

EDITORIAL

Dare to resist and protest amid the pandemic

Times of pandemic are times for protest and resistance to defend the people's rights and well-being against tyrants who besiege their freedoms, abandon their health and oppress them with a virulence worse than the disease.

Around the world, people are rising up in numbers. They have shown how resistance should not be hindered by the pandemic, rather, that resistance has become more urgent as the pandemic is used to intensify oppression and repression. From the US, to Indonesia, Thailand and other countries, millions are rushing to the streets to fight fascism and the tyranny of a few.

For more than six months now, Duterte has taken advantage of the pandemic to wrap in fear and paralyze the people. He and his minions have exploited the locking down of people in their homes to accumulate more wealth and power, intensify

the killings and the suppression of rights. They have abused their powers brazenly believing no one will dare go out in the streets and resist.

Duterte has further consolidated his fascist reign. He used the militarist lockdown to give the police and military control of the people's everyday life, force the separation of people and stop them from coming together and fight. Duterte has pounded the people with the false claim that "a vaccine is the only solution" to cover up the fact that he cannot lead the country in surmounting the crisis.

"Dare..." continued on page 2

NPA seizes firearms in Surigao del Sur

SEVEN FIREARMS WERE confiscated by the New People's Army (NPA)-Surigao del Sur during its raid against a Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) station in Barangay Wakat, Barobo, Surigao del Sur on October 12. The PCG men on duty were drunken and failed to defend their post which allowed the Red fighters to control the station within a few minutes without even firing a single shot.

The NPA unit seized a .30 caliber machine gun, four M16 rifles, two .45 caliber pistols, 5 ammo vests, two handheld radios and several rounds of live ammunition. Red fighters were able to withdraw safely despite numerous military checkpoints

"NPA..." continued on page 3

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Duterte has been inutile from the outset. Pandemic response was handed over the military, not to doctors. Militarist lockdowns are the only answer. It abandoned state responsibility to undertake the needed health measures: free mass testing and treatment for Covid-19. Capitalists and thieves raked in profits even as the virus continued to spread. Most of the infected chose to scrimp rather than die losing money in the hospitals.

Duterte's pandemic priorities are repression and politics. The economy and people's livelihood are devastated. The country is deeper in debt. Critics are killed, suppressed or threatened. A dirty war is waged the countryside. Big capitalists and cronies get all the benefits. Congress is more tightly under his control. Schemes to remain in power are endless.

The Filipino people seethe with anger over the inutility, oppression and repression under the Duterte fascist regime. Workers, peasants, the unemployed, teachers, nurses,

employees, the youth and other sectors undergo untold sufferings. The people seek to vent their fury and await an opportunity to demonstrate their outrage against the Duterte tyranny.

The people are one in seeking to confront the ruling regime and vigorously resist Duterte's terrorism, corruption and national treachery. They aim to vigorously oppose the Anti-Terror Law, the fascist and pork barrel budget, the anti-people infrastructure projects, the policy reducing workers' wages, the tax burdens on the masses and the tax breaks for big capitalists, the debt-dependent policy and the plan to change the constitution and other schemes to perpetuate Duterte in power.

It falls on the shoulders of the national democratic forces to lead the people in their struggles. It is their responsibility to display courage, militance and sagacity in the face of the regime's systematic attacks against their ranks. While exercising caution over the pandemic, they must exert all efforts to reach

out, rouse, organize and mobilize the people in their millions. They must lead in mobilizing the masses and aim primarily to bring their numbers to the streets—the main arena in the fight against tyranny.




The Filipino youth and students play a vital role in arousing and mobilizing the entire people. They should creatively draw together their own ranks amid closure of campuses and schools. The youth's social awareness and aspiration for freedom and democracy must be transformed into a material force. They should serve as voice of the entire people in the struggle against the tyrannical power.

The workers play a crucial role in the resistance against the Duterte fascist regime. Of all the sectors in the cities, it is the workers who have the capacity to display strength in numbers marching as one. All-out effort should be exerted to transform factories into schools to raise knowledge and analysis of the country's condition, the problems of the working class and Filipino people and the need to daringly struggle. Work must be carried out in hundreds of factories to establish unions and associations and mobilize the masses of workers to fight for their well-being and the interests of the entire people.

