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Editorial

Oust the American troops

Officials of the Pentagon and the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have recently declared that the 600-strong Special Operations Forces (SOF) involved in counterrevolutionary operations in the Philippines will maintain its presence in the country.

They justified the decision by citing the key role allegedly played by the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) and the CIA in operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to kill or capture leaders of the Abu Sayyaf and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). They moreover invoked lessons learned in the Afghan war that a sustained military presence is necessary to ensure victories in the battlefield.

The declaration merely formalizes in public the secret agreement arrived at between Gloria Arroyo and US Pres. Barack Obama on July 30 where Arroyo guaranteed the US military troops' permanent presence in exchange for continued US military assistance. Arroyo has now been going to the hilt defending the increasingly apparent US military presence and intensifying military intervention in the country.

There has been a longstanding lie that US soldiers have been constantly streaming in and out of the country merely for annual training exercises and humanitarian work. This admission by officials of the US and Arroyo governments confirms the barrage of information on US troops' permanent basing in the country and their direct and indirect participation in combat operations in the Philippines.

Further confirmation has been provided by LSG Nancy Gadian of the Philippine Navy who, as planning officer of the annual Balikatan Joint US-Philippine Military Exercises has personal knowledge that US troops are embedded in AFP combat units and involved in intelligence and other combat-related operations. Gadian related details about permanent, exclusive and heavily guarded structures set up by the JSOTF-P within AFP camps. She also disclosed how arrogantly US officers and even enlisted personnel treated the puppet forces.

The presence, participation in combat and intervention of US troops in armed operations and other matters internal to the country are a big slap on Philippine sovereignty. They are also violative of the



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existing reactionary constitution.

Despite the junking of the US military bases treaty in 1991, the US has been able to maintain its military presence in the Philippines through various other agreements. It has, for this reason, drafted the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in 1998 and the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) in 2002.

These agreements have paved the way for the untrammelled entry and exit of US troops, warships and warplanes and their long-term basing in the country. The construction of various facilities, including airports, seaports and even exclusive structures and offices right within AFP camps was permitted. The entire Philippines has thus become a virtual US military base.

JSOTF-P forces have, in the past several years been based in camps of various AFP commands in different areas; set up their own offices within tactical command posts of operating military forces; engaged in electronic, air and combat intelligence; fed combat intelligence to AFP units; and joined actual combat operations.

The US has, in the meantime,

continued to train and advise puppet military and security officers, mainly in fighting the revolutionary forces. The AFP has likewise continued to rely on military assistance and weapons supplied by the US.

US military forces have taken advantage of calamities as well as widespread poverty and the puppet government's own shortcomings by showcasing the repair of some public facilities, the provision of a number of social services and the conduct of humanitarian work. The object of all this is to deodorize their presence and provide a cover for their marauding and interventionist military operations.

US and Philippine military officers would have the public believe that the JSOTF-P's assistance has been confined to operations against the Abu Sayyaf bandit group and so-called rogue MILF units. In fact, the JSOTF-P's operations have not been limited to Western Mindanao. Its personnel have been involved in military operations in other parts of Mindanao and in Eastern Visayas, Panay, Bicol, Central Luzon, Northern Luzon and other regions

where the main targets are the armed revolutionary forces and mass base of the New People's Army.

The main objective of US military intervention is the perpetuation of America's neocolonial domination over the country, ensuring its constant hold on the leadership of the reactionary puppet state and its continued ability to dictate and influence events, internal matters and conflicts in pursuit of their interests. The US takes an interest in and blocks any threat or obstacle to its continued rule and unbridled plunder of its neocolonies. Its strategic aim is to intervene in the conduct of the raging civil war and defeat the revolutionary, patriotic and anti-imperialist forces. The US also aims to continue using the Philippines as a station and staging area for US military forces to ensure its military dominance in Southeast Asia and the entire Asia-Pacific.

In the face of all this, the revolutionary forces and the Filipino people will relentlessly resist US neocolonial rule over the country until national liberation is attained. The Filipino people have a long and brilliant history of waging revolutionary, patriotic and anti-imperialist struggle in tandem with waging their own struggle for genuine democracy, justice and progress.

The US' continuing domination, plunder and oppression of the country must be thoroughly exposed and opposed. We must step up our struggle against the incursion, continuing presence and operations of US military forces in the Philippines. We must unmask and expose the ugly face of US military intervention and oppression in the country. We must unite the Filipino people under the banner of patriotism and cry out in unison: "Oust the American soldiers!" **AB**

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The GRP is obstructing the peace talks

The following statement was issued on September 4 by NDFP Negotiating Panel spokesperson Ka Fidel V. Agcaoili. It clarifies the true reasons why the peace talks between the NDFP and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines did not transpire as scheduled on September 5. Foremost among these is the GRP's failure to comply with its verbal agreement with the NDFP on June 15 to thoroughly implement the JASIG, release detained NDFP consultants, dismiss the trumped-up cases against the other consultants and free the political detainees that Gloria Arroyo had ordered released in 2001 and 2004 as a goodwill measure.

