



EDITORIAL

Strive to frustrate the brutal Oplan Kapayapaan

Towards the end of 2017, Duterte and the AFP pompously declared that they will crush the New People's Army (NPA) before the end of 2018 under Oplan Kapayapaan. Such is more ambitious compared to the "reduce to insignificance" declaration which the AFP repeatedly proclaimed under Oplan Bayanihan (2011-2016) during the previous Aquino regime which they miserably failed to achieve.

Like all previous counter-revolutionary wars of suppression since Marcos, Duterte's Oplan Kapayapaan will fail in its declared ambition. The people's aspiration for social justice, genuine democracy and national freedom will not be suppressed however intense Duterte's armed brutality to defend the interests of the oppressors and exploiters.

In his desperation to crush the Filipino people's armed resistance, Duterte has intensified his counter-revolutionary war using the entire state armed machinery. Du-

terte and the AFP employs the tactics of widespread occupation of rural villages, intimidation and coercion against the people. This aim to suppress the struggles of the peasant masses and minority people for land and to serve the interests of foreign big corporations in mining and plantations, and prevent them from participating in the armed struggle and supporting the people's army.

At the same time, in areas under the AFP principal concentration, its units mount siege operations or "focused military

NPA-Isabela strikes newly formed AFP battalion

THE NPA-CENTRAL ISABELA (Reynaldo Piñon Command or RPC) struck at the 95th IB, a newly formed battalion under the 5th ID, in a series of tactical offensives.

About 12 troopers were slain while three others were injured in an ambush launched by Red fighters against a platoon of the 95th IB in Barangay Sindon Bayabo, Ilagan City on August 16, at around 5 a.m. Among those killed in action was Sgt. Junie Iyadan. Red fighters seized an R4 assault rifle and 10 magazines in the ambush. The AFP retaliated by dropping bombs and strafing using two helicopters which severely terrorized civilians and destroyed their livelihood. Two carabaos were killed.

On August 14, around 9 p.m., Red fighters disarmed Task Force Kalikasan (TFK) members along Sindon Highway in the same barangay. The TFK is notorious for

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operations" using overwhelming forces against units of the NPA. There are operations commanded at the division or area command level and which mobilize batallion-sized forces to isolate and encircle a unit or units of the NPA in the area. They use drones for surveillance. They employ helicopters to drop bombs and rockets and fire artillery cannons to intimidate the people.

In an attempt to cover all guerrilla fronts, and territories and areas of operation of the revolutionary movement, Duterte is rushing to increase the AFP's forces. The AFP formed ten new battalions for a total of 98 batallions. It aims to enlist 15,000 soldiers before the end of the year promising salary increases to attract recruits. Duterte is scurrying to acquire various modern weaponry from the US and other countries. He is seeking loans to buy new firearms, bullets, helicopters, rockets, bombs and other weapons.

Despite having intensified their total war, Duterte and the AFP are set to meet complete failure in their attempt to suppress the

people's revolutionary armed resistance.

The AFP's forces are overstretched. It has deployed 75 battalions in Mindanao, 34 in the Moro areas and 41 against the NPA. Thus, it has only 20-25 batallions to deploy in Luzon and Visayas giving the NPA in these regions wide berth to maneuver, expand and strengthen.

Even in areas being besieged by the AFP in some Mindanao regions, it can only afford to concentrate one battalion of maneuver troops to cover several adjacent clusters of villages for several weeks. Other combat troops are scattered in squads in villages within the NPA's guerrilla fronts making them vulnerable to annihilation by NPA platoons. A far bigger number of villages are without AFP presence proving the AFP cannot cover all barrios at all times.

AFP officials and troops are becoming increasasingly tired with the non-stop field operations which meet repeated failure.

Duterte's government is becoming bankrupt. Its fiscal deficit soared by 30% from January to July. To buy new weapons, it is

leading the country further into debt. Politically and funds-wise, it cannot afford to daily fire their cannons and fly their helicopters to drop bombs. In addition, the military is swamped in corruption. They counterfeit lists of "surrenderes" to pocket the funds for "integration." They steal even from the operations funds of their troops.

Strategically, the use of modern weapons by Duterte and the AFP is ineffective. Duterte's bombs and rockets cannot flatten the mountains nor crush NPA units who have mastered guerrilla tactics and enjoy the deep and wide support of the masses.

Duterte will fail in his ambition to crush the NPA because he is extremely isolated from the Filipino people. As his war of suppression become increasingly brutal and cruel, he is further inciting the people to take up arms and resist. Under Oplan Kapayapaan, violations of human rights run rampant. Everyday, thousands upon thousands are subjected to intimidation, coercion and threats by fascist soldiers occupying their villages.

AFP officials abuse their power by arbitrarily drawing up lists of people who need to "clear themselves" and coercing them to "surrender" even without evidence that they are members of the NPA. They are not formally charged before courts. Many are duped to attend assemblies supposedly to receive funds or services but would later be presented to the media as "NPA surrenderes."

After more than half a year, the AFP cannot yet boast of any major victory under Oplan Kapayapaan. The only thing which the AFP brags of is its claim of more than 4,000 "surrenderes" who are, in fact, victims of relentless AFP intimidation and violence. From time to time, the military declares areas as "development ready" but are repeatedly rebuffed by NPA tactical offensives in those areas.

