



EDITORIAL

## Fight resolutely to end the dark reign of new martial law

The Filipino people will mark in a few days the 48th anniversary of the Marcos dictatorship's martial law imposition. Marking this day has added importance because of the similar situation we face today. Lessons from the 14-year struggle against the dictatorship are deeply significant and should help guide in confronting and fighting the Duterte fascist tyranny.

Duterte has virtually pulled the country back to the dark days of Marcos' martial law with the incessant attacks against democracy and freedom. Like then, people's rights are systematically taken away and their struggles are suppressed to untrammled reign by Duterte and his cronies and minions.

Like the erstwhile dictator, Duterte's thirst for power and wealth is unquenchable. Using state armed forces to spill the people's blood and terrorize everyone, he established his unquestioned authority. All must kneel and plead. Duterte is an insatiable monster un-

leashing unlimited brutality against those who dare challenge him.

He sits on the shoulders of soldiers and police. His cruelty and brutality is supreme. He spits and tramples on people's rights. There is rampant killings and violence against the poor, and against anyone who stands and fights for the people. In four years, Duterte has surpassed the old dictator in terms of mass murder by state armed agents.

Duterte's endless wars have no other aim but to suppress and silence the people and feed his soldiers and police. It is utterly repre-

hensible that his fascist response to Covid-19 has resulted in widespread failures, inutility and economic crisis.

Duterte now is the bureaucrat capitalist king. He is the lord of all drug lords in the country. He is the biggest traitor to Philippine freedom and sovereignty, and colludes with China in plundering country's wealth. His anti-American rhetoric is hollow when all he could do is bow to his imperialist master.

In marking Marcos' martial law amid Duterte's all-out fascism, let us recall and be inspired by the courage and heroism of the Filipino people, by the tens of thousands of patriots who did not hesitate to take on the difficult and dangerous path of struggle, sacrificed and gave up their lives to end the dictatorship. Scores went to the countryside to sow and nurture the

armed revolution.

In the dark years of martial law, workers mounted strikes to fight for their rights and welfare, as well as for the people's aspiration for freedom. Peasants and the poor marched hundreds of kilometers. Plazas and streets became great schools where students honed their knowledge and learned the lessons of history and struggle. The countryside and mountain ranges raged in widespread armed struggle and served as fortress of the people's democratic power. Every stream of rebellion gathered into a raging river of resistance leading to a powerful uprising.

Th people's desire to be free from Marcos' martial law is the same aspiration that now drives them to be liberated from repression and oppression of the Duterte tyranny. Under the evil Duterte regime, majority of the Filipino people suffer from unprecedented economic, social and health crisis, while Duterte's cronies and collaborators wallow in corruption, fascism and plunder.

Using the threat of the Anti-Terror Law, the killings, abductions and arrests, the Duterte regime silences and paralyzes the people's democratic resistance. All tactics are applied to preempt the people from coalescing into a broad front of all democratic forces and coming together in a powerful people's uprising.

The Party encourages the Filipino people and their democratic mass movement to act all-out and frustrate the attempts of the Duterte regime to suppress them. They must employ all means to mobilize the people in their numbers.

Duterte's restrictions against rights on the pretext of Covid-19 pandemic response must be overcome. Lack of public transportation, prohibiting the youth from going out and restrictions against mass gathering curtail efforts in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the masses.

Remember that no amount of restrictions can stop people from taking action if they are conscious and determined to fight and end Duterte's evil reign. The key is to

rouse the people and raise their consciousness and determination to act.

Propaganda and education work among the masses must be untiringly carried out, taking advantage of technology wherever it is available to send out statements and calls to large numbers, at the same time regularly publishing newspapers and other printed material as solid forms of propaganda.





Take effort to transform the factories and communities into centers of political activity by mounting mass meetings to discuss their daily concerns, how their problems are linked to the overall situation of the country and why they must come out and act. In militarized communities, the people must be creative in evading surveillance and restrictions by state agents.

The democratic mass struggles of the basic classes and sectors must be carried forward with full force. The strength and courage of the toiling masses will encourage other classes and forces to stand up and fight, including those among the conservative opposition and their allies in the military and police who are fed up with Duterte. The united front of democratic forces must be expanded and strengthened in their effort to demand Duterte's resignation or ouster from power.

