



ANG

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Editorial

The only way out of poverty is revolution

Gloria Arroyo is lying through her teeth in claiming that the local economy is safe from the global recession, that the latter's effects will be minimal and that the worst that could happen is a slowdown as her regime had allegedly insulated the economy against the crisis' most deleterious effects.

She touts that her imposition of the value added tax (VAT) has safeguarded the economy, is the source of "subsidies" that help the poor and the hungry, and that the economy will survive on remittances from migrant Filipinos and anticipated foreign capital infusions, loans and "aid."

The current global recession will last far longer and be much more disastrous to backward and unindustrialized semicolonies like the Philippines.

The facts belie Arroyo's claims. Poverty and hunger are worsening across the country. Prices

of commodities are skyrocketing, wages and salaries remain exceedingly low and unemployment spreading like wildfire.

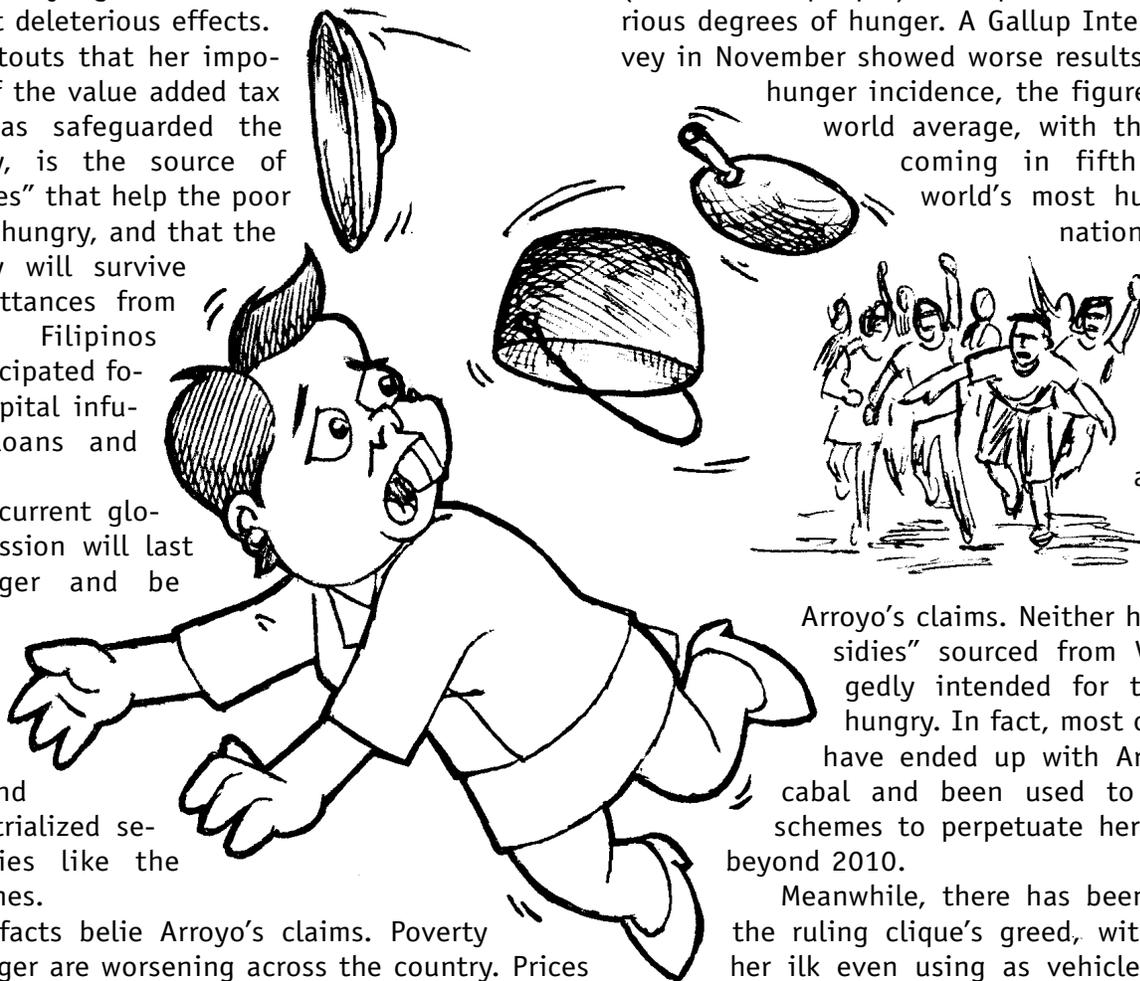
A Social Weather Stations survey in December revealed that hunger is at its worst with 23.7% (21.5 million people) of Filipinos suffering from various degrees of hunger. A Gallup International survey in November showed worse results. With a 40%