The broad mobilization of the youth, workers, peasants and impoverished masses will serve as core of the broad unity of all other democratic forces. By displaying courage and militance, they can unleash a storm of rage and protest for freedom and democracy.

While waging broad mass struggles in the cities, the people's army will continue to intensify and expand guerrilla warfare in the countryside in order to punish the armed agents of the fascist regime. More tactical offensives will stretch the enemy and prevent it from concentrating a big force to suppress the people. More victories in the armed struggle will embolden the people more in their fight to end the Duterte tyranny.

AB

 <p>Vol. LI No. 20 October 21, 2020</p> <hr/> <p>Ang Ang Bayan 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> instagram.com/prwcnewsroom</p> <p> @prwc_info</p> <p> cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</p>	<h2 style="text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Editorial: Dare to resist and protest amid the pandemic</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NPA seizes 7 firearms in Surigao del Sur</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Labor unions gain victories</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DOJ issues IRR for ATA</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Land as capital, not for farming</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Peasant month protest</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>International protests</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amazon exploits cheap Filipino labor</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Justice for Baby River and Ina!</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Soldiers shoot child in Bukidnon</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Burdensome distance learning</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Worsening inequality</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In brief</td> <td style="text-align: right;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Migrants situation amid the pandemic</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Raging anti-racism movement</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>US is besieged by grave crisis</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10</td> </tr> </table>	Editorial: Dare to resist and protest amid the pandemic	1	NPA seizes 7 firearms in Surigao del Sur	1	Labor unions gain victories	3	DOJ issues IRR for ATA	3	Land as capital, not for farming	3	Peasant month protest	4	International protests	4	Amazon exploits cheap Filipino labor	4	Justice for Baby River and Ina!	5	Soldiers shoot child in Bukidnon	5	Burdensome distance learning	6	Worsening inequality	6	In brief	7	Migrants situation amid the pandemic	9	Raging anti-racism movement	9	US is besieged by grave crisis	10
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dotting the national highway.

Coast guards reportedly extort money from small fishermen and oblige them to give out a portion of their catch for free. There was also a complaint against a drunken Coast Guard personnel who slapped a child on the face.

Albay. Four soldiers were killed and ten others were wounded in an ambush mounted by the NPA-Albay along the boundary of barangays Del Rosario and Tobgon, Oas last October 17. The offensive was a response to 9th ID's continuing focused military operations in the province.

Bukidnon. Four AFP troopers were likewise killed and three were wounded after being blasted by the NPA-Bukidnon in Barangay Salaysayon, Quezon on October 9. The military indiscriminately bombarded the area after the offensive.

Misamis Oriental. The NPA-Misamis Oriental paralyzed three trucks and a bus owned by multinational company Del Monte Philippines, Inc. at Sityo Talambao, Barangay Bulahan, Claveria, Misamis Oriental on October 6.

Earlier on October 5, an NPA-unit also harassed CAFGU elements securing the plunderous operation of Mindanao Energy (MINERGY), a electric company which operates in Barangay Quezon, Balingasag.

The said offensives are the response of the people's army to focused military operations across North Central Mindanao as well as the destructive operations of plantation and mining companies.

Western Samar. Carlos Diaz, a CAFGU and notorious paramilitary agent, was killed in an NPA ambush in Matuguinao on September 28. Diaz was a member of the Dos paramilitary group which is known for perpetrating extrajudicial killings of civilians in the province. AB

Labor unions gain victories

A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING agreement between the United Coca-Cola Workers Union-IBM-KMU and the Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines Inc. in Imus, Cavite was finally signed by both parties on October 16.

Earlier, various Laguna-based unions also gained various victories in advancing the rights and safety of workers since factories were allowed to resume operations in May. For instance, workers of Gardenia (bread manufacturing company) were able to push the management to compensate workers put under quarantine. The labor union in Daiwa (electronics) was able to demand the management to compensate workers with 50% of their pay during the lockdown. Workers of Nexperia (electronics) were also able demand better health benefits such as free Covid-19 testing, as well as the implementation of other measures to ensure safety in the factory.

DOJ issues IRR for ATA

THE DEPARTMENT OF Justice (DOJ) issued the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) last October 18. The document contains particular details on how the much-criticized provisions of the fascist law are to be implemented.