The New People's Army must continue to intensify and widen guerrilla warfare across the country. Together with the people's militia and self-defense units, they must cut a thousand wounds on the fascist regime to allow the mass struggles to grow and to further strengthen the army and the people's organs of democratic power.

The Duterte fascist regime must not be allowed to reign unchallenged. But the longer it remains and the more brutal it becomes, the more it stokes the people's anger and determination to fight back, the sooner will be the end of Duterte's military rule.

AB

 <p>Vol. LI No. 17   September 21, 2020</p> <p>Ang <i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English. Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p> <p> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/prwcnewsroom">instagram.com/prwcnewsroom</a></p> <p> <a href="https://twitter.com/prwc_info">@prwc_info</a></p> <p> <a href="mailto:cppinformationbureau@gmail.com">cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</a></p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;"><u>Contents</u></h2> <p><b>Editorial:</b> Fight all-out to end the dark reign of new martial law 1</p> <p>NPA foils focused mil ops in NCMR 3</p> <p>CPP calls for blacklisting of Chinese companies 3</p> <p>Health protocols and production 4</p> <p>Calls for aid, farmgate price increase 5</p> <p>Red fighters, contemporary Katipuneros 5</p> <p>Protest at Bantayog ng mga Bayani 5</p> <p>Predicament to be caused by Duterte's loans 6</p> <p>In short 7</p> <p>Justice remains elusive for <i>desaparecidos</i> 7</p> <p>Brutality against Aetas in Zambales 8</p> <p>Foreign-dominated pharma industry 9</p> <p>Sky-high prices of imported medicines 9</p> <p>Lumad leader killed in North Cotabato 10</p> <p>Successive harassment vs. mass leaders 10</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	

## NPA foils focused military ops in NCMR

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army-North Central Mindanao Region (NPA-NCMR) mounted six successive offensives against the focused military operations (FMO) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in the region last August. At least 10 soldiers were killed in the offensives including two officials.

The NPA attacked operating soldiers at Sitio Traktor, Barangay Mahagsay, San Luis, Agusan del Sur on August 2; Sitio Kalasungay, Barangay San Vicente, Esperanza on August 7; again at Sitio Traktor on August 18; and twice at Sitio Talabaw in the neighboring barangay of Binikalan on August 19.

Two lieutenants were killed in the offensives in Barangay Bal-ason, Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental on August 14 and at Sitio Kalasungay on August 26. A Red fighter was killed during one of the encounters.

## CPP calls for blacklisting of plunderous Chinese companies

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on September 2 called on the international community to step up diplomatic and economic efforts to pressure the Chinese government to comply with its international obligations and sanction its officials for trampling on outstanding agreements and instruments and compel it to respect the sovereignty of other nations.

This came after the US' announcement on August 26 regarding its blacklisting of 24 Chinese companies, officials and individuals that are involved in land reclamation and construction of at least seven military facilities in the South China Sea, particularly those within the Philippine exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

These companies include the China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), the CCCC Dredging Group, China Shipbuilding Group, the CCCC's China Harbor Engineering Company (CHEC), the China Electronics Technology Group Corporation and other subsidiary companies. The CCCC is the successor organization of the China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) which was determined by the World Bank in 2009 to have engaged in fraudulent practices in the Philippines and was consequently sanctioned. These companies are mainly state-owned or are in collusion with the Chinese government.

Many of these companies are also engaged in various other projects under Duterte's Build, Build, Build infrastructure program. It was revealed recently that the Duterte government has five concessions with the CCCC for projects in Manila, Davao, Cebu and Clark. The CCCC is also involved in the Sangley Point International Airport project, in a joint ven-

ture with MacroAsia Corp. owned by Duterte crony Lucio Tan. Duterte ordered the fast-tracking of the Sangley Point project last year. Top Duterte crony Dennis Uy, meanwhile, is engaged with the CHEC for a \$1.2 billion reclamation project in the area.

The CPP asserted that China should be sued by the Philippine government before the international courts for transgression of Philippine sovereign rights and be required to withdraw and pay compensation for environmental damage and unpaid rent of its military bases. The computed compensation is much more than what Duterte has actually gotten from China's promise of high-interest loans of \$24 billion for overpriced infrastructure projects done by Chinese contractors and workers.