The officials of the reactionary Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), including the de facto president Gloria M. Arroyo, executive secretary Eduardo Ermita and presidential adviser Avelino Razon, should stop issuing press statements that they are willing to resume formal talks in the peace negotiations between the GRP and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

The plain and simple fact is that all these hypocrites are preventing the resumption of the formal talks by continuing to violate the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and refusing to comply with it and remove the impediments that they have imposed on NDFP panelists, consultants and other persons protected by JASIG.

They continue to use false criminal charges to abduct, imprison, torture and murder NDFP consultants and other JASIG-protected persons in the Philippines, to blackmail and pressure NDFP panelists and consultants who are abroad and even to request foreign governments to blacklist, raid, arrest and detain them as previously done in The Netherlands in 2007.

The GRP has not complied with the JASIG and June 15 agreement but has instead maneuvered to

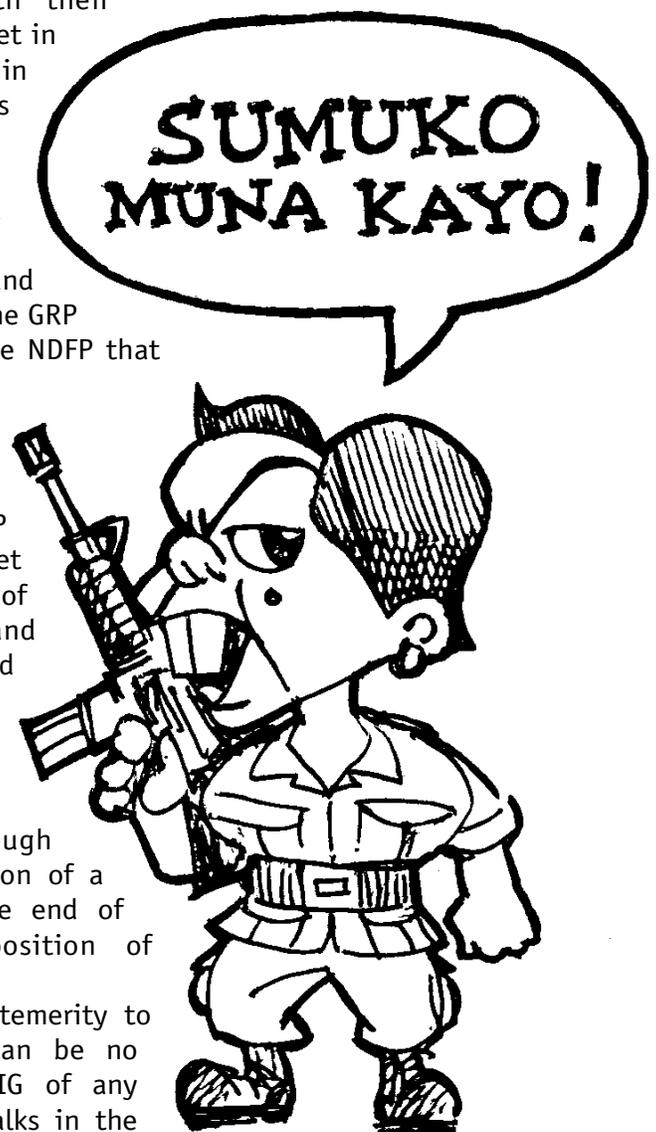
undermine and cast away the JASIG and aggravate the impediments on NDFP panelists and consultants. Thus, the NDFP has demanded that the GRP and NDFP panels, together with their respective lawyers, meet in Oslo in order to put in writing the expeditious methods of complying with the JASIG and removing the aforesaid impediments.

But the vicious and arrogant response of the GRP has been to inform the NDFP that there can be no meeting of the negotiating panels to focus on compliance with JASIG, unless the NDFP agrees first of all to set aside the negotiation of social, economic and political reforms and give highest priority to the discussion of "disarmament, demobilization and reintegration" (DDR) through the premature formation of a working group on the end of hostilities and disposition of forces (EHDF).

The GRP has the temerity to suggest that there can be no compliance with JASIG of any kind and no formal talks in the

peace negotiations unless the NDFP makes a commitment first of all to form the working group on EHDF as the key to the destruction and pacification of the armed revolutionary movement of the people.

The GRP is showing that it has no interest in peace negotiations as a way of addressing the roots of the civil war through agreements on social, economic and political reforms. It continues to violate JASIG and seeks to impose the DDR framework on the NDFP. It is challenging the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people to intensify their armed revolution for national liberation and democracy. **AB**





NPA seizes 16 firearms

Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) seized at least 16 firearms in separate tactical offensives launched in the last week of August. Among those seized was a light machine gun. Thirteen enemy forces were also killed and seven were wounded in these fire-fights. There were no casualties on the NPA side.

August 30. Red fighters of the Arnulfo Ortiz Command of the NPA in Samar province seized at least ten high-powered rifles in a successful raid on a detachment of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) in Barangay Cancaiyas, Basey, Samar at around 4:00 a.m. According to initial reports, the NPA confiscated four M16s, four M14s and two carbines. The guerrillas also seized a VHF radio. After two CAFGU elements were wounded, the 15 troops camped out at the detachment ran for their lives. In order to conceal their humiliation, the 8th ID of the Philippine Army falsely reported that 11 guerrillas were wounded in this encounter.

