane Butug, 26, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) organizer and Narciso Antigulas, 24, Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Opereytor Nationwide (PISTON) member in Barangay Anomar, Surigao City. Witnesses said both victims were on board a motorcycle that was bumped by a green pickup truck. Butug and Antigulas were immediately taken by armed men aboard the truck.

May 12. Elements of the 69th IB tortured Ricardo Guiao, 41, for-

mer leader of the Central Luzon Aeta Association and head of the Indigenous People's Consultative Body. Guiao was summoned to the 69th IB headquarters in Barangay Planas, Porac, Pampanga where he was told that he was being arrested for being an alleged NPA member. He was manhandled and tortured for hours with the water cure. His torturers thrice pointed a gun at his head to force him to confess. He was threatened with death by firing squad and was shown where he would be buried. He was released the next day owing to the large number of people who knew he was summoned by the 69th IB. Before his release, he was forced to sign a confession that he was an NPA guerrilla who voluntarily surrendered.

May 3. Elements of the 6th ID brutally tortured two Moros accused of involvement in a series of bombings in Mindanao. Thos Ulimpain and Nasser Mendo were arrested by soldiers in Malingaw, Midsayap, North Cotabato and illegally detained in the AFP headquarters in Cotabato City. The victims were not allowed to eat during their long interrogation. **AB**

Sniping and harassment operations against the 9th IB

FOUR troopers of the 9th IB were killed and four others wounded in small military actions launched by Red fighters under the Jose Rapsing Command of the New People's Army in Masbate last July 7-15. Two of those killed were officers of the 9th IB.

An NPA sniper killed a trooper of the Special Operations Team (SOT) at about 3:00 in the afternoon of July 7 in Barangay San Jose, Uson, Mabaste. The SOT platoon was conducting an anti-communist meeting in the area.

Last July 13, NPA snipers wounded two soldiers in Barangay San Antonio, Milagros. At about 7:00 in the evening, two soldiers were killed and two more were wounded in a followup harassment operation.

On July 15, a trooper was killed when the NPA harassed 9th IB troops in Barangay Cagay, Masbate. **AB**

Malacañang fires DOJ investigator on Burgos case

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has fired Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco as head of the ongoing investigation on the abduction of activist Jonas Joseph "JJ" Burgos. Sec. Raul Gonzalez made the move a few days after Velasco revealed that among the suspects in the Burgos case are personnel of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP) and the Philippine Army's 56th IB.

Velasco directly named last July 9 the suspects as T/Sgt. Jason Roxas and M/Sgt. Aaron Arroyo of the Philippine Army and Cpl. Maria Joana Francisco of the Philippine Air Force—all assigned to the Military Intelligence Group 15 (MIG-15) of the ISAFP; 1Lt. Jaime Mendaro of the 56th IB; and Lt. Col. Noel Clemente, former commander of the 56th IB now assigned to the Escort and Security Battalion of the Philippine Army in Fort Bo-

nifacio.

Velasco had ordered the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to summon the soldiers for investigation. Velasco had also summoned another individual known only as Tango Lima of MIG-15.

The suspects were identified by an informant now under the DOJ's witness protection program.

Velasco had likewise ordered a probe on two other vehicles used in the abduction—a red Mitsubishi Lancer with plate number WAM-155 and a maroon Toyota Altis with plate number XBC-881. Investigations later revealed that the maroon Toyota Altis with the said plate number is a vehicle assigned to the office of Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, former Northern Luzon Command chief and currently the Philippine Army chief.

Tolentino denies any involve-

ment in the abduction despite such reports. To weasel his way out, he has instead blamed Burgos' disappearance on the revolutionary movement, insisting that the victim was an NPA member and insinuating that Red fighters abducted Burgos.

Velasco started receiving death threats one day after he announced the names of his suspects and ordered their appearance. The threats are believed to have come from ISAFP elements. Velasco received text messages like: "*Hayop ka Velasco. Hindi mo kaya si Emperor, ihahabol ka namin kay Jonas. Bilang na oras mo, magtago ka na* [You are an animal, Velasco. You cannot take on the Emperor. We'll send you where Jonas is. Your days are numbered. Hide]." "Emperor" is believed to be the ISAFP chief Brig. Gen. Delfin Bangit.