In the course of peace negotiations between the GRP and NDFP up to 2017, the NDFP negotiating panel and its chief political consultant repeatedly expressed to the GRP negotiating panel and Duterte himself that by all necessary and appropriate means the sovereign and maritime rights of the Philippines over the exclusive economic zone and extended continental shelf (ECS) in the West Philippine Sea must be asserted, exercised and defended.

The CPP also called for solidarity within the international community, specifically between the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and other neighboring countries whose sovereignties are likewise being impinged upon by China's efforts to dominate the South China Sea.



**₱ 231.7 billion**

*ESTIMATED VALUE OF MARINE RESOURCES DESTROYED BY CHINA*



**\$ 26 trillion**

*OIL AND GAS RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN OUR EEZ*



**1.9 million kilos**

*OF FISH DIE ANNUALLY*

due to the destruction of coral reefs and plunderous fishing practices of China.

## Health protocols and production

The New People's Army (NPA) continues to conduct its public health campaign as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to rage. At 17 villages in Samar, the people's army and mass organizations are working hand in hand to implement precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the disease. They established health protocols and prepared quarantine facilities in each village.

Red fighters successively conducted their health campaigns amid intense operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in the area last June. In one guerrilla front, four NPA units conducted basic medical trainings to educate the health committees of revolutionary peasant organizations. Afterwards, the newly trained medics launched a mass clinic in the area. They provided free check-ups, dental services, minor operations and traditional medications to at least 400 residents from four villages.

Likewise, Red fighters are striving to be exemplars of cleanliness and sanitation. They wear face masks when interacting with the masses and follow protocols on social distancing and ensure cleanliness in guerrilla bases. They utilize traditional medication practices such as acupuncture and use herbal medicine. To address the shortage of medicines in villages, Red fighters spearheaded the production of herbal plants, herbal vitamins and medicines such as lagundi syrup and powder, and nutritious foods.

### Extreme food shortage

The militarization of communities and economic restrictions imposed on farmers have aggravated the food crisis which has been raging in the region even before the pandemic. People in Eastern Visayas have long been suffering from extreme hunger and the lack of food products.

A research by *Larab*, the regional revolutionary publication in Eastern Visayas, disclosed that only 32% of the total agricultural land area in the region is utilized for food production such as palay, root crops and vegetables. Majority of the agricultural area—63% or 455,134 hectares—is used for the production of cash crops such as coconuts and abaca that are mainly for export.

Palay production in the region has been declining steadily for more than a decade. The last time that Eastern Visayas was able to produce a metric ton of palay was in 2008. This further declined by 11% in 2019.

The palay harvest and supplementary income from working as palay porters is not sufficient to make ends meet for a family of 10 for the entire year.

If they were to eat twice a day,

they will be left with at least 19 out of the 54 sacks of rice they were able to harvest. They are compelled to work as porters, because if not, they will be forced to eat rice once a day for the next nine months before the harvest season.

Due to rice shortage, farmers eat sweet potatoes, cassava and bananas as alternative. However, these are also scarce as only 19% of the agricultural land area in the region (73,411 hectares) is utilized in producing these crops.

Similarly, the stipulated daily minimum wage for farm workers in the region which is pegged at ₱236-₱238 is extremely meager. A family of five commonly spends up to ₱135 to eat rice at least twice a day. This excludes expenses for other basic needs.

Farmers cannot also rely primarily on selling copra. The farmgate price of copra dropped to ₱8 per kilo after the typhoon Ambo hit the region in May. The typhoon also adversely affected abaca production which has been experiencing a decline for a decade now due to pests.

AB



## Red fighters, contemporary Katipuneros

To commemorate the beginning of the Katipunan-led armed uprising in 1986, revolutionaries paid tribute last August 31 to the selflessness and sacrifices of the heroes and martyrs of the current people's democratic revolution. They are the modern Katipuneros of the continuing national democratic revolution.

From the Cordilleras to Mindanao, the revolutionary movement gave salutes to Red fighters who offered their lives for the people and armed struggle.

The Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa in Cordillera paid tribute to Philbert Dalang, Antonio Licawen (Ka Hicap), Wilfredo Aluba (Ka Hoben), Maritess Payangdo (Ka Gigi)—workers and semi-proletariats who served as members of the people's army—as well as other Red fighters who offered their lives to advance the cause of national minorities and the people.