In Surigao del Sur, NPA Red fighters seized an M16, an Ingram machine pistol and a 9 mm pistol when they raided the house of San Miguel town mayor Alfeo Perez.

Meanwhile, in Davao City, the recently arrived 69th IB immediately tasted the bitterness of defeat when four of its soldiers were killed and six others wounded in an ambush by the 1st Pulang Bagani Company of the Merardo Arce Command (MAC-BHB) in Southern Mindanao. The 69th IB are reinforcements from Luzon and are under the 10th Infantry Division. They were patrolling Barangay Dalagdag in Calinan District when they were ambushed by the people's guerrillas.

Among the items confiscated

by the Red fighters was an FN Minimi (Mini Mitrailieuse, or M249 in the US). The Minimi is a light machine gun first made in Belgium. There is a 5.56 mm and 7.62 mm type.

August 28. Two soldiers from the 57th IB Charlie Company were wounded when the military vehicle they were riding was ambushed by NPA fighters of Front 53 along the border of Barangay Noah and Barangay Bagumbayan in Magpet, North Cotabato.

That same day, a soldier of the 82nd IB was injured when military troops attempted to surround an NPA unit in Barangay Tigbanaba, Igaras, Iloilo. It was the newly formed battalion's first encounter with the NPA.

August 27. Two M16s were

confiscated and two policemen were killed in an ambush by Red fighters. The policemen were then patrolling the public market in Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur.

August 24. Four soldiers were killed in two firefights between the NPA and attacking troops of the 71st IB in Barangay Diaat, Maria Aurora, Aurora. In the first encounter, the NPA successfully seized the initiative from the attacking soldiers. After almost an hour, the second firefight took place when Red fighters ambushed the soldiers returning to the site of the encounter to retrieve belongings left behind and hold the position. After a firefight that lasted almost half an hour, the NPA attacked the soldiers' position. The soldiers retreated and left behind six backpacks which the comrades confiscated.

Meanwhile, a CAFGU element was killed and two wounded when they were ambushed that same day by Red fighters of the NPA Tomas Pilapil Command in Sitio Sto. Domingo, Barangay Malabog, Caramoan, Camarines Sur. **AB**

AFP chief admits defeat

Gen. Victor Ibrado, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) openly admitted that the Arroyo government has failed to eradicate the armed revolutionary movement being advanced by the New People's Army (NPA). The highest official of the AFP admitted defeat in front of landlords who are members of the Northern Negros Planters Association at its assembly in Sagay City, Negros Occidental on August 30.

This admission was made by the AFP chief two months after Arroyo ordered in her State of the Nation Address that the NPA be crushed before the end of her term in 2010.

A few days before this, Lt. Gen. Rolando Detabali, chief of the Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM), admitted in front of the media that they will have a hard time complying with the order to destroy the armed revolutionary movement. The SOLCOM's operations cover Southern Tagalog and Bicol. **AB**

Villagers boot out military from Lianga

More than 1,700 residents of Lianga, Surigao del Sur were able to go home after military forces were booted out from their communities. On August 29, the military was forced to accede to the widespread and vehement call that they leave 15 communities in two municipalities of Surigao del Sur. The evacuees lived for more than a month in an evacuation center in Tandag, Surigao del Sur.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR), local officials, progressive congresspersons, advocates of human rights and the rights of the Lumad people led an inspection of the communities to ensure that the military was no longer in the area. This was done due to inconsistent statements made by the military regarding their status in the area and also because of the AFP leadership's adamant refusal to leave the communities.

Residents evacuated on July 18 when two battalions from the 36th and 58th IBs entered their communities in order to force them to join Task Force Gantangan-Bagani Force, a paramilitary group run by the AFP.

Militarization of the schools. The fascist soldiers particularly vented their ire on the Alternative Learning System for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (ALCADEV) in Sitio Han-ayan in Diatagon, Lianga. ALCADDEV is a boarding school for Lumad youth, and is equivalent to a public high school. It gives lessons not only on literacy and numeracy but in agricultural production, health and other basic services that the reactionary government has never provided them.

As many as 124 students and teachers of the school fled. The students and teachers of six other schools also run by the Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao del Sur (TRIFPSS) which are equivalent to public elementary schools, also fled with them.

This is not the first time that the military has harassed these schools. In 2005 and again in 2007, students and teachers had to flee because of severe militarization in the area. The military accused the students and teachers of being supporters, if not members, of the NPA and stopped the supply of food intended for the students.

The evacuees were first cramped into the Lianga city gymnasium before they moved to the Diocese of Tandag under the care of Bishop Nereo Odchimar. Here they were visited by representatives of the CHR, progressive parties and mayors from nearby municipalities.

Several times the military broke its promise to retreat. Up to the end, the soldiers insisted on staying at the outskirts of the communities and refused to withdraw from their occupation of the area.

According to the residents, the military began bolstering its presence in their communities when giant foreign mining corporations entered the area. Out of nowhere, they were accused of being NPA supporters when it became clear that they would not give up their rights to the land they inherited from their ancestors.

They held on to their rights not just because of this, but also for the services given to them by philanthropic organizations. They proved once again that through coordinated action, they can continue to defeat the oppression and exploitation they have long been suffering from. AB

NPA sets fire to truck used in illegal logging

NPA guerrillas from Agusan-Surigao set fire to a truck used in the illegal logging of falcatta in Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur on August 30. The guerrillas' actions were in line with the revolutionary movement's longtime policy against illegal logging.