Bangit has vehemently denied any involvement in the abduction. Meanwhile, Malacañang absolved Bangit forthwith, even before the conclusion of the investigation. **AB**

Ka Bel freed

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran was freed on the evening of July 11 after the Supreme Court ruled with finality to dismiss the rebellion charge filed against him and more than 40 others including the other progressive legislators comprising the "Batasan 6."

The administration of the Philippine Heart Center (PHC) in Quezon City allowed him to leave the hospital despite unpaid bills amounting to ₱140,000. Beltran's bill at the hospital had come to ₱1,062,340 from the time he was detained in April 2006 because of hypertension and other illnesses. His friends and acquaintances, fellow representatives, supporters of the democratic movement and civil rights advocates donated money for his hospital bills. He sincerely

thanked all those who helped in his release.

Beltran will file counter-charges and demand damages from the Arroyo government for his unjust incarceration.

The newly freed representative immediately joined the protest movement. He attended a rally against the Human Security Act of 2007 (HSA) led by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan last July 13.

Ka Bel was met joyously by

3,000 rallyists in Plaza Miranda. In his speech, he strongly condemned the extremely repressive HSA and said that the first thing he would do when the 14th Congress opens will be to file HB No. 1093 which calls for the repeal of the HSA. **AB**





The foiled abduction of Roy Velez

Following is a narrative of how labor leader Roy Velez evaded his would-be abductors. AB is publishing his story so that other leaders, members and supporters of militant organizations who may be targets of abduction may glean lessons from his experience. Velez was saved by his alertness, quick and decisive action and his broad and deep support network among the masses in the community.

Last May 20, the military tried to abduct Roy Velez, Kilusang Mayo Uno secretary general in the National Capital Region (KMU-NCR).

It was close to 9:00 in the morning when Velez's wife who was on her way to a store near their house in Barangay CAA-BF International, Las Piñas City met two men who asked her, "Where is the house of Roy Velez?" She also saw two motorcycles on standby beside the store. She replied she didn't know where Velez lived and then hurried back home.

Upon being informed of the incident, Velez asked his friends to scout the area so that he could gauge the situation and safely leave the area. His friends reported seeing three motorcycles, each with two men on board, scouring the area. Velez left through the back of his house, passed through his neighbor's roof and climbed down a fruit tree.

He did not get far because a military agent posing as an ice cream vendor was watching the area. His friends followed Velez to his new location to help ensure his safety. Some called the media to expose the attempted abduction.

Aside from the men on the motorcycles and the ice cream vendor, there were four other men inside an L300 van parked beside the Velez home and three men inside a Toyota Revo. Four men on foot served as lookouts.

Other residents distracted the ice cream vendor so that Velez could safely move to another location. The ice cream vendor was able to follow Velez to this second location, but left when Velez's friends started taking his picture.

Members of the media soon arrived to interview Velez and broadcast the incident. **AB**



NPA punishes death squad leader in Bicol

Bicol has one of the highest numbers of extrajudicial killings in the country. Death squads have killed 142 people in the region since Arroyo assumed power in 2001. There have been six cases of abduction. While the police turn a blind eye, the revolutionary movement in Bicol is fervently doing its task to mete justice on the fascist criminals. The following narrative is excerpted from Silyab, the regional mass newspaper in Bicol.

Last November 27, 2006, revolutionary justice was meted on Philippine Army Capt. Patrick Baesa, 34, intelligence officer of the 901st Bde based in Villa Hermosa, Daraga, Albay and main handler of the brigade's death squads.

Captain Baesa led the widespread and brutal killing campaign implemented by military death squads against mass leaders and activists in Sorsogon. His primary death squad was based in Irosin town.