In fact, the NPA is able to mount increasing number of tactical offensives. These include those mounted recently by the NPA in Luzon and Visayas such as that in



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cppinformationbureau@gmail.com

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Ilocos Sur, Isabela, Mt. Province, Rizal, Quezon, Batangas, Albay, Sorsogon, Northern Samar, Capiz and Iloilo.

Despite having deployed almost 50% of its troops against the NPA in Mindanao, the NPA continues to launch tactical offensives and other actions in the five regions of Mindanao. It continues to implement laws and policies of the people's democratic government concerning the economy, the environment and others.

In the coming months, more frequent and bigger tactical offensives of the NPA across the country will surely cause the further overspread of the AFP's forces.

Under the Party's leadership, the NPA will roundly frustrate Duterte's Oplan Kapayapaan this year. This will be achieved by the NPA by following the line of extensive and intensive guerilla warfare based on an ever widening and deepening mass base.

All NPA commanders and fighters must strive and be ready to make sacrifices in the face of the counterrevolutionary brutality of Duterte's war. Their will to fight and readiness to act quickly must always remain high to defeat the enemy's plans at all stages and at all times.

Painstakingly strengthen the Party at all levels of the NPA. The Party must firmly lead the NPA to comprehensively carry-out its military and political tasks. Further strengthen the NPA. Continuously recruit and train new Red fighters.

At every opportunity, seize the initiative and frustrate the enemy's offensives. Continue to master guerrilla tactics of concentration and dispersal, quick shifting and use of deception to make the enemy beat the wind and to hit at its isolated and scattered units. Diligently monitor and study the enemy's offensive plans at the division and brigade levels. Firmly draw up tactics, plans and coordination at the regional and subregional levels. All units of the NPA must assiduously carry out their tasks in line with the overall plan.

Mount tactical offensives across the country with the correct balance of punitive and annihilative operations. Pay attention to offensives with the aim of seizing weapons from the enemy.

The NPA must boldly arouse, organize and mobilize the peasant masses and minority people in their millions and intensify their antifeudal and other economic struggles with the aim of improving their lives especially amid crisis. Raise their anti-imperialist consciousness by exposing the interests of big foreign capitalists which trample upon their welfare. Actively mobilize the peasant masses to participate in the people's war.

Exert all-out effort to advance the anti-fascist struggles. In the countryside, firmly resist military occupation of communities. Oppose the campaign of intimidation, harassment and coercing the peasant masses to "surrender." Collectively struggle against the AFP's "surrender list" which are veritable AFP targets of suppression or death warrants, which violate international humanitarian law, and are illegal even under reactionary laws. Strive to more vigorously advance the people's economic struggles amid militarization to assert the people's legitimate interests and link with their anti-fascist resistance.

In the cities, in accord with the democratic struggles of various sectors, actively expose the AFP's fascist onslaught in the countryside, especially the suppression and crackdown against civilians. Echo the calls to end martial law in Mindanao and military rule across the country. Demonstrate the correctness and justness of the masses' armed resistance to defend their land and advance their cause. Further accelerate NPA recruitment of workers, as well as students and other intellectuals and democratic sectors.

Further broaden the unity against Duterte's fascism and tyranny. Mobilize the entire people to overthrow the US-Duterte regime. AB

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controlling logging operations in, and exploiting resources of the Sierra Madre mountain range. Its personnel confiscate timber which they then sell to generate income. They also nab small loggers and extort cash from them ranging from P2,000-P10,000 per trip.

The NPA-Central Isabela also arrested PO2 Danilo Maur who was caught red-handed transporting 3,000 boardfeet of timber along the same highway on August 15 at around 11 p.m. Maur is an active intelligence agent. He uses logging and trading as a pretext for conducting surveillance in territories of the people's government. He is also notorious for extorting money from small loggers. A .45 caliber pistol was seized from him.

Maur was declared a prisoner of war and probed for his crimes against the people. He was set free after a three-day investigation. He voluntarily promised to stop his surveillance and criminal activities. He was turned over to his family on August 19 at around 2 p.m.

Meanwhile, armed actions were also mounted by other NPA units in various parts of the country.

Ilocos Sur. The NPA-Ilocos Sur (Alfredo Cesar Jr Command or ACC) attacked the 81st IB headquarters in Barangay Bugbuga, Sta. Cruz in the evening of August 9. Saniata Maglaya, spokesperson of ACC, said that an AFP official was killed while another soldier was wounded in the attack.

Maglaya added that the 81st IB is notorious for abusing civilians while conducting so-called community support programs. They also serve as mercenaries of hydropower dam projects in Salcedo. The 81st IB spokesperson admitted that on top of the casualties, the officers' quarters, administrative office, and a vehicle were also destroyed.

Masbate. On August 24 at around 7:45 a.m., Red fighters of the NPA-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) ambushed policemen aboard a patrol vehicle in Crossing Biyong, Masbate City. The said officers came from their detachment

in Barangay Bayombon when the NPA detonated an explosive (CDX) and fired upon them. Four policemen were wounded, including SP02 Ariel Espiel.

Rizal. Two elements of the 80th IB were seriously wounded when the NPA-Rizal blasted their truck with a CDX in Sitio Tanza 2, San Jose, Antipolo City on July 30, at around 9:30 a.m.

On July 28, another unit of the NPA-Rizal shot at elements of the 59th IB operating in Barangay Sta. Inez, Tanay, Rizal. A soldier was slain.

Quezon. A unit of the NPA-Quezon in Southern Tagalog fired at a company of the 80th IB in Sitio Sari, Lumutan on August 13, General Nakar. Two soldiers were slain while two others were seriously wounded.