In a statement on September 4, the NPA said that illegal loggers took advantage of the evacuation of 15 Lumad settlements in Lianga to chop down falcatta trees and engage in other illegal activities. The loggers were free to do so because they enjoyed the military's protection and there were no residents who would stand in their way. "They fed off the riches of the ancestral lands while many of the people in the evacuation centers were suffering," said the NPA. AB



Ongoing militarization in Leyte

Following are additional reports of human rights violations in Leyte due to extensive military operations in the area.

First week of June. Alex Casundo, 30; Boyet Salubre, 20; Mauricio Penada, 40; Jessie Martinez; and a certain Junior were punched, slapped and mauled by troops of the 19th IB. They are all from Barangay Bunga, Baybay, Leyte. Meanwhile, Ekot Sacay, 30, who was collecting firewood in Sitio Lunas, San Agustin, Baybay, Leyte was beaten and whacked with the stalk of a coconut tree frond.

June 30. Ronnie Bumagat, 29, a peasant of Barangay Bunga, Baybay, Leyte was interrogated and thrashed. He was unable to work for three days due to the severe mauling from 19th IB troops. The military suspected that Bumagat had contact with the NPA through his cellphone and was a carrier of supplies to their camp. Virgilio Martinez, 40, Bumagat's barriomate, suffered the same abuse.

Meanwhile, Eric Salubre, 30, also from the same village was beaten up by the same military unit. His tormentors also stole a tent and copra-making tools that were in his *tapahan* (structure used as a kiln for coconut drying). Felix Cabahit, 40, was also punched and mauled by soldiers who claimed he was an NPA contact. Taboy Gravillo, 30, was flogged twice by 19th IB elements and could not work for two days due to the intense pain he felt all over his body.

June 24. Moises Rapada, 50, from Barangay Oguisan, MacArthur was beaten, suffocated with a plastic bag and slashed on his

face by 19th IB elements who were operating in the village. Various cases of abuse also happened at the same time like the uprooting of Bernal Banag-banag's sweet potato crop in Barangay Cagbana, Burauen; and the burning down of Benny Roche's hut at his farm.

June 19. Soldiers interrogated and punched Jordan de Paz, 15, from Barangay Cagbana, Burauen, Leyte. After hitting him, they threatened to kill him if he squealed on them.

June 12. Troops of the 19th IB illegally arrested and detained for two nights Jumbert Martinez, 36, a peasant from Barangay Bunga, Baybay, Leyte. He was being investigated because he was accused of carrying supplies to the NPA. Another peasant named Basil Robles, also from the same village was arrested by soldiers. The military beat Robles but forced him to sign a document stating that he was not hurt by the soldiers.

MEANWHILE, soldiers threatened residents of Barangay Cagbana, Burauen that if anything happened to them, they would get back at the village and kill them all. While in June the villagers were not allowed to go to their farms, in July they were permitted to go but they had to be back in the village by 4 p.m.

A food blockade was also enforced in four municipalities—in the villages of Bunga, Hilapnitan, Caridad, San Agustin, Maybog, Pangasugan and San Marcos in Baybay; in the villages

of Cagbana, Mahagnaw, Roxas and Lugsongan in Burauen; in San Vicente, Lanawan, Oguisan and San Antonio villages in MacArthur; and in Barangay Luneta in the town of La Paz.

Because of severe militarization in these villages, several students have been forced to stop studying due to fear and their families' inability to support their food needs, also because of the blockade and harassment by the 19th IB.

But the most intense harassment is being suffered by Manobo settlers who derive their livelihood from gathering rattan in the hinterland areas of Baybay and Burauen. They have been outrightly declared "illegal" and automatically fingered as members or supporters of the NPA. In other words, if they are seen, they face immediate arrest and summary execution by the military. **AB**

Plot to kill Panay activist leader exposed

On September 1, Ka Wilson Balingit, vice chair of Bayan Muna in Panay, exposed a plot to kill him. At a press conference held in Iloilo City, Balingit said that he received information that a group of assassins has been paid P300,000 to liquidate him. This is apart from an ongoing vilification campaign against him.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo stated that Balingit's enemies want to silence him in his work against corruption and human rights violations.

NDF-Mindanao and CPDF in solidarity with the Lianga evacuees

The National Democratic Front-Mindanao and the Cordillera People's Democratic Front (CPDF) stand in solidarity with the evacuees of Lianga, Surigao del Sur in their struggle against militarization.

Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos saluted the evacuees who returned to their homes after the long-desired expulsion of the military from their communities was secured. In a radio interview, Ka Oris denounced the 58th ID for insisting on staying in the area in spite of the widespread clamor from various sectors supporting the evacuees' demand.

While hailing the evacuees' triumph, Ka Oris pointed out that there were still hundreds of thousands of people cramped in evacuation centers in other parts of Mindanao due to militarization.