Among the victims of death squads in the province are Max Frivaldo, Ding Uy, Brgy. Capt. Neal Futalan and Rei Mon Guran. Frivaldo, Bayan Muna (BM) municipal coordinator in Irosin was slain in January 2006. Uy, BM coordinator in Sorsogon City was slain in November 2005. Guran, Bicol regional spokesperson of the League of Filipino Students was slain in July 2006. Futalan, a BM member was slain in May 2005.

Captain Baesa graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in 1997. He was assigned to Mindanao before being transferred to Bicol. He was later deployed to Eastern Visayas where he became one of Gen. Jovito Palparan's men. When Palparan was transferred to Central Luzon, Captain Baesa was transferred to Bicol.

Captain Baesa chose to base his death squad in his hometown in Irosin because he had many relatives there and knew the area well.

Despite this, the NPA was able to piece together the pattern of his movements. NPA operatives spent months in painstaking intelligence work. They saw Baesa's weakness for cockfighting. The Red fighters quickly seized the opportunity. Baesa was meted punishment while engaged in his favorite vice.

The punitive action against the butcher Captain Baesa is a huge victory for the people's army. The Red fighters were able to attain justice for the victims of his death squads. **AB**

Jose Ma. Sison removed from list of terrorists

The European Court of First Instance (ECFI) ordered last July 11 the removal of Professor Jose Maria Sison from the European Union (EU) list of terrorist personalities and organizations.

In particular, the court reversed the EU Council's decisions of May 29, 2006 and May 29, 2005 imposing suppressive measures against Professor Sison because of his inclusion in the list of terrorists.

According to the ECFI, Professor Sison's inclusion in the list did not pass through the proper judicial procedures. In particular, the EU violated Professor Sison's right to defend himself and be granted effective protection before the court. Denied his right to face his accusers in court, the EU likewise refused to show

to him or to his lawyers the documents used to indict him. Neither was Professor Sison summoned to a criminal investigation by any authorized court or to any court hearing regarding his alleged terrorist activities within and outside the EU. The EU further violated Professor Sison's rights by immediately including him in the list of terrorists without informing him about the reason for this move.

The ECFI further ordered the EU council to reimburse all the expenses incurred by Professor Sison and the National Democratic Front

of the Philippines negotiating panel which supported him in the

case. While the ECFI did not act on Sison's plea for the restoration of all financial benefits

denied him by the Dutch gov-

ernment,

it said that Si-

son may file a petition be-

fore any court within The Netherlands or the EU to have them restored.

Professor Sison, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army were first put on the EU's "foreign terrorist" list on October 28, 2002. The Sison couple's bank deposits and other assets

were then ordered frozen. The benefits received by Professor Sison as a refugee of the Dutch Welfare and Refugee Agencies (DWRA) were also cut off on September 10, 2002. He was also evicted from his housing unit provided by the local authorities.