On the afternoon of the same day, an element of the 1st IB was sniped and killed by another unit of the NPA-Quezon in Barangay Cagsiay II, Mauban. Elements of the said unit serve as mercenaries of Marbuilt Construction, a company notorious for grabbing farmers' lands in Laguna and Quezon.

Capiz. Four soldiers of the 61st IB were wounded in a harassment operation launched by a unit of the NPA-Central Panay (Jose Percival Estocada Jr Command) on August 26 in Sitio Naatip, Barangay Lahug. The 17-men unit of the said batallion were conducting combat operations when they were hit by a CDX at around 7:00 p.m.

Iloilo. Three police officers were wounded in an ambush launched by a unit of the NPA-Southern Front (Napoleon Tumagtang Command) against the Iloilo Police Provincial Office's 1st Provincial Mobile Force Company on August 24 at around 6 a.m.

The said officers were on a combat patrol in Barangay Isian, Victoria, Leon. Chief Inspector Abner Jordan, the leader of the said unit, was wounded in action.

Compostela Valley. A unit of the NPA-Compostela Valley ambushed patrolling troops of the 46th IB in Manangkol, Golden Valley, Mabini. Three soldiers were killed in the attack. AB

NPA paralyzes operation of 2 mining companies

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA) temporarily paralyzed the destructive operations of two large mining companies last August in Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte and San Mateo, Rizal.

An NPA unit torched a dredger (barge used in mining black sand and other minerals from the Agusan River) in Purok 1-B, Barangay Lingayao, Las Nieves in the evening of August 24. Upon boarding the dredger docked off shore, Red fighters ordered four crew members including the captain, to disembark. They confiscated a shotgun from its security guard before burning down the dredger. The said dredger is owned by the Ark Green Dynamic Resources Corporation. Its operation is destructive to the Agusan River. The said corporation also dumps its mining waste products back to the Agusan River. Meanwhile, the NPA-Rizal paralyzed on August 12 the machinery of Monte Rock Corporation, a company involved

in destructive quarrying operations in Barangay Guitnang Bayan 2, San Mateo, Rizal. According to the NPA-Rizal, the two-hour raid seeks to punish the company which has been quarrying for years in mountainous areas in Rizal. Its operation has resulted in uncontrollable flooding not only in San Mateo but Marikina City and Metro Manila, as well. The raid was launched after the flooding in San Mateo due to Typhoon Karding. The NPA paralyzed six dump trucks, two bulldozers, two payloaders, four backhoes, four vans and various office equipment. They also disarmed the security guards of the company. Two shotguns, three .38 caliber pistols, and five handheld radios were seized. AB

NPA seizes 10 M16 rifles from PNP-Lapinig

THE NPA-NORTHERN Samar (Rodante Urtal Command or RUC) seized 10 M16 rifles, two .9mm pistols, one thousand M16 bullets, and 49 magazines in its successful raid against the police headquarters in Lapinig on August 10. The Red fighters also confiscated a telescope, three laptop computers and various important documents.

In a statement on August 12, it said that the raid is a heavy blow against the US-Duterte regime, most especially because officers of the aforementioned station are notorious protectors of illegal drugs syndicates in Northern Samar.

Ka Amado Pesante, spokesperson of the NPA-RUC, said that while the Philippine National Police (PNP) is being utilized by the regime as a killing machine in its hypocritical Oplan Tokhang, its police officers are actually involved in illegal drug trade in many towns of the province.

Coming in by dump truck, the Red fighters raided the police headquarters and engaged the police officers in a five-minute fire fight until the latter surrende-

red. Two police officers were wounded. Since last year, poor peasants have reported to the NPA about the PNP's involvement in the illegal drug trade. The RUC added that the PNP is also using Oplan Tokhang as a pretext to coerce civilians to surrender as NPA members.

Meanwhile in another statement on September 2, the NPA-RUC reported seven military actions launched under its command from May to June against troops of the 803rd IBde. Five of these offensives were conducted in the towns of Silvino Lobos, and one each in Las Navas and Lope de Vega. The enemy unit suffered no less than eight casualties, and RUC was able to seize M60 and M16 bullets. AB

The rapidly worsening economic crisis

The crisis of the people's livelihood and decline of the backward Philippine economy is exarcebating. The people are subjected to increasingly worse forms of oppression and exploitation under neoliberal policies which serve local and foreign big capitalists, landlords and bureaucrat capitalists.

Since the start of the year, prices of food and other basic necessities have climbed ceaselessly. This August, inflation hit 6.4%, the highest in almost a decade. People bear the brunt of soaring rice prices. Prices of diesel and other petroleum products also continue to increase.

Unemployment is widespread. No less than 11 million are without or lack work. In the agricultural sector, at least 723,000 jobs were reported lost in April. The gap between workers' wages and the minimum threshold for decent living is widening.

The people are correct to indict Duterte for the relentless rise in the prices of commodities due to the burdensome TRAIN law taxes. Contrary to his promise of a "comfortable life," Duterte has only brought hardship and poverty with his TRAIN, subsidy cuts and other policies. He has merely perpetuated the policies of previous regimes. His "Build, Build, Build" offers nothing new except to eliminate established requirements to open up ways for widespread corruption.

The crisis in the people's livelihood worsens alongside the continuing deterioration of the economy. Since this year, there are indications that the economy is approaching the verge of a severe crisis.