Like the Lumad in Surigao, the minorities of the Cordilleras are also experiencing hardship. CPDF

spokesperson Simon "Ka Filiw" Naogsan said that since the 1970s, communities in the Cordillera have experienced dislocation caused by military operations because of the AFP's suspicions that these were NPA guerrilla bases and because the AFP wanted to give way to destructive government and foreign-owned projects like the Chico Dam. As in Surigao, many of the victims of these violations are children.

This year alone, Tingguian children in Lacub, Abra were forced to hold classes outside of their classrooms because elements of the 41st IB Reengineered Special Operations Team (RSOT) were occupying the local daycare center. In 2007, classes at the Tamboan Elementary School in Besao, Mountain Province were suspended for a lengthy period because troops of the 54th IB turned the school into their barracks. **AB**

Court sides with Melissa Roxas against the military

The Court of Appeals (CA) is convinced that elements of the AFP abducted and tortured Melissa Roxas, a Filipino-American activist. The CA's decision on August 27 granting Roxas' petition for a writ of amparo and habeas data also dismissed the AFP and Arroyo government's claims that Roxas' assertions were merely fabricated.

Roxas was abducted by 15 military elements in Tarlac on May 19 along with two companions John Edward Jandoc and Juanito Carabeo. From Tarlac, they were brought to the 7th ID-Philippine Army camp in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija where they were subjected to interrogation and torture for six days. When the AFP surfaced her, Roxas filed a petition for a writ of amparo and habeas data with the Supreme Court, which ordered the CA to hear the case. The CA also ordered the AFP to stop accusing Roxas of being an NPA member.

Albayanos harassed by the military

RESIDENTS of Manito and Camalig, Albay complained that personnel of the 901st Brigade of the Philippine Army are forcing them to have their pictures taken and to pay P35.00 as contribution in the formation of the Barangay Defense System.

The complainants said that those who refuse to have their pictures taken are accused of being NPA members.

Atty. Salvador Brioso of the Commission on Human Rights-Bicol said that such measures by the military are a violation of human rights. He urged affected residents to file a formal complaint with the commission so the latter could take action.

The military has also been harassing residents of Barangays Maninila, Del Rosario, Panoypop, Taluto and Taplakon in Camalig, Albay. Several residents were being forced by soldiers to admit that they are members or supporters of the NPA. Some were hit on the head, locked in toilets and choked by soldiers for refusing to do what they wanted.

Several villagers also were forced to sign a blank piece of paper. The soldiers threatened to retaliate against anyone who complains.

MILF and UN sign agreement on children's rights

The MILF signed an agreement with the United Nations in July to protect the rights and welfare of children in the midst of armed conflict. Both sides agreed on a program permitting UN monitoring teams to enter MILF fronts, stop the recruitment of minors and send children under 18 back home to their communities. As initial steps, the MILF issued general regulations prohibiting all commanders and officials of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces from recruiting minors in any kind of military work and prescribing disciplinary action for anyone who violates these rules. **AB**

Cordillerans rekindle spirit of anti-Chico Dam struggle

Leaders of the various tribes in Kalinga and Mountain Province joined together once more to fight for and defend their ancestral lands against the threat of landgrabbing and environmental destruction caused by large-scale mining in their area.

The meeting was prompted by the latest incident on June 5 where slabs of earth in the town of Mankayan, Benguet sank due to the expanded operations by the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company (LCMC).

The people likened this battle to their struggle against the construction of four dams in Chico River under the US-Marcos dictatorship in the 1980s. They said that large-scale mining will destroy their livelihood and their homes which are located within the Chico River Watershed Area.

The various tribes have basis for reuniting to defend their ancestral lands. Presently, their struggle is against a new enemy, the collusion between the state and mining corporations.

Starting in 2009, the Council of Elders of Bakun-Aywanan (Bantay ken Kinabaknang ti Umili a Nagtaudan o Defend and Nurture Bakun) met and united in the town of Benguet to solidify their unity against large-scale mining. Seven organizations in the community and several personalities joined the Bakun Aywanan in February.

One of the organization's first steps was to file a petition at the regional and provincial offices of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) against its Memorandum of Agreement with Royalco Philippines and banning any exploration by the company in the area.

Flood of mining applications.

In 2006, mining applications flooded the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) as a result of the Arroyo regime's campaign to attract foreign investments. But due to the sustained and determined struggle of the people, the majority of the applications were shelved at the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the DENR.



The mining applications cover the areas of Mountain Province, Abra and Kalinga. These encompass 61% of CAR's entire land area. The applications also cover parts of the Central Cordillera Forest Reserve, which has been declared a protected area. If an application is submitted before an area is declared protected, the mining companies may be permitted to begin operations.

The tribal leaders and officials of the villages of Bontoc began their protests as early as 2006. But the foreign mining companies would not budge. With the help of

the regime and armed goons, Royalco terrorized and deceived several residents into allowing the exploration to continue. Even though many residents were in opposition, the NCIP still gave permission to Royalco.

The residents further intensified and strengthened their opposition. On August 7, 2008, up to 230 representatives from 13 municipalities of Benguet held a conference to discuss issues and matters on widespread and destructive mining and to exchange experiences and lessons from their successful struggle. They formed the Benguet Mining Alert and Action Network.

In October 2008, they formed the Bakun-Aywanan. They launched a sustained campaign to oppose commercial mining, which included forums, coordinated actions, mobilizations and dialogues with the local government and regional and provincial offices of the NCIP.