hunger incidence, the figure is twice the world average, with the Philippines coming in fifth among the world's most hunger-stricken nations.

The VAT has been of no use at all in helping the economy and alleviating the people's misery. contrary to

Arroyo's claims. Neither have the "subsidies" sourced from VAT and allegedly intended for the poor and hungry. In fact, most of these funds have ended up with Arroyo and her cabal and been used to fuel various schemes to perpetuate herself in power beyond 2010.

Meanwhile, there has been no letup in the ruling clique's greed, with Arroyo and her ilk even using as vehicles for plunder



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their so-called pro-poor programs and projects to cushion the impact of the economic crisis on the people.

The latest example is the ₱20 billion Special Purpose Fund (SPF) in the 2009 national budget. Over ₱15 billion of it has been earmarked as additional funding for the GMA Rice Program, GMA Corn Program, GMA High Value Crops Program, GMA Livestock Program and similar projects that have already served as milch cows for Malacañang. Arroyo exercises sole prerogative on where the SPF goes.

The flood of “assurances” from government officials can never cover up the worsening unemployment situation. Joblessness is expected to swell in the face of export industry shut-downs and the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of migrant Filipinos.

Amid the Filipino people’s massive poverty and suffering, they have no recourse but to tread the path of revolution. It is the only road to a liberated, just and prosperous future. **AB**

Worsening unemployment

Poverty and hunger in the Philippines will worsen as the crisis intensifies and more people swell the ranks of the unemployed. Massive retrenchments will occur immediately in industries that export their products to the US and other major capitalist countries.

Foremost among them is the electronics industry that yields 67-70% of Philippine exports, mainly to the US. With global demand for these products diminishing, the electronics industry has been plummeting by 30% monthly and is expected to continue declining this year. Many of the industry’s 600,000 workers have already been retrenched or are in danger of being terminated.

Many companies involved in the clothing and furniture industries, which produce the country’s second and third biggest exports, have also fired their workers due to dwindling exports.

The reduction of “aid” in the form of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from imperialist countries will also have grave effects on the economy. ODA funds are usually used to bankroll infrastructure and other huge projects that are profitable to favored imperialist corporations. Imperialist countries have reduced ODA funds for poor countries by up to 30%.

The pullout of foreign investors will also result in a massive drop in employment. Net new foreign investments fell by 50% last year, and more are expected to flee the country this year.

Even the business process outsourcing sector (composed mainly of call centers geared towards the US market) has suffered a slowdown. The sector has so far achieved only a third of its target of creating 920,000 jobs. Achieving the target by next year is an impossibility amid the continuing losses of companies serviced by call centers.

The number of unemployment and underemployed stand close to 11 million, with the number expected to swell by at least another million this year.

This figure does not include more than 500,000 migrant Filipinos who are expected to lose their jobs and will be obliged to return home.

At present, thousands of migrant Filipinos are being sent back home from Asia, particularly from Taiwan and South Korea. Australia and other European countries have closed their doors to additional migrant workers. Canada and other countries in Europe and the Middle East have followed suit in rejecting the entry of professionals such as nurses. An 30,000 migrant Filipinos have already been swept by the massive tide of retrenchments in the US. **AB**



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CPP achieves brilliant victories in the regions

The revolutionary forces attained brilliant victories in 2008 under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Following are some of these achievements, based on initial reports from the regions.

In Mindanao. Membership in the Party and the New People's Army (NPA) in the island grew by 5%. The revolutionary forces currently operate in over 2,000 barrios in 200 cities and towns in 19 provinces across Mindanao. Hundreds of thousands of peasant masses benefit from the implementation of the minimum program of agrarian revolution.