There is a widening trade deficit (\$19.1 billion in the first semester of the year, the highest half year deficit in history), balance of payments (\$3.7 billion in the first seven months, almost three times greater than during the same period last year) and the budget deficit (P279.4 billion, 36% higher than the same period in 2017).

The regime and the reactionary technocrats scramble to cover up the roots of the economic crisis. They never tire of proclaiming the

economy's "strong fundamentals," when in fact, it is bankrupt to the core. It is becoming more decrepit amid the international capitalist crisis and the drive of the monopoly capitalists to accumulate profits through worsening forms of exploitation.

The local economy is backward and cannot stand on its own. The foreign big capitalists dominate local production centered around so-called "economic zones." These are import-dependent and export-oriented. These do not raise local production capacity and do not address local needs. Foreign investors are not levied taxes on their profits and consumption of goods and services. Workers' basic rights are suppressed to subject them to the worst forms of exploitation. The value created by workers do not contribute to local economic growth but is instead factored into the international assembly line of big multinational corpo-

rations.

Foreign big capitalists siphon off local resources. Large swathes of land are taken from or denied the peasants and minority peoples, and are plundered for its the mineral resources and used as plantations for export crops. Hundreds of thousands of hectares are denied use for production of food for local processing and consumption. Local agricultural production is backward. It starkly lacks irrigation facilities and machineries for cultivation, planting, harvesting and milling. State subsidy for agriculture is almost nil.

The crisis of livelihood is a deep wound which the entire people suffer. The regime's palliatives such as cash subsidies are worthless. The people's resistance will surely rise in the coming months. **AB**



Mindanao bombings to further martial law

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of the Philippines condemns the bombings in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat last August 28 and September 2 where at least four died and almost 50 were wounded. It also condemned the US-Duterte regime for using the two incidents to justify its plan to extend martial law in Mindanao for the second time.

Mindanao martial law is set to expire on December 31. This early, Rodrigo Duterte's minions and allies have already expressed support for its extension. Duterte has already threatened to impose a national curfew.

The police claim that the revolutionary movement, particularly the New People's Army, has something to do with the bombing incidents is a big lie. The NPA firmly follows its rule in ensuring the safety of civilians and it is against its principles to endanger them.

Greater crimes and human rights violations are being committed in the name of martial law. The list of cases of widespread intimidation and forcing civilians to "surrender," harassment and killing, militarization and putting up numerous detachments in the name of "peace and development" is long. Civilians are also victims during "focused" combat operations where rockets and bombs are used. **AB**

Junk the fake OLBARMM, join the NPA!—MRLO

The Moro Resistance and Liberation Organization (MRLO) vigorously condemned the recently enacted Bangsamoro Organic Law, otherwise known as the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (OLBARMM).

The group said that OLBARMM is being used as an instrument by the US-Duterte regime to crush the Moro people's struggle even as the majority suffer from poverty and injustice. Rodrigo Duterte signed the said law on July, after it was railroaded in congress and senate on May.

Hunger and poverty is pervasive in the Moro areas and is bound to intensify under the soon-to-be-established Bangsamoro, added the MRLO. The OLBARMM has no provisions for the implementation of genuine agrarian reform, a major issue faced by the Moro people. Instead of implementing land reform, the Bangsamoro government itself is tasked to create policies that will further open their ancestral lands to foreign plunder.

This has been proven true in past years under the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The regional government boasts of developing the local economy purportedly through allowing nickel ore mining, quarrying, biomass renewable energy and palm oil plantation operations. Despite jobs generated by the said investments, poverty incidence in the region worsened. Statistics indicate that almost 60% of the regional population of about four million are considered poor.

Using the ruling Moro elites, the OLBARMM aims to peddle the wealth and resources of the region to foreign corporations. In fact, the reactionary government has already awarded billions-worth of oil concession in Liguasan Marsh to the Malaysian Gas Petronas – a US corporation based in Malaysia, and the Lake Lanao to multinational corporations and local compradors including Manny Pangilinan. UNIFRUITTI, Dole, Del Monte, La Frutera, Nestle, Mount Kalatungan Agri Ventures Inc., and mining companies are expected to expand their encroachment and plantations in Maguindanao, Basilan, Ta-

wi-tawi, Sulu, Sultan Kudarat, North Cotabato and Lanao Del Sur.

“We are not surprised by the decision of some MILF leaders to abandon the armed struggle as many of them are now among the Moro ruling elites who own vast lands of banana and oil palm plantations in Sultan Kudarat, Sultan Mastura, Datu Odin Sinsuat and Upi in Maguindanao. Some own malls, hotels and restaurants in Cotabato and Davao City,” said Ka Jihad Al-Qursi, spokesperson of MRLO.

“They are quick to lay down their arms because they themselves will greatly benefit from OLBARMM while majority of the Moro people live in dire poverty.”

MRLO added that even during peace negotiations between the MILF and the reactionary government, military operations against the Moro people continued unabated. Under the guise of the war against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, an MILF break-away faction, the Liguasan Marsh was relentlessly bombed during the Ramadan this year. About 20,000 families evacuated due to this.

Duterte also pulverized Marawi City which resulted in the evacuation of 323,000 individuals, destruction of homes and infrastructure, and the deaths of thousands of civilians. While the ‘negotiations’ between the MILF and Duterte regime are ongoing, 30 military battalions were deployed in ARMM to crush Moro armed groups including the BIFF, MNLF and MILF. Armed clashes in Moro communities continue.