The IRR states that protests and other exercises of civil and political rights are not considered terrorism as long as these are not intended to "intimidate the general public" or "create an atmosphere of fear," among other reasons which the regime can set arbitrarily.

It gives the Anti-Terrorism Council unimpeded authority to identify who terrorists are even on the basis of mere suspicion. This is no different to the current suppression campaign of the military in the countryside wherein civilians are arbitrarily tagged as being "NPA members" and coerced to "surrender" in order to have their names "cleared." This violates people's civil rights as well as international international juridical standards.

Land as capital, not for farming

THE WORLD BANK (WB) is posturing as a land reform champion by pretending to address the longstanding demand of peasants to have their individual parcels of land titled. The agency is known for funding countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia to expedite land titling processes to purportedly to improve investment climate, particularly in the agricultural sector.

In the Philippines, the Duterte regime approved last July a \$370-million loan program called Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT). This scheme aims to dismantle collective certificates of land ownership award (CLOAs) which cover lands which are now being tilled by farmer beneficiaries. According to government estimates, only 53% of land distributed in the past four decades have individual titles. Approximately 1.4 million hectares distributed to around 750,000 farmers are covered by collective CLOAs.

The distribution of individual titles will expedite the valuation, selling and use-conversion of agricultural lands. This is to circumvent policies which do not accept collective titles as collateral, in order to pave way for the aquisition of foreclosed lands and to have these taxed by the government. This will further impoverish farmers who are already deep in debt due to high production costs and low farmgate prices.

Groups commemorate peasant month in Mendiola

More than a thousand farmers led by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and their supporters marched to Mendiola, Manila on October 21 to mark the Peasant Month. They demanded "End the oppressive, negligent and fascist Duterte regime!"

They said that Duterte is guilty of crimes against peasants. Demonstrators included farmers who traveled from Bulacan, Bataan, Pampanga, Tarlac and Rizal, as well as fisherfolk from Cavite.

Similar mobilizations were also mounted by farmers in Batangas, Iloilo, Camarines Sur, Albay, Masbate and Sorsogon in front of the local offices of the National Food Authority to demand an increase in palay farmgate prices.

Earlier on October 15 and 16, KMP members staged picket protests in front of the headquarters of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City.

Health workers. A protest campaign dubbed "Protest from Ward" was launched on October 9. Programs were conducted at the Philippine Children's Medical Center, National Center for Mental Health, Tondo Medical Center among others.

Members of the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center Employees

Union also protested last October 13 to criticize the Department of Health for having around P2.2-billion worth of expired medicines and supplies in stock. They also paid tribute to their leader Judyn Bonn Suerte who died last July 31 after contracting Covid-19 while working in the said hospital.

Workers. Robina Farms workers and members of the Kilusang Mayo Uno staged a picket in front of the office of the National Conciliation and Mediation Board in Intramuros, Manila on October 12 to oppose an impending massive layoff in the company. The management plans to retrench 292 workers of the Robina Farm 11 in Antipolo City, Rizal claiming that the company is already "going bankrupt."

Urban poor. Progressive groups led by the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap marched to Mendiola last October 12 to oppose the impending demolition of urban poor communities in Intramuros and Tondo among others. AB



THAILAND

Thousands of Thai people, mostly youth, mounted successive protests in Bangkok since July to demand the ouster of their prime minister, the abolition of the parliament, an election and constitutional reform. They also demanded monarchy reform and the junking of laws which prohibit people from criticizing their king and other feudal orders. Many Thai leader activists have already been arrested. This October, protests began to spread in other parts of the country.

INDONESIA

Thousands of workers and youth participated in a three-day general strike launched on October 8 to oppose the newly enacted Omnibus Job Creation Bill. The said bill will reduce the legislated severance pay of workers by more than half and removes the national minimum wage in favor of foreign investors. Policemen violently dispersed protests in city centers and arrested hundreds of protesters

Amazon exploits cheap Filipino labor

DURING THE PAST six months, call centers agents in a contact center of Teleperformance in Cebu have been calling for the implementation of additional safety protocols in order to cope with the challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Teleperformance is a French company that is outsourced by American company Amazon. It operates 22 call centers across the Philippines.