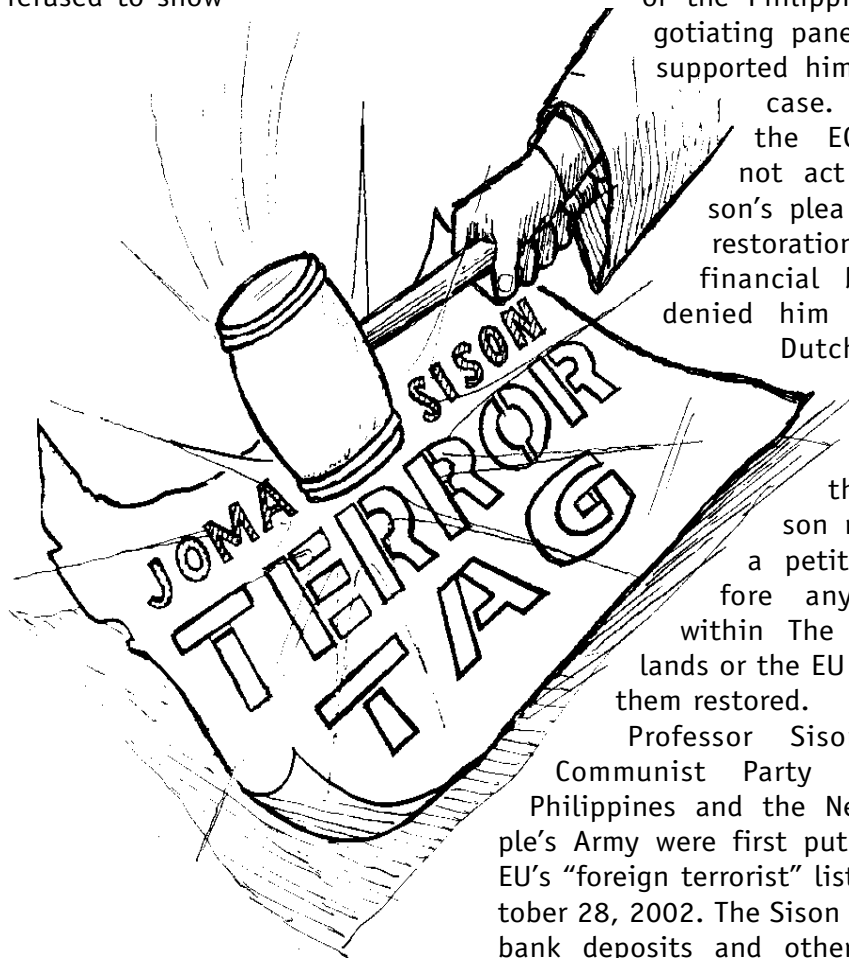
Professor Sison expressed his delight over the court's decision, especially since he was not expecting a favorable one. He thanked all of those who helped him.

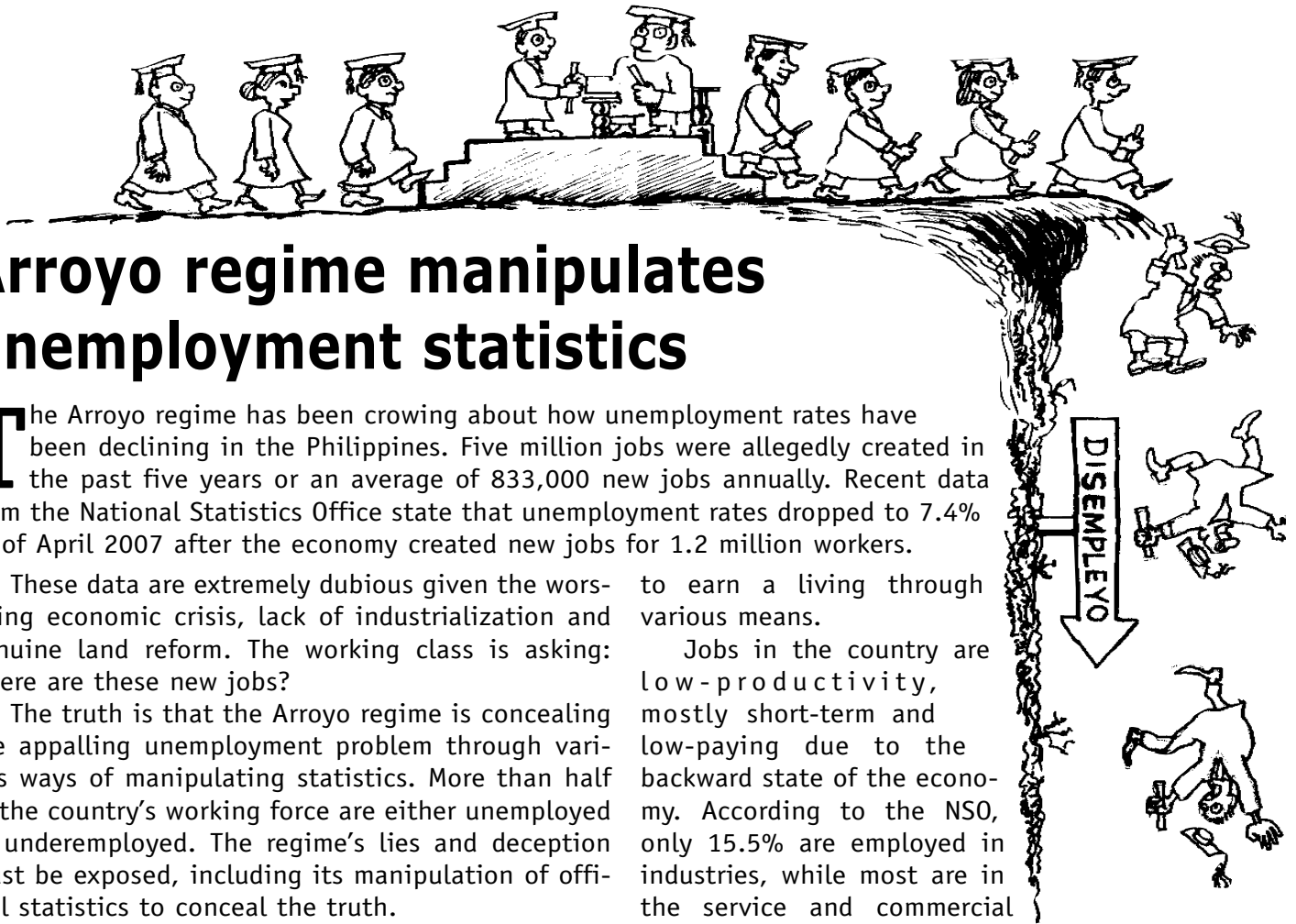
A few days before the ECFI handed down its ruling, however, the EU again included the name of Professor Sison in its list of terrorists for 2007. The EU reviews and publishes the list annually.