In a separate statement, Ka Bayani Obrero of the National Democratic Front-Negros Island said that the blood and sacrifices of martyred comrades flame further the struggles of Negrosanons. The most recent fallen comrade was Mitchel Fat (Ka Epi), who was killed last August 31. They serve as in-

spiration to the people especially in the face of the unabated attacks, killings and harassment perpetrated by state forces, recounting the 89 victims of extra-judicial killings in the island.

Published in North Central Mindanao's revolutionary mass paper *Ang Kalihukan*, revolutionary forces in the region honored about 23 martyred comrades in the first half of 2020. They remembered Rio Amor Yuson (Ka Lima), a member of the Regional Party Committee, Gladys Joy Hiponia (Ka Andi), a member of the Regional Medical Staff and other Red fighters who were killed in Ginogog City last May.

In Southern Mindanao, the Regional Operations Command of the NPA conferred its highest revolutionary salute to comrade Prince Wendel Olofernes (Ka Do), a Red commander and re-

volutionary artist.

The people also paid tribute to Andrea Rosal, formerly a political prisoner and the daughter of the late Party spokesperson Gregorio Rosal (Ka Roger). She was killed last September 3 in Brooke's Point, Palawan, along with Bonifacio Magramo, Noel Siasico, Rona Manalo and another individual.

The revolutionary movement also paid tribute to great communist leaders Julius Giron (Ka Nars), Randall Echanis, Fidel Agcaoili and all others whose names have been etched in the annals of revolutionary history alongside the other heroes of the Philippine revolution. **AB**



### Protest at Bantayog ng mga Bayani

MORE THAN 500 activists and human rights advocates converged at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani last August 31 to commemorate the National Heroes' Day.

They condemned the continuing attacks against activists, government critics and political oppositionists.

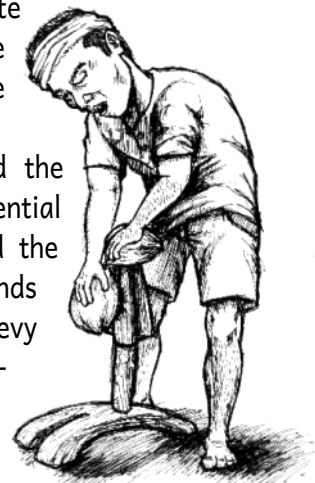
They carried placards demanding a thorough and independent investigation on the killing of activists Randall Echanis, Zara Alvarez, Carlito Badion, Jory Porquia and other victims of extrajudicial killings.

Simultaneously, various sectors commemorated the struggles of the people's martyrs who offered their lives for the nation. They also paid tribute to health workers and other citizens who are at the frontlines of the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and the Duterte regime's fascism.

### Coconut planters demand aid, increase in farmgate prices

HUNDREDS OF COCONUT planters protested in front of the Philippine Coconut Authority in Legazpi City, Albay on August 20 to demand a dialogue, aid, increase in the farmgate prices of copra, and the immediate return of the coco levy fund.

The protest coincided the 47th year of the Presidential Decree 27 which imposed the collection of coco levy funds on farmers. The coco levy fund now amounts to approximately ₱76-100 billion.



# Predicament to be caused by Duterte's borrowing spree

Second part of the series on the Duterte regime's borrowing binge. Read the first part, "Pandemic borrowing binge," in Ang Bayan, August 21, 2020.

The regime's economic officials on August 26 projected the government debt to reach a record-high ₱10.16 trillion by the end of 2020. This is higher by 31% than the debt recorded last year. The additional ₱160 billion which the regime is set to borrow this month will become part of this figure.



To justify the borrowing binge, the regime is repeatedly making it appear that the economy will be stimulated by the loans and funds that it will be able to accumulate. As in the past, however, it is very clear that these onerous loans will only drive the nation to further bankruptcy to the detriment of the people.

Next year, the Duterte regime plans to spend ₱531.5 billion in debt interest payments. The said amount is equivalent to 12% of the ₱4.51-trillion proposed national budget for 2021. This means that for every ten pesos that the reactionary government will spend, more than a peso will go to creditors. The average loan interest rate is also set to increase from 2.5-3.5% this year to 3-4.5% next year.

The proposed 2021 government fiscal program explicitly states that the planned appropriation for debt interest payments will correspond to borrowings to be availed of in the same year to finance the regime's big-ticket infrastructure projects. This is utterly reprehensible especially that funds for aid, subsidies and other services which can directly help the people to survive the economic crisis caused by the pandemic and lockdown remain insufficient.