According to Al Qursi, the Moro people have no reason to celebrate the approval of the OLBARMM. The law does not address the Moro's clamor for self-determination and justice, and their right to control



their ancestral lands and territory. OLBARMM fails to recognize their aspiration to till lands they can own, end discrimination against the Moro people, and to be free from the oppressive reactionary US-Duterte regime.

Instead of serving justice, the Duterte and the Moro elites are determined to displace the Moro people by hook or by crook. Hunger and poverty will worsen. Thousands of Moros will be left with no choice but to sell their labor power cheaply so they can feed their families, while big corporations amass profit.

“We call on the Moro people to continue the armed struggle amid the provisions of the OLBARMM on the decommissioning (laying down of arms) of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF). The MRLO believes that this is a mere tactic of the regime to render the Moro communities defenseless against state forces and multinational corporations which seek to plunder the Moro lands and resources,” said Al Qursi. The BIAF is the

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standing army of the MILF.

The group also called on their fellow Moro to join the New People's Army, the true army of the Filipino people and the Bangsamoro. MRLO also expressed openness to work with the MILF, BIFF and other Moro organizations to advance the armed struggle until the achievement of complete liberation from US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. The Moro people will be fighting alongside the Filipino people to achieve national democracy.

"History has taught us that self-determination and independence will not be attained through peace agreements with the reactionary state. Only through armed resistance can the Moro people achieve genuine justice and freedom," said Al Qursi. AB

Manobos occupy ancestral lands

AROUND 3,000 Manobos, led by KASILU (Kaugalingong Sistema Igpasasingdog to Lumadnong Ugpaan), simultaneously occupied and cultivated 200 hectares of land in Barangay Cawayan, San Fernando, Bukidnon last September 4. The land is being claimed by Paquet Albona, Toto Espidoza and Bennie Elumba.

It has been five decades since the Manobo's ancestral lands were taken from them. They seldom experience hunger before because they have sufficient food coming from their farmlands. They are used to "hunglusay", a system of collective farming. They also get their medicines, clean water and materials for housing from their ancestral lands.

"Only through our collective struggle will we reclaim our ancestral lands," according to Datu Ekil Amas, secretary of KASILU in San Fernando. Participants of the land occupation came from the 12 Manobo communities of barangays Magkalunay, Cawayan and Poblacion.

In Norzagaray, Bulacan, 60 peasant families also conducted a *bungkalan* (collective cultivation) of 75 hectares of land in Barangay San Mateo which is being claimed by Royal Mollucan, a real estate company. The peasants are members of *Samahan ng Mabubukid sa Compra* which started planting banana, palay and vegetables last September 1.

Last September 6, armed elements of Royal Mollucan attacked the *bungkalan* and destroyed the palay, fruit-bearing trees and vegetables, even the peasants' make-shift houses. They also fired at the peasants last September 3. AB

Workers march to Mendiola

VARIOUS UNIONS AND workers' associations, alongside church people held a "Workers' March" at Mendiola Bridge in Manila last August 27. They called for the end of contractualization and to fight against the worsening economic conditions of workers and the people.

Thousands from around 20 organizations participated in the march led by Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) and the Church-Labor Conference headed by Manila Auxiliary Bishop Pabillo. A similar march was conducted by *Samahan ng mga Manggagawa laban sa Kontraktwalisasyon (SAMA AKO)* in Davao City.

Protests were also held in the cities of Cebu and Bacolod in Visayas.

Meanwhile, more than 300 workers of Liwayway Marketing Corporation went on strike last August 24 after its management denied the workers' just call to regularize all contractuales. The workers are under four labor contractors despite working for 15 years for the company behind Oishi products.

In related news, PLDT supervisors plan to go on strike after being made by the company to

overwork resulting in health issues. PLDT supervisors are being made to do extra jobs covering the work of 12,000 contractuales recently laid-off en masse. The laid-off contractuales expressed full support to the supervisors.

People's protests

In Bacolod City, around 1,500 members of the *Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay)-Negros* camped-out in front of an unoccupied government housing project in Barangay Felisa last August 30.

Kadamay has long asked the National Housing Authority to award them the said housing. According to Berlita Ante, Kadamay-Negros secretary general, they will not occupy the houses as long as the Bacolod NHA is open to a dialogue. The protests will continue until such dialogue takes place.

Counter-terrorism. Various national minority groups marched and protested in front of the Manila Regional Trial Court last August 31 to file a motion to remove indigenous leaders from the list of terrorists in a case submitted by the Department of Justice to the said court.

They condemned the continuing arrests and detention of around 170 indigenous leaders and individuals.

Defense of Lumad schools. Save our Schools Network (SOS) and Salinlahi Alliance protested in front of the Congress last August 28 during deliberations of the Department of Education (DepEd) budget.

They called for the release of permits to operate of Lumad schools and condemned DepEd for allowing military presence in their schools.

The "Eskwelehang Bakwit" was reestablished in Metro Manila last September 3 bearing the calls against militarization and harassment of Lumad schools by the Duterte regime. AB

Military and police rampage across the archipelago

Three members of a peasant organization in Compostela Valley were successively killed by state agents this August amid the continuing terror of Mindanao martial law. In other parts of the country, other military and police units also rule with terror.