Not a single guerrilla front was dismantled despite relentless enemy attack. In fact, in the past year, the number of guerrilla fronts in the island grew from 35 to 39. Red fighters launched 300 tactical offensives, seizing over 200

high-powered weapons. There is at least one squad of people's militia in most of the consolidated barrios.

The counterrevolutionary military campaigns launched by the enemy forces in Mindanao—"Oplan Destroyer" in North Central Mindanao, "Oplan Diwata" in Northeastern Mindanao and "Oplan Pagasa" in Southern Mindanao—failed miserably.

National Democratic Front-Mindanao spokesperson Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos said that when needed, the people's army in Mindanao can put together a battalion-size formation to attack particular targets. Ka Oris issued the statement during the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the CPP's

reestablishment held in a forested area in Agusan del Norte. The celebration was joined by selected media members, some 200 NPA Red fighters and hundreds of people.

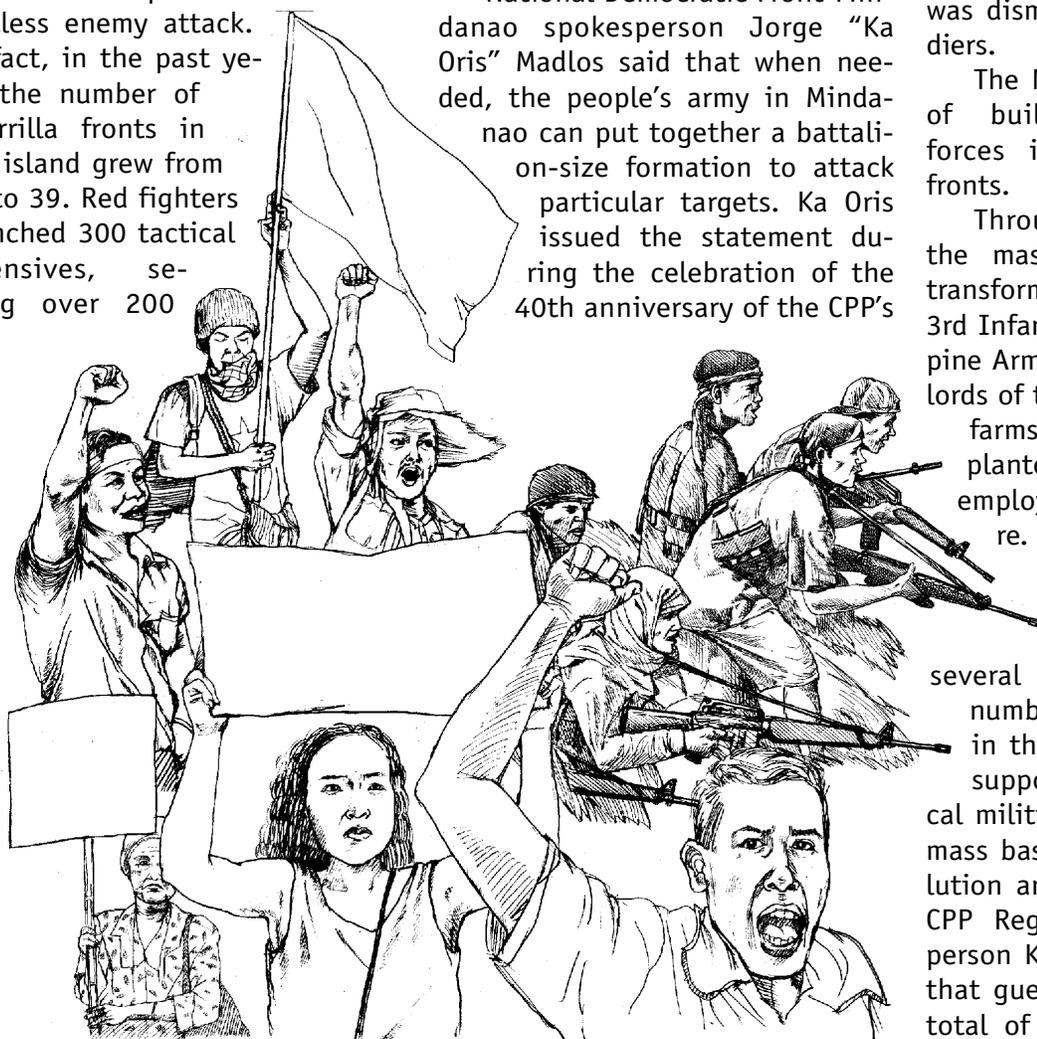
In Panay. In a statement, CPP-Panay spokesperson Ka Concha Araneta said that the Party grew by 200% since 2001. The NPA sustained the initiative in launching tactical offensives these past years. It successfully conducted 65 tactical offensives. Despite having faced 12 defensive actions in this period, the NPA managed to seize the initiative inflict casualties on the enemy.