The proposed budget does not yet cover the payment for the principal amortization of current loans. This year, the regime appropriated ₱582.1 billion for this. From 2017, the Duterte regime has already appropriated ₱3.25 trillion to pay gov-

ernment debts, 47% of this is interest payments.

## Automatic appropriations

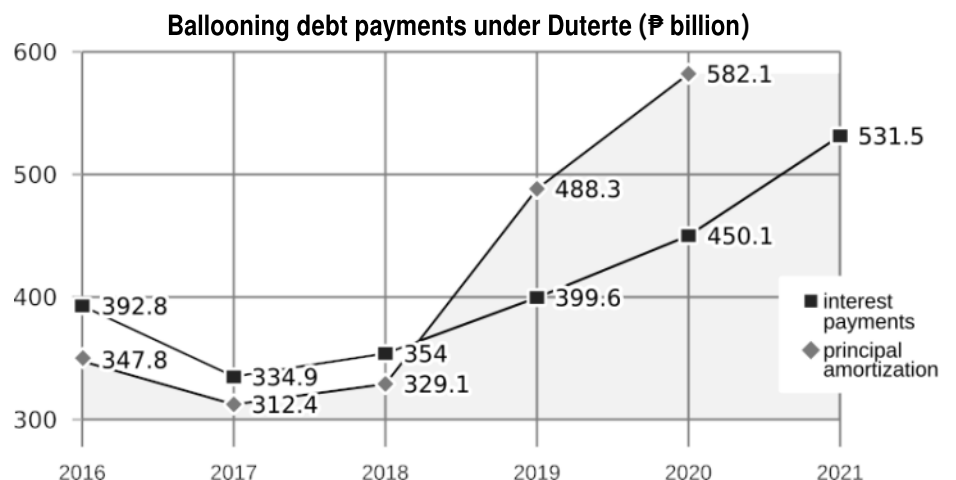
The reactionary government is obligated to appropriate a huge chunk of the national budget for debt servicing. The Automatic Appropriations Law stipulates that debt servicing should be prioritized before allocating funds for the government's essential operations, capital expenditures and programs. The Philippines is the only country in the world with this type of law. This was enacted by the earlier US-Aquino regime which promised to pay the funds loaned and plundered by the Marcos dictatorship "to the last cent."

Under the Duterte regime, funds appropriated for debt servicing is equivalent to approximately 22% of the national budget annually.

Due to the chronic budget deficit, the reactionary state has always resorted to austerity by appropriating less funds for basic social services. With its overreliance on

loans to provide a band-aid solution to the ballooning budget deficit, the regime is dying to comply with all the recommendations imposed by imperialist banks and financial institutions. Among the reforms currently being railroaded by the regime currently are taxes on basic food products such as dried fish and instant noodles, as well as on digital platforms (Netflix, Facebook, Twitter, and others). Small online entrepreneurs are now also obliged to pay taxes. (Read related article in Ang Bayan, July 21.)

These policy reforms are not new to Duterte. Even before the pandemic, he has rabidly complied with some of these neoliberal recommendations to achieve a high "credit rating." The onerous programs implemented by Duterte in the past years include the implementation of the TRAIN and Rice Liberalization Law, K-12 educational reform, privatization of public properties such as the airport in Clark, low spending for health and educations, and many others. AB



Sources: Department of Budget and Management, General Appropriations Act (2016-2017); National Expenditure Program 2021.



# August 26 1930

— IN —  
SHORT

# 2,969%

**Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas** was founded under the leadership of **Crisanto Evangelista**

With the founding of the PKP, Filipino workers began to mobilize collectively as a class. It led the struggles of the toiling masses and the fight against US colonialism.

**Proposed budget increase** for the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).

**₱ 19.1 billion**

in 2021 from

**₱ 622.3 million**

this year.

# 200,000+

**Number of Covid-19 infections in August 26, from 100,000+ in August 2.**

The infections doubled while NCR and four nearby provinces were put under modified enhanced community quarantine.

**5 out of 10 YEARS**

TO HAVE BEEN SPENT BY JOSEPH SCOTT PEMBERTON IN PRISON

should the court's order on September 1 to release him for "good conduct" be implemented. Pemberton is an American soldier who was found guilty of killing transgender Jennifer Laude. He was detained at a special cell in Camp Aguinaldo instead of a regular prison cell.