The tribal leaders of more than nine sitios in Barangay Gambang of Bakun, Benguet rejected the exploration project of Royalco Philippines. Residents of Barangay Sapid, Mankayan, Benguet passed around a second petition that demanded that town officials take action on the dumping of toxic waste (asbestos) by LCMC.

Also in Barangay Ampucao, the people have once again banded together against the machinations of giant mining corporations. **AB**

Butuan City's water supply poisoned by mining

Manganese mining in the mountains known as the "Malinhawod Area" in Agusan del Norte is the reason behind the pollution of Taguibo River which is Butuan City's source of drinking water.

In a statement issued on August 17, National Democratic Front-Northeastern Mindanao spokesperson Ka Maria Malaya said that earth from the mines is washed away into the Taguibo River every time it rains. There are also 100,000 tons of manganese stockpiled in various places in Malinhawod that have not been hauled because its buyers decided not to push through with the sale. Manganese is a metal that has various uses in industry.

With the mining coming to a halt, none of the Lumad miners has been paid the pittance of ₱2.00 for every kilo of manganese mined.

Ka Maria denounced the persons behind the manganese mining—the bureaucrat capitalist and despotic landlord Amante family. In 2007, each metric ton of manganese cost up to \$154. Thus, at an exchange rate of \$1:₱40, these 100,000 metric tons of manganese would easily have brought in \$15.4 million or ₱616 million for the Amantes.

Ka Maria also revealed that the family of Mayor Democrito Plaza of Butuan City also plans to mine silver in the upland areas of Barangay Antikala where the source of the Taguibo River is. The Plasas are the politician family that stripped bare the formerly extensive forests of Agusan. To prepare for the mining, a road is being built by the Plasas. They have also established an AFP-trained Special Civilian Auxiliary Army to serve as private armed guards.

The rival Amante and Plaza

political clans have been manipulating and deceiving the Lumad people to entice them to work on their mining projects.

Agusan's ruling classes have long been exploiting and raking in millions from the province's rich

natural resources, said Ka Maria. After decades of cutting down trees, now they are extracting the minerals beneath, with no concern whatsoever for the consequences to the environment and the drinking water of the people of Butuan City.

The NDF-NEMR called on the people, particularly in Butuan City, to launch a movement to protect the environment, especially the city's water source. It challenged concerned politicians to be accountable to the public for their destruction of the environment. **AB**

NPA calls for struggle against mining in Catanduanes

The Nerissa San Juan Command (NPA-Catanduanes) called on all Catandunganons to continue resisting the mining activities of Monte Oro Resources Energy Inc. (Morei) in the province. In a statement, command spokesperson Ka Theresa Magtanggol called on the people to utilize all forms of protest to stop mining in the province.

The local chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) in Catanduanes also declared its readiness to carry out a "legal revolution" against mining in any place in the province. IBP-Catanduanes said it was ready to carry out legal action against the main proponents of mining. The Catholic Church in the province is also active in condemning plans to open Catanduanes to mining. Provincial and municipal officials share the same sentiments, as well as the Katadungan Kontra Mina. The Philippine Association of X-Seminarians (Paxs) supports the Catholic Church in its opposition to mining in the province.

An online petition was also launched against mining by the Group of Environment Enthusiasts of Catanduanes Mountaineering and Outdoor Club (Greencat).

Among the owners of the Morei company is Enrique Razon, a close ally of Gloria Arroyo's family. The Department of Energy (DOE) permitted Morei to carry out exploration activities on 7,000 hectares of land in the towns of Caramoran, Panganiban and San Andres for coal deposits worth at least ₱6.2 billion. The Catandunganons are also opposing the DOE's plans to give another private company an additional 8,000 hectares of land in the towns of Caramoran, Panganiban and Viga to mine an estimated ₱9.4 billion worth of coal.

Mining in Catanduanes will certainly precipitate landslides and floods in the towns of Bagamanoc, Bato, Caramoran, Manambrag, Panganiban, San Miguel and Viga. The ocean and other waterways will also be dumping areas for toxic waste. **AB**

Ill-concealed wealth

The Filipino people were shocked by recent disclosures that the assets of Gloria Arroyo's sons—Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo and Camarines Sur Rep. Diosdado Ignacio "Dato" Arroyo—grew suddenly by gargantuan proportions since they became congressmen. The people grew even angrier with the thought that their wealth was the product of corruption and plunder. Malacañang distanced itself from the controversy, saying that Mikey and Dato's parents had nothing to do with this.

Based on Mikey's Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN), which is required of all government officials, his net income ballooned from P5 million in 2002 to P99 million in 2009, and he now owns assets with a net value of up to P156 million. Dato's net income also grew from P15.8 million in 2007 to P89 million this year, according to his SALN. As per his 2009 declaration, he reportedly owns over P150 million in assets.

Mikey Arroyo gave a convoluted explanation of his enhanced wealth. He argued that he and his wife enjoyed a sudden boost in their assets due to the wedding gifts and campaign contributions they received. With that, Mikey inadvertently admitted not having given a full accounting of electoral contributions which he illegally appropriated for his personal use.