On the whole, OBL2 has been defeated in Panay. NPA units were able to launch tactical offensives even in areas that the enemy claimed to be under its control. Not a single guerrilla front in the island was dismantled by the enemy soldiers.

The NPA is now in the process of building company-strength forces in the island's guerrilla fronts.

Through cooperative efforts, the masses have been able to transform lands recovered from the 3rd Infantry Division of the Philippine Army, land grabbers and landlords of the new type from swidden farms to permanent farmlands planted to durable crops and employing sustainable agriculture.

In Negros. From only two small platoons in 1992-93, there are now several guerrilla platoons in a number of towns and districts in the island. The platoons are supported by a battalion of local militia in carrying out tasks in mass base building, agrarian revolution and armed struggle. Negros CPP Regional Committee spokesperson Ka Diego Dagohoy reported that guerrilla platoons launched a total of 50 military offensives in



2008 or an average of four tactical offensives per month.

Under Oplan Kalinaw Visayas II (OBL 2's version in the Visayas), more than 10,000 enemy troops have been deployed in Negros. These troops are focused on protecting vast tracts of lands owned by the Arroyo, Cojuangco and other big hacendero families. Despite the big number of enemy troops in the island, the revolutionary movement continued to advance and defeat OBL2 in Negros.

Guerrilla zones and bases are being built in ten congressional districts covering a mass base of more than 120,000. In these areas, over 30,000 have benefited from the antifeudal campaign to raise farmgate prices of agricultural products, raise wages of farmworkers, reduce usury and raise production levels, among others.

The local revolutionary government system has improved and economic, political, military and cultural tasks advanced in the local level. The masses in the guerrilla fronts benefited from agricultural production, education, health and sanitation, defense, forest renewal, cultural and other projects.

The CPP firmly calls on the revolutionary forces to achieve greater victories in preparation for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the NPA's establishment this March 29. The CPP foresees further advances in the revolutionary movement amid the worsening global and local economic crisis and the Arroyo regime's subservience to the dictates of its imperialist master. The regime's severe repressiveness and its sinister schemes to prolong its term beyond 2010 push the Filipino people to intensify their revolutionary struggle. AB



NPA seizes 33 firearms in Rizal and Agusan, captures 3 policemen

Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) seized at least 33 firearms and several military equipment in an ambush in Rizal and simultaneous assaults on a large mining firm and a police station in Agusan del Norte. Eight military and police troopers were killed and seven others were wounded, while a lieutenant and two of his men were captured in various tactical offensives staged by the NPA in several parts of the country before and after the unilateral ceasefire declared by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on December 24-26 and December 31, 2008-January 1, 2009.

The captured policemen are P/Insp. Rex Cuntapay, PO1 Alberto Umali and PO1 Marvin Agasin. They are being held as prisoners-of-war by the Narciso Antazo Aramil Command (NAAC) of NPA-Rizal.

January 3. A Red fighter unit of NAAC seized 12 firearms in an ambush on six elements of the 418th Police Mobile Group (PMG) at around 1:00 p.m. in Barangay Macabud, Rodriguez, Rizal. Seized from them were six M16 armalite rifles, three 9 mm pistols, three .45 caliber pistols and several mobile phones.