In April, workers complained about the lack of accommodation facilities in call centers as they were required to be at work despite the implementation of strict transportation restrictions and curfew. They were not allowed to work from home because Amazon prohibits the said policy. After complaining, their situation even got worse.

Instead of providing them accommodation, the company prohibited workers from sleeping on the ground of the office and forced them to rent apartments in nearby areas. Workers bared that 20% of their salaries goes to rent.

They were obliged to work in cramped airconditioned offices where physical distancing could not

be practiced. Their tables and computers are not regularly sanitized. Many workers reported that they were experiencing symptoms such as cough and fever but were not entertained. There was no mass testing. Those who get sick are obliged to leave without being compensated. Workers are unaware if the company is truthfully reporting the situation in the company to the Department of Health.

Teleperformance is among the companies that were allowed to operate during the entire pandemic period despite not being essential to the local economy.

Justice for Baby River and Ina!

Calls for justice and cries of condemnation resounded over the Duterte regime's inhumane treatment of political detainee Reina Mae (Ina) Nasino and her three-month old child River who died last October 9 after suffering from acute respiratory distress syndrome.

Nasino's petitions to be with her daughter in order to nurse her was denied several times by officials of the regime. Firstly, the reactionary court denied her petition to be allowed to nurse her child at the Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital after giving birth. They were forcibly separated after a month, denying River of breast milk that could have prolonged her life. Likewise denied were petitions seeking her temporary release to allow her to be with her dying child.

The baby died without being reunited with her mother. Instead of three days, Nasino's furlough was cut short to two visits of three hours each during the wake and

burial. Ina was dressed in full PPE, handcuffed and guarded closely by more than 40 jail personnel and police when she first visited the wake of her daughter on October 13.

During the burial march on October 16, police ordered the driver of the funeral car to speed off. Around 100 policemen also and jail guards also blocked Nasino's relatives and supporters from participating in the burial march to demand justice. Up to the last moment, the police refused to uncuff Reina Mae and allow her to touch her daughter for the last time. Their relatives and supporters staged a protest during the burial to condemn the regime's inhumane treatment.

Reina Mae was illegally arrested along with two other activists at the Bayan-NCR office in Tondo, Manila on October 31, 2019 as part of the regime's crackdown against activists. They were slapped with trumped-up charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

AB



Soldiers shoots child in Bukidnon

A child was injured when soldiers believed to be part of 8th IB indiscriminately fired their weapons in the vicinity of civilian communities in Upper Pulangi, Barangay Indalasa Malaybalay City, Bukidnon on October 16.

The unit perpetrated the attack in retaliation to an offensive mounted by Red fighters. Soldiers strafed houses, huts and farms within the area and shot anyone on sight. Among those targeted were 10-year old Jemlyn Liaban who was shot on her foot, and Jessica Limpyo who was carrying her baby. The victims, together with 9 other relatives, were harvesting corn when they were fired upon.

Afterwards, the soldiers proceeded to the barangay center and mauled resident Titi Limbos. They also challenged the leader of Matripona, a local religious group, to a fistfight. The soldiers likewise fired artillery at the area on October 15 and 16.

In Camarines Sur, the 83rd IB killed civilian Joana Marpiga inside her residence in Barangay Mangga, Bato. She was accused of being a member of the New People's Army (NPA).

Bombing. On September 30, the 20th IB shelled residents' rice field at Sitio Canonghan, Barangay Osmeña, Palapag, Northern Samar for about 15 hours. Residents also strafed residents' farms in Barangay Bagacay.

Earlier, soldiers also mortared a portion of Oras River and Barangay Siljagon in Mapanas town. The 20th IB also hamleted the said barangay under the guise of "Retooled Community Support Program." Soldiers prohibit farmers from going to their

rice fields to harvest and arbitrarily arrest those who violate this.

In Western Samar, a farmer's house was destroyed and his two dogs were killed after being shelled by the 19th IB in Barangay San Isidro, Matuguinao on September 26. Artillery rounds also hit an area near a school in the community.

Arrests. The 8th IB arbitrarily arrested 16 residents of Sitio Ulayanon, Barangay Kalabugao, Impasug-ong, Bukidnon last August. They were brought to the battalion headquarters in Impasug-ong, detained for almost a week and coerced to "surrender."