Vera Files, which publishes investigative reports on burning issues written by a group of veteran journalists has disclosed that Mikey Arroyo bought a house and lot worth \$1.31 million (P63.7 million) at Beach Park Blvd., Foster City, California in 2006. To

conceal his acquisition, he claimed that the house was owned by Beach Way Park LLC, a front company that he himself established. Mikey declared in his SALN that he owns some shares in the company, but declined to give further details.

Real estate records in the US show that the property is listed under the name of Mikey's wife Angela Montenegro, just like many of his other properties and businesses.

Mikey has also failed to declare other commercial real estate properties that he acquired in the US, including a condominium unit in Redwood City, California which he sold for \$900,000 in September 2005. He had transferred its ownership to his wife before selling the property,

Dato Arroyo also owns a \$570,000 (P26.7 million) condominium unit in San Francisco's Gramercy Towers, one of the priciest buildings in California. Though Dato and his wife Victoria Manotok are listed as the property's owners, Dato did not declare this in his SALN as among his assets and instead listed it among his liabilities (a debt he allegedly owes his in-laws). Like Mikey, Dato has a myriad of other properties and businesses under his wife's name.

The anomalies in the Arroyo scions' SALN have prompted progressive lawmakers in Congress to file a resolution calling for an investigation of the entire Arroyo family's assets. The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) wants the Arroyos to explain how they acquired so many properties in the US. BAYAN said that their extravagant lifestyle is no laughing matter amid the people's widespread poverty. In the US, Filipino-American activists picketed Mikey Arroyo's house, saying they were not surprised about revelations of his ill-gotten wealth. AB





International peasant caravan

The Asian Peasant Coalition (APC) and the International League of Peoples' Struggle is currently undertaking a "Caravan for Land and Livelihood" amid the severe global crisis and widespread state terrorism and landgrabbing in Asia and Africa. The caravan which started on July 21 and will finish in November will pass through Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Sri Lanka.

The theme of the caravan is "Stop Landgrabbing! Fight for Genuine Agrarian Reform and Peoples' Food Sovereignty". Its formal launching in Sri Lanka was attended by Ka Danilo Ramos, secretary general of the APC and the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

A counterpart launching was also held in the Philippines on July 25, the anniversary of the KMP's founding, which was attended by 300 people.

ILPS International Coordinating Committee chair Prof. Jose Maria Sison called for the initiation of campaigns to denounce the imperialist powers, their monopoly banks and firms, and their puppet reactionary states, saying they are behind the current crisis and social injustice. AB



The Heroic Struggle of the *adivasi* in India

Since mid-June, the *adivasi* or tribal people of Lalgarh, West Bengal, India have been braving the brutal onslaught of police and military forces under "Operation Lalgarh" a massive state-sponsored military campaign. Despite the cruel offensive, the *adivasi* remain uncowed and are courageously fighting against the pro-imperialist and antipeople government as well as the state terror that would conquer their resistance.

Lalgarh is an area located in the West Midnapore district of West Bengal state in eastern India. The majority of the population is comprised of *adivasi*. Poverty is rampant and the people suffer from decades of government neglect, lacking basic services such as health care and drinking water. Their main means of livelihood is agriculture. But many of the people have little or no land to till and no irrigation. Farm workers receive very low wages.

Since colonial times, the Indian ruling class has long been exploiting and oppressing the *adivasi* of Lalgarh. Their dismal plight worsened under the West Bengal Left Front government controlled

by the revisionist Communist Party of India (Marxist) or the CPM. The local big shots of the CPM are the "new landlords". They grab the lands and destroy the livelihoods of the *adivasi* to make way for a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for big multinational corporations. Any resistance the people show is met with unbridled brutality and suppression.

In November 2008, the *adivasi* formed the People's Committee Against Police Atrocities (PCAPA), rising up against decades of abuse by the police and CPM and demanding justice for the victims of state repression. Since then, the PCAPA has strengthened its resistance, forming more than



1,000 committees in the area. The people's committees do not only defend their communities from the police and CPM goons. They work hand in hand with Maoist activists who have been operating in the area for years. They have also initiated development projects for drinking water, irrigation, roads and health centers.

Repression of the adivasi. In early June, CPM goons fired on a demonstration led by the PCAPA. Because of this, thousands of *adivasi* burned down CPM offices and police camps, symbols of unbridled power and oppression. As the movement spread to new areas, over a thousand West Bengal policemen and 50 companies of central paramilitary forces were deployed to "retake" Lalgarh. They were met with dug-up roads, felled trees and mass demonstrations of *adivasi* trying to hinder their advance. They were also hounded by land mines and a series of ambushes by the Maoist forces. It took them two and a half days to reach the Lalgarh

police station.

When they reached Lalgarh, the police and paramilitary forces rained ruthless abuses upon the people. Police raided the homes of PCAPA members and dragged the activists outside to be beaten. Children were not spared. They broke the leg of a seven-year old boy. Hundreds of women were stripped naked and humiliated. A woman was raped with a rifle butt by a policeman. The paramilitary forces forced local youth to act as "human shields," searching for hidden mines and explosives.

Faced with this brutality, tens of thousands of *adivasi* were forced to flee their villages. Hundreds of houses have been burned down and several thousand families herded out of their villages. More than 20,000 people are now living in make-shift camps looked after by the opposition parties.