A policeman was killed on the spot when the NPA detonated a land mine, unleashed a volley of shots and lobbed grenades on their patrol car as it approached Rodriguez town, about 40 kilometers east of Manila. The policemen were responding to reports that a truck had been set on fire.

P/Inst. Rex Cuntapay, PO1 Umali and PO1 Agasin surrendered to the Red fighters, and are now considered prisoners-of-war, said the NAAC in a statement sent to Ang Bayan. The wounded policemen were given first aid



before being brought to the hospital.

December 29. Four soldiers of the 9th IB were wounded in an ambush staged by fighters of the NPA Jose Rapsing Command in Sitio Acacia, Barangay Asid, Masbate City. The soldiers had just come from their headquarters in Milagros town when the truck they



were riding was blasted by a command-detonated land mine.

Prior to this, the people's guerrillas bombed a police station in Placer, Masbate on December 27.

December 27. Five soldiers of the 30th IB of the Philippine Army were reportedly killed in an ambush carried out by Red fighters in Barangay Tagmamarkay, Tubay, Agusan del Norte. The incident occurred a day after the successful celebration by the revolutionary forces in Northeastern Mindanao Region of the 40th anniversary of the CPP's reestablishment.

December 22. NPA guerrillas from Front 21 in Northeastern Mindanao seized 18 firearms in a raid on a police station in Tubay town. The weapons included 10 M16 rifles, three shotguns, two 9 mm pistols, a .45 caliber pistols, a .40 caliber pistol and a .22 caliber re-

volver. Also confiscated by the NPA were two VHF radios.

In a separate incident, a soldier was killed and another one was wounded in a clash between the military and the NPA in Sitio Calasunahan, Barangay Tagmamarkay in the same town at 5 p.m.

Before the raid at the PNP headquarters in Tubay, the NPA seized three firearms from security guards of San Roque Mining Corporation (SRMIN), a large nickel mining firm in the province. The Red guerrillas, who posed as policemen carried out the disarming operation at 12:30 a.m.

The military offensive against the SRMIN was a punitive action, said Ka Maria Malaya, NDF spokesperson in the Northeastern Mindanao Region. She cited complaints from the Manobo and Mamanwa tribes about the destructive mi-

ning operations of SRMIN and a number of politicians who have profited from the mining operations.

December 21. NPA fighters assaulted and disarmed guards of Sinophil Mining Corporation in Barangay Pinagrealan, Candelaria, Zambales. The Red guerrillas used a six-wheeler truck in the military action. They also burned down a bulldozer, two backhoes and a compressor truck.

December 16-18. Two soldiers were killed and another was wounded in an encounter between a composite force from the 41st IB Bravo and Charlie Coys against an undersize NPA platoon in Lacub, Abra on December 16, according to reports from the Agustin Begnalen Command of NPA-Abra.

Residents sighted the 40-strong enemy platoon maneuvering into position as early as 9 a.m. They immediately informed the Red fighters about this, enabling the comrades to swiftly draw up an active defense plan. This resulted in casualties on the reactionary troops when they assaulted at around 12:30 p.m.

The NPA suffered no casualties despite the superior strength of the enemy forces. The government troops waited until dusk before transporting their casualties. The next morning, propagandists of the reactionary military falsely claimed that the NPA suffered many casualties and scampered away.

The 41st IB's "stay-behind unit," however, was forced to withdraw on December 18 for fear of an assault by the NPA. The soldiers forcibly took with them seven civilians and used them as human shields in their escape. They also burned down pine trees to prevent the Red fighters from getting close. AB

NPA releases two POWs

The NPA Merardo Arce Command has released prisoners-of-war (POW) 1Lt. Vicente Cammayo and P03 Eduardo Tumol.

Tumol was released on December 24 in Mati City and transferred to the custody of church people and some local government officials of Davao Oriental. Cammayo, on the other hand was freed on January 6 in Loreto, Agusan del Sur and transferred to the custody of representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The release of the two prisoners was an act of goodwill in view of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

P03 Tumol of the 110th Provincial Mobile Group was captured on November 5 by Red fighters in Barangay Baogo, Cateel, Davao Oriental. Seized from him was an M16 armalite rifle, a .45 pistol and KG-9 submachine gun.