Sison and his lawyers and supporters protested the move, saying nothing has changed in the procedure and basis for his inclusion in the list for 2007. They called on the EU to respect the ECFI ruling and immediately drop Sison from the list.

Sison also decried how the embassy of The Netherlands and the Philippine government disregarded the ECFI decision. He said that while the ECFI decision did not cover his inclusion in the 2007 list, it still has direct bearing because the EU continues to violate his right to defend himself in court.

Sison asserted that the rebellion charges filed against him by the Philippine government and the accusations against him by the EU minister are devoid of basis in any national or international court. He also assailed the Philippine military for constantly dragging his name to violent events occurring in the country. **AB**





Arroyo regime manipulates unemployment statistics

The Arroyo regime has been crowing about how unemployment rates have been declining in the Philippines. Five million jobs were allegedly created in the past five years or an average of 833,000 new jobs annually. Recent data from the National Statistics Office state that unemployment rates dropped to 7.4% as of April 2007 after the economy created new jobs for 1.2 million workers.

These data are extremely dubious given the worsening economic crisis, lack of industrialization and genuine land reform. The working class is asking: where are these new jobs?

The truth is that the Arroyo regime is concealing the appalling unemployment problem through various ways of manipulating statistics. More than half of the country's working force are either unemployed or underemployed. The regime's lies and deception must be exposed, including its manipulation of official statistics to conceal the truth.

The unemployment problem cannot be concealed. The Arroyo regime has been manipulating unemployment statistics since 2005 through various means such as excluding the unemployed from the workforce or classifying them as employed. (*See attached article*)

Official statistics had earlier put the unemployment rate at 11-14% in 2001-2004. There were 3.6 million (11.4%) unemployed in 2001 and 5 million (13.7%) in April 2004. There was a sudden drop in the unemployment rate to 8.2% in April 2006 and 7.4% last April. But a quick review of the base data will show that the unemployment problem has not been solved and continues to worsen.

The most recent NSO survey shows that only 51.7% of the 33.7 million employed were wage earners (with most of them being casual, contractual or apprentice workers).

The rest are categorized as self-employed (36%) or "unpaid family workers" (14.5%). Among them are more than ten million street vendors who earn a pittance for their day's work, store helpers and subsistence farmers. In effect, 45.5% of those considered employed are actually underemployed and struggle

to earn a living through various means.

Jobs in the country are low-productivity, mostly short-term and low-paying due to the backward state of the economy. According to the NSO, only 15.5% are employed in industries, while most are in the service and commercial

sector (49.3%) and in agriculture (35.2%). Most of those classified as industrial workers are employed in small sweatshops engaged in manual labor; most of those under the service and commercial sectors are street vendors, small store owners and workers in manual and low-level services; and most of those in the agricultural sector are farmworkers and farmers who till or rent small plots of land.