Killings. In Compostela Valley, elements of the 66th IB shot and killed on August 18 at around 10:30 p.m. Rolly Panebio, 46, an active member of the Compostela Farmers Association (CFA). Panebio had just finished his shift as volunteer security staff of the Salupongan Ta Tanu Igkanugon Community Learning Center in Barangay Bango when two men aboard a motorcycle arrived. The men dragged Panebio some meters away from the school and shot him. At around noon the following day, elements of the 66th IB also shot and killed the couple Gilbert and Jean Labial, also members of CFA. The couple were on their way home from Panebio's funeral when Gilbert noticed two men waiting near the 66th IB camp in Sityo Balite, Barangay Banakon of the same town. Gilbert turned his motorcycle around but the assailants chased and shot them to death.

Panebio and the Labial couple were active in opposing mining and militarization in their area. They were recently accused by soldiers of being members of the New People's Army (NPA) and were forced to surrender last February and March.

In Negros Oriental, Heide Malalay Flores was shot to death at past 6 p.m. on August 21 in Poblacion, Guihulngan City. Flores was a former activist and was known to be helpful especially to poor peasants. In 2017, Flores was threatened by the vigilante group *Kawsa sa Guihulnganon Batok Druga ug Komunista* after a successful NPA ambush against the PNP.

In Cebu, 42-year old Butch Rosales, a human rights defender and Rise Up Cebu volunteer, was shot to death on August 8. Rosales was seated in front of a jeepney on his way to Punta Engaño in Lapu-Lapu City when the assailant shot him

from behind. The assassin fled aboard a waiting motorcycle.

In Pangasinan, elements of the PNP Regional Office 1 killed minor Joshua Laxamana, 17, while the youngster was on his way home to Tarlac City along with his friend Julius Sebastian, 15.

Both teens were returning from Baguio City after attending a DOTA tournament. They were last sighted in Sison, Pangasinan last August 16 while hitching for a ride home. The following day, the PNP reported that they had killed Laxamana when he "put up a fight." The PNP also reported that the youngster was involved in thefts in Pangasinan, in possession of a firearm and shabu, and evaded a checkpoint aboard a motorcycle. The PNP has yet to surface Sebastian.

Frustrated killing. Armed men attempted to kill Victor Ageas, union leader of *Nagkahiusang Mamumuo sa Suyapa Farms-Kilusang Mayo Uno* in Compostela, Compostela Valley on September 4 at around 6 a.m. Ageas was driving his motorcycle on his way to work when four men aboard motorcycles tailed him. Four more men met him along Crossing Blanco. The assailants fired at him when he was only two meters away.

The KMU pointed as the motive NAMASUFA's plan to launch a strike against Sumifru because of the company's disregard of the collective bargaining union spearheaded by the union.

Illegal arrest. On September 2, three farmers in Barangay Calumpit, Lobo, Batangas were illegally arrested by soldiers of the 2nd ID encamped in the middle of civilian houses in the said village. According to the *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas*, arrested were Marwin de Rafael, Santi Ticatic and Joselito Flores and are currently detained at PNP Lobo.

Residents of Lobo have been militantly opposing the planned construction of a mining company in the municipality.

The illegal arrest was made after the NPA-Batangas' defense against an attack by the 1st IB in Sityo Silyaran of the same barangay earlier that day. The NPA set off a bomb and fired at the soldiers resulting in some casualties in the military.

On August 11, two police officers in plainclothes arrested Arnold Albarillo in Barangay Calsapa and brought him to the Provincial Public Safety Battalion camp in Barangay Tacligan, San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro. He was put under interrogation for two hours before being brought to the PNP San Teodoro. He was detained for cases for murder, attempted murder and rebellion.

Albarillo comes from a family long subjected to state persecution. His parents and older brother were victims of torture and murder by the military. In April 2002, under then Col. Jovito Palparan's reign of terror in Mindoro, his parents Manuela and Expedito, Bayan Muna coordinators, were accused as NPA members and killed. In 2012, the 74th IB killed Armando Albarillo, Arnold's brother and former secretary general of Bayan-Southern Tagalog.

Meanwhile, in the afternoon of August 15, police illegally arrested Mylene Santua, former spokesperson of the group *Coco Levy Fund Ibalik sa Amin (CLAIM)*, in Barangay Pagsangahan, San Francisco, Quezon. CLAIM is calling for the return to coconut farmers of more than P200 billion in coco levy funds. Santua was pregnant and was on her way to a medical check up when she was arrested. She is currently detained at Barangay Malamig in the same town.

Bombing. The 10th ID's bombing brought extreme fear to the students of Salupongan Ta Tanu Igkanugon Learning Center in Ba-

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GRP manipulates rice and food crisis to push all-out liberalization

Filipinos are currently tightening their belts amid galloping inflation and dominant control of big capitalists over rice, fish and other staple food supply despite the Philippines being an agricultural country. Based on data by the reactionary government, the average retail price of rice increased by 10% since 2017. Last month, Zamboanga City was compelled to declare a state of calamity after rice prices rose up to P70-P80/kilo in the city.

Simultaneously, prices of round scad (galunggong), tilapia and milkfish (bangus) soared up to P160-P200/kilo (higher by P20-P60 than its suggested retail price or SRP), P130/kilo (higher by P30) and P180/kilo (higher by P30), respectively. The regime considers the current food crisis as among the crucial factors why inflation hit a nine-year high of 6.4% last month.