In Surigao del Sur, elements of the police and 36th IB arrested five workers of construction company ABI at Sitio Hubason, San Vicente, Carmen on October 14. They carrying bomb-making equipment and NPA supplies.

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Burdensome distance learning

The first three weeks of classes under "distance learning" since the opening of classes on October 5 was a nightmare for teachers, students and teachers. They experienced many problems and issues brought about by the Duterte regime's failed Covid-19 response, as well as the impact of the pandemic on the education system. These serious problems have further put a spotlight on Duterte's.

Department of Education (DepEd) Sec. Leonor Briones bragged that the opening of classes for more than 24 million students across the country was a success. She made the claim while turning a blind eye to mounting complaints against shortage of modules as well as erroneous presentation of lessons, slow internet signal and lack of learning materials and exploitation of teachers, among many others.

Due to extreme shortage of printed modules produced by DepEd, many public school teachers have been left with no other option but to pay for printing and reproduction of modules using their own money. The DepEd central office also gave school districts extremely low allocations.

On October 14, a DepEd official

admitted to Congress that it would be impossible to continue implementing blended learning with the shortage. The 22.4 million students in public schools will need approximately 1.1 billion modules for the first quarter of the school year alone. Amid the shortage, DepEd is planning to shift its focus on digital learning instead of providing printed modules. According to a survey, more than 70% of students prefer to use printed modules because they do not have gadgets and internet.

Students, along with their relatives, also complain of being loaded with school assignments without being provided sufficient instruction materials on how to accomplish these. ACT Teachers Partylist urged them not to blame their burnout and stress to teach-



ers, saying that the problem was caused by DepEd's insistence to use a curriculum that was designed for face-to-face learning and not for distance learning.

DepEd has failed not only in producing quality modules but also in devising an appropriate curriculum for the new learning system. It has also failed to issue working guidelines for teachers, whom the agency obliged to always stay online and be available to answer the inquiries of students and their students 24/7. DepEd personnel were rushed to produce approximately 200 video modules per week without given enough support.

DepEd has not allocated funding to ensure the safety of teachers. In Cagayan Valley, around 200 teachers reportedly contracted Covid-19 while distributing modules to their students. AB

Worsening inequality

Wealth of billionaires rose during pandemic

The wealth of US billionaires ballooned even as millions of Americans saw their wages plunge and their jobs lost. According to two private researches, the wealth of more than 600 American billionaires rose by \$850 billion from March to October. The combined wealth of the top 12 richest Americans exceeded \$1 trillion. This is double the aid the US government handed out to 150 million Americans who lost their jobs since March.

On top of the list is Jeff Bezos of Amazon. His wealth increased by 40% or \$73.2 billion while thousands of his warehouse workers suffer from unsafe working conditions. In September, a total of 20,000 Amazon workers were reportedly infected with Covid-19. Amazon workers who are mostly contractuales receive low wages and have limited benefits.

Next in the list is Tesla's Elon

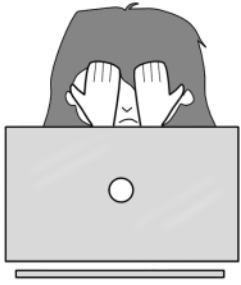
Musk who earned \$67.4 billion or triple his wealth since the start of the year. Musk compelled his workers to accept a 10% to 30% wage cut. He laid off 3,000 and furloughed thousands more without pay.

Also among those who profited from the pandemic are Bill Gates (Microsoft), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) and Warren Buffet (Berkshire Hathaway).

Globally, it was reported in October 7 that the wealth of 2,189 richest individuals (including those mentioned above) rose by 27.5% in the span of four months. Their aggregate wealth rose from \$8 trillion in April to \$10.2 trillion in July, the highest recorded in history.

In the Philippines, bourgeois comprador Edgar Sia II's wealth rose the fastest. Sia is ranked 21st among the Philippines richest individuals. His net worth rose by 75% or a whopping ₱14.6 billion within a year, from ₱19.5 billion in 2019 to the current ₱34.1 billion. He owns CityMall, MerryMart and DoubleDragon Properties Corp.

IN SHORT



7 out of 10

young women aged 15-20 have experienced online sexual harassment.