Arroyo's claimed "new jobs." What Arroyo has been showing off as new jobs are actually desperate efforts of the working class to eke out a living and survive.

In 2006, for instance, two out of every three "new jobs" were under the categories of "unpaid family worker" (525,000) and househelp (148,000). Meanwhile, 105,000 workers in the manufacturing sector had lost their jobs.

More than half of the new jobs (681,000) for that year were in the agricultural sector. But most of the "newly employed" were actually workers who had lost their jobs or failed to find jobs in Metro Manila (where unemployment is highest at 12.5%) and had to go back to their hometowns to eke out a living as farm workers.

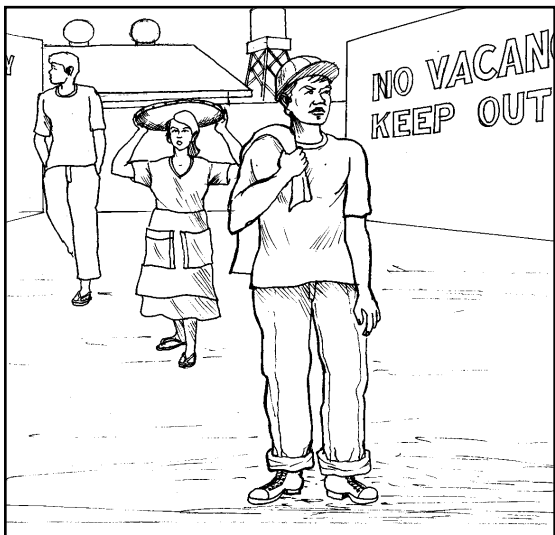
Severe unemployment. The regime conceals the rising unemployment rate by categorizing as underemployed persons who are actually unemployed.

This number has risen alarmingly since 2005-2007. Official government statistics put the underemployment rate at 15-17% from 2001 to January 2005 and 26.1% in April 2005. Since then, the rate has not gone below 20%.

A close scrutiny will show that 78.4% of those categorized as underemployed are actually unemployed. This includes seven out of every nine farm workers who are categorized as underemployed but are actually unemployed.

Unemployment will continue to rise. Studies conducted by the Senate Committee on Economics in 2004 state the need to generate 1.6 million new jobs annually or 10 million new jobs until 2010 to significantly reduce the unemployment rate. The committee warned that the unemployment rate would rise to 16.2% by 2010 if 1.6 million jobs were not created annually. The Arroyo regime will fail to meet this goal given its unquestioning implementation of imperialist globalization policy that wreaks havoc on the national economy.

The unemployment rate reflects the depth of the country's economic and livelihood crisis. For several decades now, the greed of imperialists and their big comprador, bureaucrat capitalist and landlord partners has deprived the working class of livelihood. AB



A history of deceit

The reactionary government has long been employing various means to understate unemployment statistics. Following are some of the usual ways by which unemployment rates are understated and employment rates boosted:



1. Excluding from the workforce more than 35% of the population who are able to work (those 15 years old and above), including full-time homemakers and students. Most of those who are looking for jobs are youth and full-time homemakers.

2. Classifying as employed the large number of lower petty-bourgeois and semi-proletariat own-account workers, such as those who run small stores and market stalls; street vendors; scavengers; jeepney and megataxi "barkers"; car-wash boys; and other oddjobbers. Most of those in this category are peasants.

3. Classifying as employed those who work in family-owned sweatshops, stores or small farms and receive measly wages or no wages at all.

4. Classifying as employed the huge number of part-time workers—even if they were employed for only an hour during the survey period. This group constitutes 42% of those categorized as employed by the survey. Of this number, more than 2/3 are peasants.

5. Forming a new classification of "underemployed" aside from "part-time workers". Under the new category, the underemployed comprise those who may have full-time or part-time jobs but are in need of more work. A survey by the Department of Labor and Employment shows that this category accounts for about 20% of the workforce, with more than half of them peasants. They constitute more than twice and almost thrice the number of those officially classified as unemployed.