But instead of strengthening local production consistent with the principle of food and agricultural security and sovereignty to address the said crisis, the regime's economic managers and House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo are using it as a pretext to implement unlimited importation of agricultural products in compliance

with the policy recommendations of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In particular, they are paving the way for the implementation of policies that will further dismantle importation restrictions and pull down tariffs. The enactment of the Rice Tariffication Bill that will completely remove the quantitative restriction (QR) on rice and replace it with a meager 35% tariff that is bound to be

pulled down to lower levels in the coming years. Furthermore, the Department of Agriculture implemented last month the Fisheries Administrative Order 195 which permits the importation of 17,000 metric tons (MT) of round scad.

Neoliberal scheme

Under the Ramos regime in 1995, then Senator Arroyo lobbied for the Philippines to sign the Agreement on Agriculture (AOA) of the WTO. In accordance



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rangay Dagohoy, Talaingod, Davao del Norte last August 27. The Philippine Air Force dropped its bombs near the school where children were holding classes.

Militarization. In Isabela, the 54th IB have been occupying Barangay Sta. Isabel, Jones since July. A certain Lt. Amilao leads the "community support program" operations. As a result, various cases of human rights violations were recorded, including the forcible entry and illegal searching of residences, destruction of farms, surveillance and tagging of residents as NPA members or supporters. The soldiers also imposed a curfew. Aside from the 54th IB in Jones, the 86th IB and the 95th IB are also conducting operations in the towns of San Agustin and San Guillermo.

In Negros, the 303rd IBde's violations of the rights of the island's people intensified since the 15th IB and 94th IB arrived in the

first half of the year. This is apart from the 62nd IB's militarization of the island's other towns. The 303rd IBde is headed by Col. Alberto Desoyo.

The 15th IB's operation has been unrelenting in South Negros, particularly in the towns of Hinobaan, Ilog, Candoni, Sipalay City and Basay since March.

According to Ka Juanito Magbana of the NPA-Negros Island, 15th IB operations serve as clearing operations for the upcoming Balikatan military exercises in October. In the coastal barangays of Asia and Sangke, and in the boundaries of Hinobaan and Ilog, the soldiers ordered the residents to destroy and leave their homes in the mountains.

Among the 15th IB's crimes are the torture of four farmers and forcing them to serve as guides; surveillance and targetting of residents listed by the military as NPA

members or supporters; destruction of farms, crops and harvest; prohibiting residents to tend to their farms; and setting farm animals loose resulting in the deaths of some of these.

In Central Negros, more than 100 soldiers of the 94th IB mounted brutal operations in the cities of Guihulngan and Canlaon, and in the towns of Magallon (Moises Padilla) and Isabela. The NPA-Negros added that elements of the 94th IB misrepresent themselves as Red fighters and sow fear to the villagefolks. Because of this, residents could not tend to their farms.

The 62nd IB meanwhile have been occupying two barangays in Mabinay, two more in Manjuyod, and several in Ayungon since five months ago. The soldiers encamp in barangay halls and other civilian structures, forcibly enter residences and coerce them to surrender as NPA members.

with the AOA, the country is obligated to liberalize and lower tariffs on imported agricultural products to allow the influx of the products in the local market. The Senate ratified the AOA through the enactment of the Agricultural Tariffication Law.

The proposal to completely liberalize the rice sector was met with dissent and resistance, and thus failed to materialize immediately. Amid broad protests, the reactionary government was compelled to apply for a ten-year extension before dismantling the QR on rice.

Although the tariff on rice has initially remained unchanged at 50%, the WTO required the country to implement a minimum access volume (MAV) for rice or the minimum volume of rice allowed to be imported in the country. The MAV was pegged at 3% of the total local production, but data indicate that rice imports are usually above this requirement.

When the reactionary government applied for further extensions on 2004 and 2012, the WTO was able to impose more inequitable trade policy restructuring requirements. On the second extension, it reduced the tariff on rice to 40%, and on imported meat from 40% to 35%. On the third extension, the MAV was increased to 7% and its tariff was reduced to 35%. Tariffs on meat, pig and chicken entrails and dairy products were simultaneously reduced.

At present, the Philippines is the only WTO-affiliated economy with remaining QRs on importation. The regime is currently using the inflation on food prices as a pretext to justify full liberalization of rice and round scad in the local market.

Absurd logic

Ibon Foundation belied the logic that high supply through unlimited importation of food products can stabilize and lower its prices. It explained that there were years when prices have continued to rise amid high importation. For example, the country has been importing an annual average of 1.8 million MT of rice for three years prior to the

Indian fascist troops massacre civilians

Fifteen civilians were massacred by Indian police on August 6 in the village of Nulkatong in the town of Sukma, Chattisgarh. To cover up its crime, police claimed that the civilians were armed and members of the people's militia of the Communist Party of India-Maoist. Families and villagemates of the victims denied this claim.

In August 8, human rights groups filed a case against the police.

According to police accounts, the civilians returned fired and 13 low caliber arms were confiscated from the scene. They even dressed one of the victims, 14-year old Muchaki Muka, in camouflage. The reactionary India state boasted of the massacre as one of the "biggest anti-Naxalite operations" in Chattisgarh. Chattisgarh is considered part of the "Red corridor, an area where CPI-Maoist and its army, the People's Liberation Army, is strong.

But according to investigations by *Scroll.in*, an independent media outfit in India, around 30 individuals were sleeping in a "kheta" or "Ladi," a temporary shelter used by peasants during farming season, when the police opened fire. Out of the 15 killed, four were minors. Four were arrested, one seriously wounded while the rest managed to escape. According to the list released by the CPI-Maoist, none of the civilians were members of the party nor of their militia. Police investigation even proved "some" of the victims as civilians.