Cammayo, meanwhile, was captured after a gunbattle in Barangay Casoon, Monkayo, Compostela Valley on November 7.

In their statements upon their release, Tumol and Cammayo both said that the Red fighters treated them well. Both of them earlier called for a ceasefire to hasten their release but this was not heeded by the Arroyo regime and the AFP. AB



Human rights abuses in Aurora

Officers and soldiers of the Philippine Army 48th IB are guilty of rampant human rights violations in Aurora province.

According to the Multi-Sectoral Action Group (MSAG), an alliance of people's organizations, non-governmental organizations and Catholic church groups in eastern Central Luzon, the 48th IB has been using 16 barangay halls and health centers in the town of Dipaculao as detachments, disrupting the delivery of social services by the local government.

The mere presence of many soldiers in the area as well as regular patrols instill fear among the residents of the Dipaculao. This is also a violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) signed by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines in 1998 and Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions

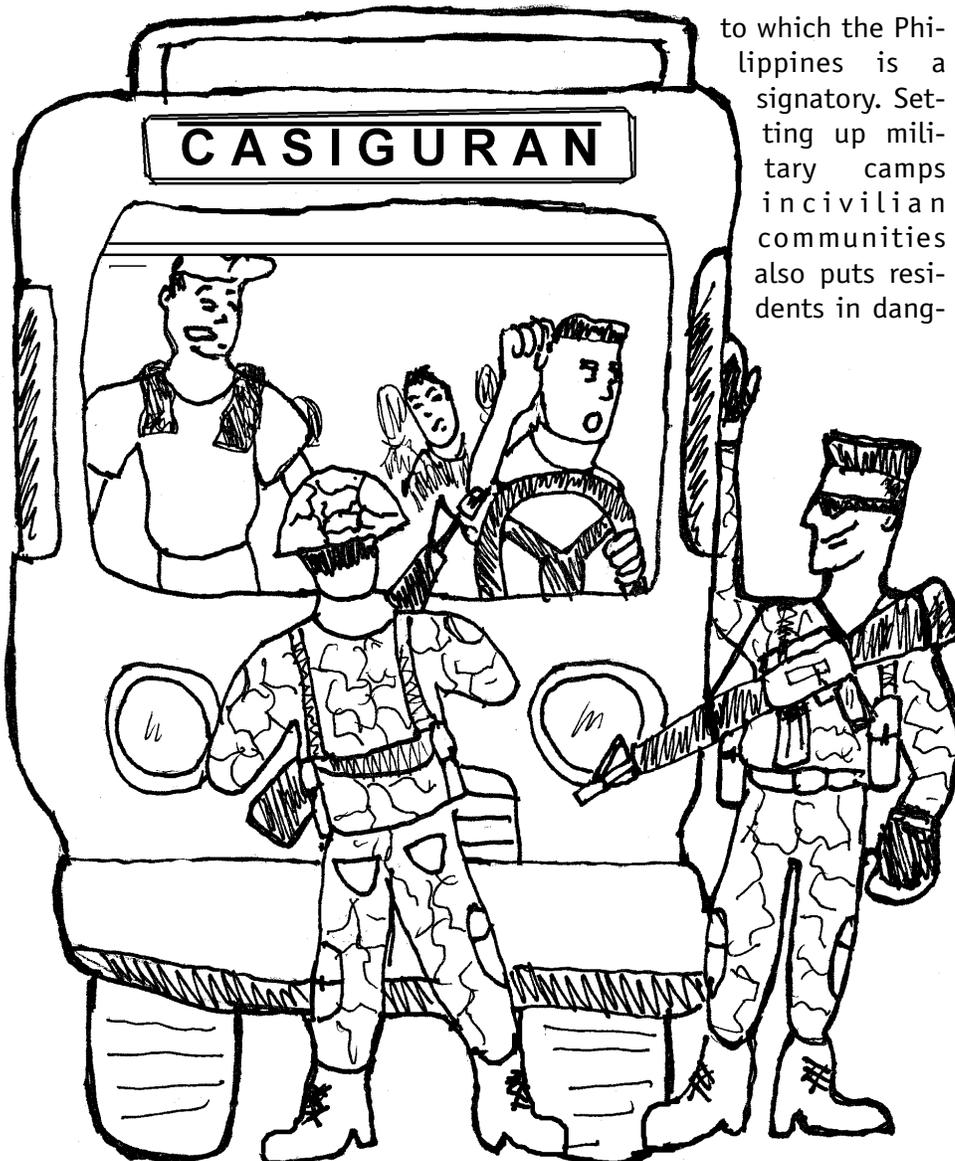
er. The 48th IB, which is based in Barangay Calabuanan, Baler is led by Col. Natalio Jayson.