# ₱ 500

offered as compensation by the Sagittarius Mines, Inc. for each hectare of land that it will mine in Tampakan, South Cotabato

In exchange: **375,000 tons of copper** and **360,000 ounces of gold.**

The municipal council of Tampakan did not accept the offer as it is lopsided seemingly insulting.

1 ounce= 0.0283 kilogram

# \$43 BILYON

personal wealth of **King Maja Vajiralongkorn** of Thailand.

*This is stashed in vast commercial estates, businesses and used to buy jewelries.*

**Thousands of youth protesters in Thailand are calling to dismantle the monarchy amid worsening inequality and suppression.**

# 25 YEAR FRANCHISE

granted by Congress to

**DITO**  
TELECOMMUNITY



on August 24, a telecommunications company owned by Rodrigo Duterte's closest crony **Dennis Uy.**

# Shinzo Abe

**Japanese Prime minister who resigned** in August due to a **chronic health problem** and his need for medication.

*"We hope everyone does the same,"* was the sarcastic comment of Filipinos on Rodrigo Duterte who also happens to be ill yet continues to desperately cling to power.

# JACOB BLAKE

A **Black American** who was **shot** and seriously injured by a **police officer** in Wisconsin, USA on August 23. He is the latest victim of racism and police brutality against Blacks which sparked the powerful **Black Lives Matter Movement.**

# 62

# International organizations

submitted a joint statement to the United Nations Human Rights Council on August 27 to demand an independent probe on the human rights situations in the Philippines.

# Justice remains elusive for desaparecidos

The International Day of the Disappeared is commemorated globally every August 30 to demand justice and remember struggles of thousands of victims of enforced disappearances who were secretly imprisoned or killed by reactionary states.

Victims in the Philippines include Elena Tijamo, a development worker in Central Visayas who was abducted by agents of the Duterte regime in Bantayan, Cebu on July 13.

Relatives and supporters of *desaparecidos* also remembered Manobo peasants Maki Bail and David Mogul, members of the Kesasabanay Dulangan Manobo who were abducted in Barangay Margues, Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat, as well as Imelda Hayahay, a peasant leader abducted by soldiers from her home at Mabini, Compostela Valley. The victims have not been surfaced since the abductions.

It has also been two years since Lora Manipis and Jeruel Domingo were last seen. They were abducted by state agents while traveling in Kabacan, North Cotabato in February 2018. Manipis was a consultant of the National Democratic Front-Far Southern Mindanao and her husband Domingo was a Red fighter who served in Sarangani and South Cotabato.

The aforementioned individuals are among the 13 individuals who were abducted and not surfaced by the current regime. Half of the total number of *desaparecidos* under Rodrigo Duterte are farmers and Lumads. These include two Lumad farmers who were abducted by state agents and goons of a mining company in November 2016.

In every enforced disappearance, regimes always deny their involvement in the crime to deny victims justice, due process and rights accorded them. These violations are perpetrated in the context of broader attacks on civilians and their communities which is considered a crime against humanity. In the Philippines, the reactionary state has already recorded a long list of vic-

tims of enforced disappearances from the Marcos dictatorship until the current Duterte regime. Human rights groups *Desaparecidos* and *Karapatan* disclosed that there are already 1,890 *desaparecidos* in the Philippines.

The first victim of enforced disappearance was Charlie del Rosario, a teacher at the Philippine College of Commerce (currently the Polytechnic University of the Philippines) and one of the founders of *Kabataang Makabayan*. He was last seen in March 19, 1971. He was abducted by agents of the Marcos regime while mounting campaign posters.

Nearly 43% of the total number of victims were recorded during regime of Corazon Aquino who ironically rose to power at the heels of the anti-dictatorship struggle. Vigilante groups such as the "Alsa Masa" were formed and backed by

the Armed Forces of the Philippines during her regime. These groups were responsible for numerous cases of enforced disappearance of activists and human rights defenders.