Families of the victims, as well as their villagemates, attested to the fact that the victims were civilians. This include three cousin minors who were with their father and uncle. In fact, only two of the civilians originally planned to sleep in the kheta that night. They were joined by others when the police started operating in Nulkatong and nearby villages.

According to the families, the 30 civilians stayed in the kheta to avoid police abuses when its troops started operating last August. Villagemen are often subjected to arbitrary detentions and physical assaults by police forces who enter their communities. The troops also steal the villagers' rice and chickens.

In related news, more and more organizations in and outside India are condemning Narendra Modi, the country's prime minister, for his

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unprecedented Php7.99/kilo rice price spike in 2008. From 2008-2010, the country imported an annual average of 2.2 million MT, but the price of rice continued to increase on an annual average of Php1.20 until 2016.

Government has no control over the price of imported rice when sold at the local market, Ibon added. There were many instances in the past when local prices, especially retail prices in the market, did not always follow the movement of the global prices. There were periods when the price of rice in the world market was generally falling, but local prices continued to rise. This is due to the tight control of big traders

over the supply and price of rice and the continuing neglect of the government of its duty to ensure that consumer rights are protected.

Clearly, the US-Duterte regime's importation programs are mere schemes to push for all-out liberalization of minimally-protected agricultural subsectors, in compliance with the policy recommendations of the WTO. This only proves that the reactionary government has no plans to strengthen and increase local agricultural production, and instead continues to uphold neoliberal trade agreements used by imperialists to impose hegemony over the country. AB

"India....," from page 10

crackdown on activists to stifle legitimate dissent against his regime.

Indian police launched a series of raids and arrests in six states against community leaders, including intellectuals last August 28. Arrested and detained are Sudha Bharadwaj, lawyer and human rights worker; Varavara Rao, known literary figure and poet and his two daughters Anala at Pavana; Arun Ferreira, writer and activist; Gautam Navlakha, reporter and activist; Vernon Gonsalves, writer and activist; Stan Swamy, Catholic priest and activist; Anand Teltumbde, professor and expert; K. Satyanarayana, professor; KV Kurmanath at Kranti Tekula, journalists; at Jiten Yumnam, journalist and human rights worker.

They were arrested for purportedly being involved in the plan to assassinate Modi and for supposedly leading a protest in support of the Adivasis, the collective term for India's national minorities. They were also accused of supporting the CPI-Maoist and its armed wing, the People's Liberation Army, which is mainly based in Adivasi areas.

Around 12 organizations from India, Nepal, Germany, Bangladesh and Philippines signed the petition to junk the trumped up charges against the said activists and release them immediately.

In August 17, the ILPS-Canada also called for the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners G.N. Saibaba, together with the "India 5" and others during the occasion of India's 72nd independence day.

Saibaba is a known literary professor in Delhi University. The five activists are staunch human rights defenders, especially of the Adivasis. They were arrested in June 2017. Saibaba was sentenced to life imprisonment on the same year, together with Hem Mishra, Prashant Rahi, Mahesh Tirki and Pandu Narote. They were accused of having links to Maoists. Saibaba is detained in the notorious Nagpur prison despite his failing health. AB

Progressive Colombian groups unite

FIVE COLOMBIAN PROGRESSIVE groups converged last August 10-11 to establish a united democratic and anti-imperialist front under the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS).

According to Prof. Jose Ma. Sison, chairperson of the ILPS' International Coordinating Committee, the assembly's theme for social justice is timely and apt especially after the FARC (Fuerza Armada Revolucionario de la Colombia) gave up on the armed struggle in exchange for a few political concessions from the country's reactionary state. Nothing will come out of the signed agreements between the FARC and the Colombian government, social justice cannot be realized under the dominance of US imperialism and the reactionary classes, and the oppression and exploitation of the people are escalating, said Prof. Sison. FARC entered into a final peace agreement last 2016, in exchange for three positions in the parliament and amnesty for all its fighters.

Furtheron, Prof. Sison said that united progressive groups are in the position to describe the history and current circumstances of the people of Colombia. The imperialist powers are once more in a period of intensifying economic competition and political rivalry among them and are escalating their oppression and exploitation of the peoples of the world. "Acting according to their narrow selfish interests, they are unwittingly goading the proletariat and people to rise up and liberate themselves."

Particularly in Latin America, "the US has reactionary allies and plenty of political and economic

assets to use against the anti-imperialist, democratic and revolutionary forces and the people," and at the same time preventing Chinese capital incursion into what it has "long regarded as its own backyard." But governments no less, like those of Cuba and Venezuela, have continued to stand up against US intervention. US efforts to impose its dominance in Latin America will intensify, Sison said.

Thus, the people "must be ready for the intensification of various forms of struggle between US imperialism and the peoples of Latin America...In the next five to 10 years, we shall see the unprecedented bursting of the economic and political bubbles of the world capitalist system and the unprecedented rise of people's resistance," Sison added.

ILPS-Colombia consists of La Corporacion para Investigacion y la Educacion Popular, El Movimiento por la Defensa de los Derechos del Pueblo, El Movimiento por la Constituyente Popular, el Colectivo Nacional Sindical Clasista "Guillermo Marín" and Organizacion de Mujeres del Pueblo de Colombia.

It is now part of the 200 member-organizations in 40 countries in five continents which continue to strive for and strengthen unity, cooperation and coordination of the anti-imperialist and democratic struggles throughout the world by developing actions around 17 multi-sectoral concerns. AB