In 2005, the Arroyo regime concocted even worse ways of concealing the Philippine unemployment problem by creating a new definition for "unemployed." Using this new definition, those officially unemployed comprise only those who are actually unemployed and those looking for jobs during the six-month period covered by the survey, including those who have lost hope of finding jobs in the country.

This redefinition greatly reduced the size of the labor force and, consequently, the number of unemployed. Since then, Arroyo was able to reduce further the official unemployment rate from 11-14% to 7-8%. AB

Vilma Espín—heroine of the Cuban revolution

The Philippine revolutionary movement salutes Comrade Vilma Espín, a heroic and exemplary Cuban official who passed away on June 8, 2007 at the age of 77. She was a member of the Central Committee and Politburo of the Cuban Communist Party. She was also a member of the State Council and president of the Commission on Women and Youth. Vilma Espín was the wife of Cuban vice-president Raul Castro. She served as Cuba's First Lady after the death of Fidel Castro's partner.

Vilma came from a rich clan in Santiago de Cuba. She was one of the first Cuban women to finish a course in chemical-industrial engineering. She had just graduated from the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US when she joined in the preparations for the return of exiled Cuban revolutionaries from Mexico on board the ship Granmá.

She joined the revolutionary guerrillas under the Frank Pais Front that was then led by Raul

Castro, where she showed her abilities as a woman commander. She was named provincial coordinator of Cuba's revolutionary army. As provincial coordinator, she gave women an important role in the revolution. Even then, she started organizing day-care

centers to liberate women from housework and give them greater opportunities to participate in the revolution and in social issues.

She married Raul Castro upon revolutionary victory in 1959. They had four children. Their eldest child is now with the Cuban government and heads the campaign against HIV/AIDS and advocacy of gender rights.

Espín was president of the Federación de Mujeres de Cuba, an organization advocating equal rights and livelihood for women and the rights of infants and youth. Upon revolutionary victory, this organization mobilized thousands of women to build schools and hospitals;

care for street children; and help in improving the livelihoods of the rural poor. She led literacy and health campaigns until her death.

She led international organizations and conferences for women's rights and led women's conferences, especially in Latin America, despite her many tasks in the Cuban government.

In his eulogy, President Fidel Castro said Espín made a huge contribution to recognizing the role of women. Today, women comprise 66% of the Cuban technical work force. He said very few Cuban women majored in science courses in the past.

Fidel Castro added that Comrade Vilma's many revolutionary tasks and duties did not deter her from performing her duties as a mother.



CIA confirms assassination plot on Fidel Castro

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) confirmed a US plot to assassinate Cuban President Fidel Castro in the 1960s. This was revealed in documents from the National Security Archive in George Washington University made available to the public last June 26. The CIA plotted with the Mafia and used two notorious US gangsters in the attempted poisoning of the revolutionary leader.

The 693-page document "Family Jewel" narrated that the CIA used Johnny Roselli, a Mafia gangster to arrange the planned assassination. Roselli planned to use gangsters Momo Salvatore Giancana (alias Sam Gold) and Santos Trifante (alias Joe). Both were to be paid \$150,000 if they succeeded.

The plot was exposed in the US in 1971, but has only been confirmed now by the CIA. Only a small group of CIA officials knew about the plot. The plot was called off after the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. The Bay of Pigs invasion by Cuban mercenaries was planned, funded and led by the CIA as part of the plot to overthrow the people's government led by Castro.

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Railroad track settlers condemn demolition of their communities

MORE than 5,000 families living along the railroad tracks in Sta. Mesa, Pandacan and Sampaloc, Manila strongly condemned their forcible eviction from the area despite a promise made by Vice President Noli de Castro that they could continue to stay in the area. De Castro heads the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council. The Philippine National Railways plans to build the Southrail Rehabilitation Program (SRP) in the area and the project's Korean contractor has demanded the removal of all structures within 15 meters of the railroad tracks.