The highest number of NDFP consultants who fell victim to enforced disappearances were recorded during the US-Arroyo regime. When the regime ended the peace negotiations, 11 consultants and their companions and relatives were abducted and no longer surfaced. Victims include father and son Rogelio and Gabriel Calubad, couple Prudencio Calubid and Celina Palma, their nephew Gloria Soco, and CPP official Leo Velasco. Under the command of Arroyo's butcher Gen. Jovito Palparan, abductions of activists in Central Luzon escalated. The victims include University of the Philippines students Sherilyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño, as well as Jonas Burgos, son of a renowned journalist.

Until today, the victims are sought by their families and justice remains elusive. AB

## AFP's brutality against Aetas in Zambales

AROUND 190 AETA families were forced to evacuate to Barangay Aglao, San Marcelino, Zambales last August 21 after their community in Barangay Buhawen was bombed by the military using four helicopters. Majority of the evacuees are children.

Nine residents, including four minors, were illegally detained by 703rd IBde troopers who accused them of being members of the New People's Army. Civilians Witi Ramos, Jepoy Ramos, and Nalin Ramos were arrested and tortured. In utter cruelty, soldiers forced Nalin Ramos to eat human excrement.

The bombing destroyed the farmlands and hunting grounds of the Aetas. Soldiers also butchered and ate the residents' farm animals.

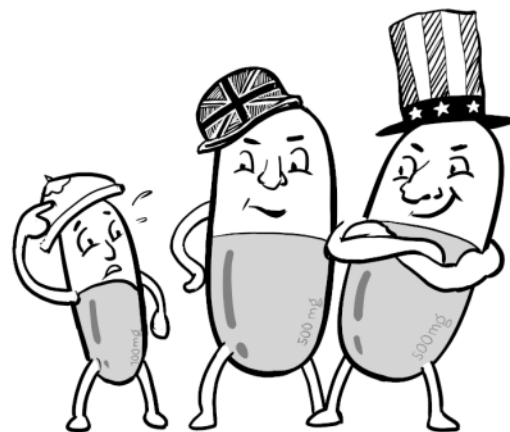
The soldiers are clearing the area to pave the way for the reentry of four large mining companies which were suspended in 2017 for causing massive environmental damage.





# Foreign companies dominate local pharmaceutical industry

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed the Philippines' lack of capacity to research and manufacture important drugs and vaccines. The Department of Science and Technology itself admitted that the country has no research facilities to develop a Covid-19 vaccine. Even before the pandemic, no local or foreign company manufactured a single vaccine inside the country. As of now, local companies have only signified their readiness to repack the vaccines into vials (fill and finish.)



Like other basic industrial sectors in the Philippines, foreign companies dominate the local pharmaceutical sector. A report in 2014 stated that 75% of the local drug and non-drug market is dominated by Pfizer (US), GlaxoSmithKline or GSK (UK), Boehringer (Germany), Sanofi (France), Abbott (US), Novartis (Switzerland), Johnson&Johnson (US), Roche (Switzerland), Merck (US) and Bayer (Germany).

With the exception of GSK, none of these companies manufacture locally. Others, such as Pfizer and Wyeth, have standing toll manufacturing contracts with Interphil Laboratories, a local subsidiary of Manchester Holdings (US) and part of the Zuellig Group of Companies (Switzerland). Interphil dominates the processing, labeling and packaging of drug and non-drug products of the 16 biggest foreign pharmaceutical companies for the local market and other countries in Asia. It processes its drugs in its factory in Canlubang, Laguna and locally supplies a third of the volume of foreign drugs in the market.

Only four companies can be called local or has local production. One of these is a local subsidiary of a US company and the other three are owned by local compradors.

According to data in 2014, about 65 local companies engage in toll manufacturing. Almost all of these use imported materials (up to 95%) from a few countries which

produce basic components and chemicals. Most of these companies are medium-sized and owned by local companies. Some examples are AM-Europharma, AD Drugstel, Euro-med, Lloyd Laboratories, Hizon Laboratories, Swiss Pharma, Ace Pharmaceuticals and Allied.

Also in 2014, only two local pharma companies, Unilab and Pascual Laboratories, manufacture their own medicines. Unilab focuses on mixing and packaging generic drugs using imported materials. An example is paracetamol, an active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) of Bioflu, Tuseran and Skelan, which is imported from India and China. Pascual Laboratories, on the other hand, manufactures vitamins and herbal supplements gathered from their own farm in Nueva Ecija.