Pursuit of Maoist guerrillas. The military operation also pursued the Maoist guerrilla units operating in the area. Maoists

operating in the area held mass meetings of villagers only a few kilometers from the state forces. Using technical assistance provided by the US and Israel, the Indian government launched a satellite to locate Maoist guerrilla units in the dense forests. The West Bengal government also clamped down on outside monitoring teams. They arrested, maltreated and detained an All-India Fact Finding Team organized by progressive forces.

A week later, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) was banned throughout India. Gour Chak-ravorthy, the open spokesperson of the CPI (Maoist) in West Bengal, was also arrested while giving an interview inside a TV channel studio.

In spite of this, the PCAPA remains undaunted. It launched a general strike on July 9 and another one since August 18 in the three districts of West Midnapore, Bankura and Purulia in West Bengal. Businesses and government establishments were shut down and public transportation paralyzed. The *adivasi* continue to demand in their actions an immediate end to militarization in Lalgarh.

Meanwhile, demoralization is extensive among the rank and file of the police and military of West Bengal because of their failure to completely defeat the *adivasi* and Maoist guerrillas.

Another offensive by the military and police is imminent due to the failure of "Operation Lalgarh". Despite this, the *adivasi* remain steadfast in their struggle which serves as an inspiration and has garnered the support of many progressive forces in India and other parts of the world.



Fisherfolk oppose fishing ban in Manila Bay

THE PAMBANSANG Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) called for massive protest actions should the proposed fishing ban in Manila Bay and its neighboring provinces push through.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture (DA) is proposing a partial fishing ban in 2012 and a full ban starting 2015 purportedly to clean up Manila Bay.

Members of PAMALAKAYA and Anakpawis launched a picket in front of the DA office to oppose this scheme. PAMALAKAYA said residents of the area have no means of livelihood other than fishing. Up to 13 million families will lose their livelihood if this proposal is approved.

PAMALAKAYA belied the DA's statement that "overfishing" is the number one reason why pollution has worsened in Manila Bay. It clarified that fishing is not the cause of pollution but the ceaseless dumping of toxic waste in the Pasig River and Manila Bay from industrial and commercial establishments along these bodies of water. The Pasig River empties into the Manila Bay.

The proliferation of these establishments was spurred by the privatization of public land in the area, the building of numerous special economic zones and the proliferation of new commercial buildings and other government projects on land reclaimed from the bay. This was done without considering the grave pollution that would ensue. Thousands of residents along Manila Bay were driven out to give way to these projects.

PAMALAKAYA said that instead of banning fishing, authorities should strictly prohibit the dumping of waste in Manila Bay and the construction of huge commercial buildings along it that dump toxic chemicals and waste into the sea. In a related development, Anakpawis revealed that aside from the commercial buildings and government offices that have already been built along the bay, up to 20,000 hectares in Manila Bay have been reserved for use as special economic zones in Bataan and Cavite.

Wyeth workers assail mass layoffs

WORKERS of Wyeth Philippines launched a protest action at the company's office in Pasong Tamo, Makati on August 26 to protest impending massive layoffs. According to the Wyeth Philippines Progressive Workers Union (WPPWU), up to 3,000 workers are in danger of being retrenched due to the reported sale of the company to its rival Pfizer for \$68 billion.

The WPPWU is worried that once the merger pushes through, the new company will not honor the union's Collective Bargaining Agreement with Wyeth.

In related news, workers of the closed down Triumph International Philippines Inc. (TIPI) also held a protest action in Mendiola, Manila that same day. Up to 1,663 TIPI workers lost their jobs due to the factory shutdown. Their protest action was launched in coordination with demonstrations by other Triumph workers in Thailand, Hongkong, Germany and Norway.

Families, progressives commemorate Day of the Disappeared

SOME 150 members of progressive organizations marched in Manila on August 30 to commemorate the International Day of the Disappeared. Members of Karapatan, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Bayan Muna, GABRIELA and Desaparecidos, an organization of relatives of victims of involuntary disappearance cried for justice for the victims.

Similar mass actions took place in Bacolod City, Baguio City and even in the US and The Netherlands.

Up to 207 persons have been abducted by the state's armed minions since Gloria Arroyo took power in 2001. This is on top of victims who were abducted even before the present regime.

Desaparecidos warned Arroyo that her immunity will soon come to an end and that relatives of the missing will demand justice.

Palparan's hit man acquitted

JUDGE Silvino Pampilo Jr. of the Metropolitan Trial Court (MTC) Branch 26 acquitted military agent Aniano Flores, alias Silver, on August 25. Flores, a "rebel returnee" and death squad element of Gen. Jovito Palparan, was accused by Ruel Landicho of shooting and killing in May 2002 Edilberto "Choy" Napoles, Bayan Muna coordinator in Mindoro Oriental. Landicho and Napoles were together when Flores fired at them. Napoles was killed while Landicho was wounded.

The court claimed that Landicho failed to prove Flores' guilt. Karapatan-Southern Tagalog strongly condemned the decision of the MTC Branch 26, saying that Flores is implicated in other extrajudicial killings and he himself has admitted that he is a member of a military intelligence unit organized by Palparan.