119%

increase in mental health-related calls during the pandemic.

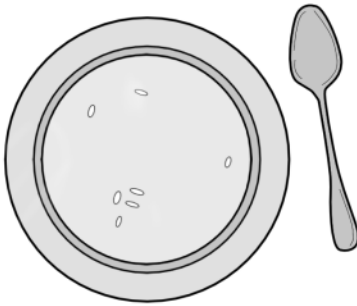
This indicates that more people are becoming depressed and anxious or having suicidal thoughts.

Source: National Center for Mental Health, August 2020

690 MILLION

people around the world are undernourished.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization



115 MILLION

people will be pushed to extreme poverty in 2020.

Source: World Bank, October 2020

1 out of 4

young workers lost their jobs during the pandemic.

Source: International Labour Organization, August 2020

53%

or 3,338 out of 6,321 of Covid-19 patients were never admitted into hospitals for proper health care.

Source: Department of Health, October 2020

75%

of the total number of critical patients are not hospitalized even with enough bed capacity.

289

troops of the fascist Duterte regime or equivalent to a small battalion were killed in armed engagements with the NPA from January to October.

October 20, 2018

Day of the Sagay Massacre where nine farmers were killed and burned by paramilitary agents in Hacienda Nene, Sagay, Negros Oriental.



\$20.63 TRILLION

Estimated federal debt of the US this year.

This is bigger (106%) than the size of the US economy.

The situation of migrants during the pandemic

The migrants sector is among the hardest hit by the global recession caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. As of this month, nearly 250,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) have been repatriated to the Philippines after losing their jobs. They are among the 400,000 OFWs who have become unemployed during the pandemic. The latter figure is expected to rise to one million by the end of the year.

Based on the latest statistics released by the reactionary government on October 17, the number of Filipino migrants who tested positive for Covid-19 has already reached 11,146, while the death toll has reached 811.

The job losses suffered by OFWs has a huge impact on the lives of OFWs and their families dependent on remittances to make ends meet. Based on the Consumer Expectation Survey of the reactionary government, 94% of OFW households allotted remittances to food and household needs, 67% to education, 51% to medical expenses and 17% to debt payments.

The massive OFW job losses resulted in a decline in remittances to the country in the past eight months. The latest report of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas indicates that total remittances to the country fell by \$585 million (₱29.3 billion) from \$22-billion (₱1.1-trillion) during the same period in 2019. This is expected to further decline as businesses continue to close amid the continuing pandemic crisis across the world. This problem leaves affected OFW households with no other option but to

tighten their belts.

To project appearances of sympathy to the sector, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) boasted on October 16 that it has already extended aid to 291,952 affected OFWs under its "Abot Kamay ang Pagtulong" (AKAP) program. However, OFWs complained that the ₱10,000-aid that they received is extremely low and insufficient to tide their families during the pandemic. If divided by the entire eight months that they lost their jobs, the aid is only equivalent to a mere ₱42 per day. The amount is only sufficient to buy a kilo of rice.

The hundreds of thousands of migrants who have finally been able to return to their provinces have now become part of the local army of unemployed. Like other workers, many of them are finding other ways to earn and survive during the crisis. Using what is left of their remaining savings, some put up small stores and other businesses.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of OFWs remain stranded abroad and are struggling to survive with the

help of and donations from their fellow migrants. An example of these are initiatives by local chapters of Migrante and its allied organizations which distribute food, medical and other material aid to migrants. More often than not, they could not expect any help from officials of Philippine embassies. Many also opted to stay because of expensive travel expenses. Many of them have yet to pay placement fees of up to \$10,000 (P500,000) they owe their recruiters.

The plight of undocumented Filipino migrants is far worse. Majority of them are working on a "no work, "no pay" basis as domestic helpers, caregivers and service workers. Being undocumented, they are not qualified to apply for and receive benefits such as subsidies for distressed OFWs, health services and other forms of aid. Since lockdowns were implemented, many of them continued to stay in the houses of their bosses and made to work even beyond working hours without being compensated. They could not go home because their families in the Philippines have already lost their jobs. AB



Raging anti-racism movement

FROM MAY 22 to August 24 amid the pandemic, more than 7,750 protest actions were mounted by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in about 2,000 locations across 50 states in the US. Ninety-three percent of these protests have been peaceful, while only a few have been violent as a result of police dispersal or attacks by pro-Trump individuals and groups.