In any case, these companies are still largely engaged in manufacturing of branded drugs, such as

antibiotics and steroids. Unilab has 6,000 workers working in five factories, two of which are focused on toll manufacturing. The company is owned by the local comprador family Campos. APIs used in manufacturing and processing of different kinds of drugs can only be imported from a limited number of countries. Some of the biggest suppliers are the big companies in US and Europe, as well as companies from India and China.

Other local pharmaceutical companies are limited to packaging, distribution and retail, such as Natrapharm, Medhaus Pharma, GX International, Prohealth Pharma and Cathay Drug.

Most of the drug and non-drug products (85%) of foreign pharmaceutical companies are distributed by Zuellig Pharma (related to Interphil Laboratories). Mercury

*"Local..." continued on page 10*

## Sky-high prices of imported medicines

IN THE PHILIPPINES, foreign companies dominate the supply of drugs in almost all categories (antibiotic, anti-hypertension, anti-cancer and others) compared to local companies. These are generally 30-80% more expensive than generic brands.

Added to the high costs is the 25-45% mark-up by local and foreign distributors for branded drugs and almost 60% for branded generics. This results to almost a thousandfold increase in prices in the country, compared to other countries in Asia.

An example of this is GSK's 150mg/100 tablet of Zantac (anti-ulcer) which cost \$95 in the Philippines, but only sells at \$3 in India.

Foreign companies also dominate sales of diagnostic agents.

# Paramilitary agents kill Lumad leader in North Cotabato

**S**uspected Bagani and Black Fighters paramilitary agents killed Bae Imelda Ansabo, 50, in Barangay Mahongkog, Magpet, North Cotabato on August 23 at 2 p.m.

Ansabo was on her way to the farm with her pregnant daughter when she was ambushed by the suspects. The victim was shot and then hacked repeatedly. Ansabo was a Manobo leader known for valiantly standing against plunder and illegal mining in their ancestral lands.

On August 17, police and 72nd IB troopers arrested Gloria Lanutan, 62, in the same town. She was

accused of having links with the New People's Army (NPA). Arresting agents planted explosives to justify the arrest and trumped up charges against her.

Arbitrary arrests of civilians accused as NPA members also run unabated in Negros Island. In Negros Oriental, two residents were arrested by the 62nd IB last August 25. In Negros Occidental, four

farmers were accused by the 94th IB of being members of the NPA after strafing and robbing their houses in Barangay Carabalan, Himamaylan City on August 26.

Meanwhile, communities in Mountain Province remain militarized. Five barangays in Sagada, two in Bauko, and three in Bontoc have been occupied by the 54th IB since October 2019. A military camp was also constructed along the boundary of Sagada and Besao. Combat operations continue in the said areas. AB

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## Successive harassment against mass leaders

JOINT ELEMENTS OF the police and military arrested Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan)-Camarines Sur chairperson Nelsy Rodriguez inside the group's office in Bagumbayan, Naga City in the evening of September 6.

A female agent disguised herself as a barangay health worker to enter the office. She was followed by eight policemen in plainclothes who presented the arrest warrant against Rodriguez which was based on trumped-up charges of murder. She was then brought to the town of Labo where she was presented before the court. She is the third mass leader to have been unjustly arrested in Bicol.

In Panay, Bayan-Panay secretary general Elmer Forro was also slapped with trumped-up murder and frustrated murder charges last September 5. The military maliciously accused him of involvement in an ambush by Red fighters against the 301st IBde in Lambunao, Iloilo on April 7.

Meanwhile, Kadamay members filed a criminal case of robbery and gross misconduct against the chief of the PNP-Central Luzon and 11 other police officers based in Pandi, Bulacan. The case was related to the arbitrary confiscation of Pinoy Weekly magazines by police officers at the office of Kadamay in July. Earlier, Kadamay members trooped to the Quezon City Hall to express their plight amid the lockdown.

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Drugstore, owned by the Que family, dominate in retail, followed by smaller drugstores such as the Ayala's The Generic Drugstore, the government's Botika ng Bayan and hospitals.

In 2014, there were 500 registered traders, 700 importers and 5,000 distributors in the Philippines. Before the pandemic, sales were estimated to reach \$4.1 billion (₱205 billion) in 2020, from \$3.6 billion (₱180 billion) in 2016. This did not include estimates for Covid-19 vaccines that could reach up to ₱110 billion. AB