Aside from the dangers brought on by the 48th IB's continued presence in civilian communities, their military operations have also severely dislocated the lives and livelihood of the masses. Forcing passengers to alight from buses plying the Dinalungan-Casiguran-Dilasag route in northern Aurora and in Maria Aurora town is a major nuisance.

The villagers are forced to evacuate mountainous barangays in Casiguran and Dingalan allegedly due to military pursuit operations against the New People's Army. Residents of Barangay Umiray along the boundaries of Dingalan, Aurora and General Nakar, Quezon are also forbidden from leaving their communities without first securing permission from the military. As a result of the AFP's relentless military campaign against the revolutionary forces, the farmers have not been able to tend to their fields for a long time.

The MSAG demanded from the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) the immediate dismantling of the 48th IB camp in Baler, the capital of Aurora, and the expulsion of military troops from Dipaculao town due to rampant human rights abuses.

As added proof of their abuses, the MSAG submitted to the CHR sworn statements from a number of residents of Aurora province attesting to military atrocities in the area. The signatories were Federico Ruiz, 56, member of the Justice and Peace Action Group (JPAG);



to which the Philippines is a signatory. Setting up military camps in civilian communities also puts residents in dang-

Antonio Toledo, 56, a teacher; Elmer Dayson, 56, leader of Panlalawigang Alyansa ng Magbubukid ng Aurora; and Florencio Pascual, 52, leader of Aniban ng Kilusang Magbubukid ng Aurora.

Ruiz was "invited" to the military camp, interrogated about his work in the JPAG and was forced to have his picture taken.

Meanwhile, Toledo and his wife were accused of being NPA members when they failed to attend an assembly organized by the 48th IB and instead joined a seminar in Angeles City, Pampanga.

Meantime, Pascual, a peasant leader complained about the frequent visits to his house of a certain Corporal Manawis and another soldier. The two soldiers have been conducting a census and taking pictures of

Pascual without his permission. They accuse Pascual's daughter Desiresa of having replaces a certain Janing Diaz as leader of a women peasant group, Samana.

Dayson, on the other hand, is a victim of illegal arrest, detention and grave threats by 14 soldiers under led by a military asset surnamed Rivera. Dayson is being implicated in an ambush on the military in San Luis town.

In a related development, church people in Aurora strongly denounced these military atrocities on December 16. A statement by ten priests vehemently condemning the abuses was read in Catholic churches all over the province. The statement was supported by Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona of the Prelature of Infanta which encompasses Aurora. AB

Military agents arrest, kill activists

Illegal arrests and assassinations formed the latest human rights violations committed by the Arroyo regime. The following were reports gathered by *Ang Bayan*:

December 28. Two men wearing bonnets murdered Anakpawis-Floridablanca municipal coordinator Nelson Malit, 48. Malit was playing cards with two friends in Barangay del Carmen, Floridablanca, Pampanga when he was assassinated. Malit, married and with three children, sustained four gun shot wounds from a .45 caliber pistol. The victim was also a staff of the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon.

December 23. Fernando "Dodong" Sarmiento was shot to death by men believed to be military elements at 7 p.m. in Purok I, Barangay Cabinuangan, New Bataan, Compostela Valley. The victim suffered five gunshot wounds.

Sarmiento is the secretary general of Panalipdan-New Bataan, a group that opposes large-scale mi-

ning operations in the Southern Mindanao Region. The organization particularly opposes the giant PhilCo Mining. According to Sarmiento's colleagues, the victim was interrogated on July 16 by elements of the 28th IB led Lt. Wendel Ariola and was accused of being an NPA member.