The residents also opposed their relocation to Trece Martires, Cavite because of the lack of employment opportunities there. Earlier on, 8,000 families who were also victims of demolition were relocated to Cabuyao, Laguna.

Progressive representatives take oath before Supreme Court

REPRESENTATIVES Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna (BM); Crispin Beltran of Anakpawis; and Liza Maza of Gabriela Women's Party (GWP) took their oaths before Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno last July 12 after the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) announced its partial list of winners in the party-list election.

Two representatives each from BM and GWP and a representative from Anakpawis will be given congressional seats pending the Supreme Court's decision on the petition against the "Panganiban formula." This formula states that only the party with the highest number of votes will be allowed three representatives in Congress. All other parties will only be allowed one or two representatives.

Ocampo criticized the formula, saying it seeks to reduce the number of militant members of the Lower House. This is the first instance that the COMELEC used the Panganiban formula, leading to the loss of one congressional seat each for BM and Anakpawis. Despite the massive fraud and intense repression perpetrated by the Arroyo government, progressive party-list organizations still managed to emerge among the top 10 parties.

Environmentalists assail Atienza and Reyes appointments

ENVIRONMENTAL groups denounced Gloria Arroyo's appointment of Lito Atienza as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Angelo Reyes as secretary of the Department of Energy (DoE) as political payback for her debts of gratitude to her two close allies.

As former Manila mayor, Atienza was called the "executioner of trees" after he reportedly ordered the cutting of 70% of trees at the Arroceros Forest Park to clear space for a building. He also earned the ire of Greenpeace Southeast Asia for his failure to implement in Manila the law calling for scientific, environmentally sound and safe waste disposal. To prove its point, the group pointed to the reemergence of huge garbage dumps in Tondo.

Reyes, former DENR secretary was criticized for his all-out support for large-scale mining and his approval for the operation of a coal-fired power plant, both of which are detrimental to the environment and people's livelihoods.

MILF ambushes military troops on operation

MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) fighters ambushed troops of the 1st Marine Brigade conducting a military operation in Barangay Guinanta, Al-barka (formerly Tipo-tipo), Basilan last July 10. The MILF seized 27 weapons including six M60 machine guns, eight M203 grenade launchers, ten M16 rifles, a 60 mm mortar and several night vision goggles. Two military trucks were razed. Thirty troopers were killed in the ten-hour firefight. Four MILF fighters were killed and seven others were wounded.

MILF spokesperson Abu Majid strongly denied the AFP's accusation that MILF fighters beheaded ten slain or wounded military troops. He said the MILF strictly adheres to Islamic tenets and terms of the Geneva Conventions that both prohibit the act. The MILF is conducting its own investigation to identify those responsible for the beheading of the dead Marines and promised to punish the guilty. It refused to give in to AFP demands to surrender the guilty parties to the military. The investigating team will be headed by a responsible member of the MILF Military General Staff.

The MILF condemned the military for entering the area without coordination, saying this was a direct violation of the ceasefire agreement between the MILF and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines.

Several Basilan government officials confirmed that they had warned military officers not to enter the area which was known to be controlled by the MILF. The military disregarded their warnings, however. They claimed to be looking for abducted Italian priest Fr. Giancarlo Bossi, despite information from local officials that there were no indications that Fr. Bossi was in the area. The MILF said it acted in self-defense because the AFP clearly violated the ceasefire

agreement.

The Philippine Marines have come under heavy criticism for their violations of human rights during their operations. Before the ambush, the soldiers reportedly killed and beheaded a blind religious leader, Ustadz Matarul Hakim Alkanul on the morning of July 10. Two civilians harvesting coconuts were also chased down and shot by the Marines when they entered Barangay Guinanta. One of the civilians was wounded in the incident.

According to reports, it was the shooting of the two civilians that sparked the firefight. When the victims reported the incident to the MILF and other Moro residents, a group of about 100 MILF fighters and 400 Moro residents irately met the attacking Marines.

The AFP has deployed a battalion to Basilan to pursue MILF forces and other armed groups involved in the ambush. The MILF has expressed its readiness to meet the attack head-on. **AB**