Of these protests, 392 were violently dispersed by the police and paramilitary groups under Trump's

command. Tens of thousands of demonstrators have also been harassed through car-ramming and

other attacks by white supremacists, state forces or racist paramilitary groups such as the Patriot Prayer, Three Percenters and Proud Boys which are all rabid Trump supporters.

Although protests began to decline after peaking in June,

"Raging..." continued on page 9

The US is besieged by grave crisis

Millions of Americans are set to vote in the 59th presidential elections in November 3. This election will be held amid a pandemic and a raging anti-racist movement borne out of America's continuing brutality and systematic oppression of the Black people. The American people is saddled with these conditions, set within a worsening capitalist crisis even before the pandemic.

Donald Trump, incumbent president and Republican candidate, faces off with Democratic Party's candidate Joseph Biden. Many fear that Trump will steal the elections and will not step down even if he is voted out. This fear is based on his repeated declarations that the only way he was going to lose is if the elections were rigged.

Those who are ready to vote for Biden to unseat Trump is rising in number in many sectors and states. They consider this a "first step" in pushing for reforms and change for the betterment of the American people. They also see this as an opportunity to consolidate their ranks and struggle for the just and long-standing demand for wages, jobs, education, housing, greater equality and other rights in the midst of the pandemic.

Unmitigated pandemic

The US is among the countries who have yet to manage the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Lancet, a medical journal, the US failed to manage the pandemic due to the government's inconsistent and incoherent response. This is despite having advanced agencies for disease research and prevention which is recognized and respected around the world.

Since May, the US has become the epicenter of the pandemic. It has the highest number of infections (8.1 million) and the most number of deaths (220,000).

The American people blame Trump's Covid response in what has been called as "medical populism." In May, the Lancet called for Trump's ouster, and the strength-

ening of health agencies such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC). It said that even if the CDC had weaknesses in the beginning, waylaying it in the response was a step backward. Among the US weaknesses was in its mass testing, the use of unreliable test kits and extremely slow test processing.

According to CDC data, Blacks and people of color are disproportionately affected by Covid-19. They are thrice as vulnerable, five times more likely to be hospitalized and twice more likely to die. This is due to systemic discrimination, no access to health services, inequalities in income, education and wealth; and lack or congested housing.

Livelihood crisis

The pandemic created the worst jobs crisis in the recent history of the US. More than 58 million people declared themselves as unemployed since May. At one time, around 150 million Americans needed subsidies to feed their families. The majority of lost jobs are low-wage in the subsectors of sales, personal services, transportation and tourism. Two thirds of these jobs are held by women, and the majority of them are women of color.

It is estimated 42% of job losses may become permanent. In September, it was reported that 40-45% jobs held by whites were recovered. Only 20% of jobs held by Blacks and people of color were recovered in the same period.

Alongside job losses is income loss of professionals and office workers. In a study last May, around 20 million received lower

wages. Around 10 million had their wages cut from 5% up to 50%. The rest were forced to cut down hours in flexible arrangements such as work-from-home.

High unemployment rates meant more Americans go hungry, are in danger of being evicted and have no access to social services, including medical care.

In the state's statistics, 30 million Americans said that they experienced hunger in July, thrice the number last year. Around 52 million will experience food-insecurity. This has been obvious in miles-long lines in food banks and hundreds of additional individuals food kitchens serve.

Hunger incidence is worse among children, which rose 14 times compared to last year.

During the first months of the pandemic, 27 million Americans lost their health insurance. This is on top of millions who were not insured even before the pandemic. Alongside this, 30 to 50 million Americans are in danger of being evicted from their homes due to nonpayment of rent.

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dozens of protest actions are still recorded weekly.

The BLM movement raged like wildfire this year after the killing of George Floyd by the police on May 25 while being arrested for allegedly using a counterfeit bill. Despite the massive demonstrations after the incident, police brutality against Blacks continued and resulted in six more killings until August 26. Victims include Breonna Taylor, a paramedic who was gunned down by the police while sleeping in her house after being mistaken for a criminal.