Sarmiento was the first activist slain in the region after the Arroyo regime formed the Investment Defense Force (IDF). Arroyo ordered the formation of the IDF in February 2008 purportedly to protect mining companies, power facilities and other infrastructure against NPA attacks.

December 22. Thirteen members of various progressive organizations were illegally arrested and slapped with trumped-up

charges in Batangas City. According to the Batangas Integrated Human Rights Advocates (BIHRA), the Batangas City Police violated Batas Pambansa 880 by positioning themselves within the 100-meter limit between the rallyists and the police and brandishing high-powered firearms during the protest action.

Arrested were BIHRA chair Arnold Evangelista; People's Coalition for Alternative Development chair Thelma Maranan and her husband Jose; Ronald Suarez; Onorio Real Jr.; Felicidad Lumalang; Rafael Lubia; Isagani Isita; Fidel Hiwatic, Jr.; Salome Eraso; Roberto Mendoza; Juna Arante; and Lina Amante. They were among 200 demonstrators who marched towards city hall but were blocked by the police, some of whom were drunk.

The rallyists planned to hold a dialogue with Batangas City Mayor Eduardo Dimacuja on the plight of vendors who had lost their livelihood at the port area who were going hungry and still had to receive compensation from the Philippine Ports Authority. AB



Renewed Israeli aggression in Palestine

On December 27, Israel began its most brutal offensive in the history of its wars of aggression against the Palestinian people. After almost two weeks of aerial bombings and ground assaults by thousands of Israeli troops in Gaza City, Palestine, over 600 Palestinian people have been killed including more than 200 children. Over 2,700 have been wounded, most of them civilians.

Israel's objective is to overthrow Palestine's legitimate government which is currently in the hands of the militant Hamas organization. Hamas won the latest parliamentary elections in 2006. As soon as it assumed power, the US, Israel and their allies stepped up various forms of repression, including an economic embargo and a series of military attacks. The latest ceasefire agreement between Israel and Palestine called for the lifting by Israel of the blockade and the cessation of attacks along its common border with Gaza. Israel outrightly violated these provisions.

Israel's intensified brutal attacks in Gaza trails decades of aggression and genocide against Palestine and preventing its people from attaining independence and

enjoying fundamental rights.

A lot of civilian infrastructure in Gaza, including schools, hospitals and water and power plants, have been razed to the ground or damaged by Israel. The Palestinian people suffer even more from the massive destruction of their livelihood and basic services. In comparison, the Israelis suffered less than ten casualties in the latest fighting and sustained minimal damage to infrastructure as Palestinians fired rockets into southern Israel to defend their territory.

Israel's renewed aggression against Palestine has earned widespread denunciation from peoples and governments of different countries and from international organizations. Among the critics of Israel and the massive destruction

it wreaks on the Palestinian people was the Arab League of Organization of Islamic Conference. The European Union, African Union, Amnesty International and Pope Benedict XVI called for a ceasefire and expressed concern on the worsening conditions of the civilians of Palestine. Because of the US' veto, the UN Security Council threw out a resolution proposed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon for the UN to call for a ceasefire.

The Communist Party of the Philippines condemnation Israel in the strongest possible terms for its relentless attacks on Gaza.

Despite all this, the Bush government continues to support Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's regime, which receives billions of dollars of US military aid.

Protest actions have erupted across the globe. The largest protest action occurred in Turkey where almost 700,000 people marched in Istanbul on January 4. Some 100,000 Israeli Arabs living in northern Israel staged a demonstration to oppose the ongoing invasion. In Morocco, 40,000 rallyists threw shoes at, and burned down, the effigies of Bush and Olmert.

In the US, protest actions were launched in Washington DC; Detroit; New York; Los Angeles; and other cities in Florida. The protest actions demanded the cessation of US military aid on Israel.

The invasion of Gaza by Israeli ground troops is a gargantuan blunder, as it will now have to face guerrilla warfare by Hamas and other armed patriotic Palestinian groups and the wrath of the Palestinian people. As Hamas declared, Gaza will be a graveyard for Israeli troops. AB

