

## NPA confiscates 22 firearms

SIX COMMANDS of the New People's Army in different parts of the country have launched offensives within two weeks last May 4-17. These include one raid, two ambushes, eight harassment operations and one disarming operation against an abusive businessman. Twenty two firearms were confiscated by the Red army. Reactionary armed forces suffered up to 35 casualties.

In Southern Tagalog, the NPA-Laguna (Cesar Batrallo Command or NPA-CBC) reaped success in its consecutive tactical offensives against the AFP and PNP in the towns of Majayjay and Luisiana in Laguna, and in the neighboring town of Lucban in the province of Quezon.

The NPA-CBC consecutively attacked three detachments of the 59th IB and 80th IB in the villages of Ibabang Banga and Piit in Majayjay. The action was undertaken last May 14, from 6:25 until 7 in the evening. Three were killed and another three were wounded among the soldiers. The targeted units of the AFP are protectors of the destructive company Global Heavy Equipment Inc.

After this, troops belonging to the 80th IB and the command from the 202nd IBde reinforced aboard two six by six trucks, one weapon vehicle and an armored personnel carrier. Upon reaching San Antonio in Luisiana, the NPA-CBC ambushed the convoy. Two of the military vehicles were hit

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EDITORIAL

## Foreign-funded infrastructure is not what people demand

Without letup, the Duterte regime's technocrats are painting a positive picture of Philippine economic progress in the coming years which they call as the "golden age of infrastructure." They insist that large investments in the construction of roads, rails, ports, dams and labor enclaves will bring about economic growth in the country.

They have become even more insistent with such declarations upon arrival from China with Duterte bringing renewed promises by China's officials that it will invest large capital in the Philippines for projects identified by the Duterte government. Duterte is full of praises for China for its sincerity in helping the Philippines and in sharing its wealth.

Aside from aiming a far bigger

capital than the past regimes (estimated at more than eight trillion pesos up to 2022, mainly from China), the Duterte regime's declarations are mere echoes of the past. All past regimes (including the Marcos regime) pushed for big-ticket infrastructure projects as centerpiece economic program.

These are clearly hollow declarations. As shown in the past, these infrastructure projects, however big

or grand, failed to resolve the country's basic economic problems.

With absolute power, Marcos pushed for left and right infrastructure projects from highways, bridges, dams, geothermal plants, LRT and monuments. These burdened the people with a bloated foreign debt (reaching \$26 billion in 1986) and tied the country to conditions imposed by the IMF and World Bank which favored foreign big capitalists. Marcos and his cronies accumulated wealth from commissions in these big projects.

All post-Marcos regimes sought to implement their own infrastructure projects: from Cory Aquino's flyovers, Ramos' Expo Filipino, Arroyo's Macapagal Boulevard and Clark Airport and Benigno Aquino's "public-private partnership" projects. All these amounted to billions upon billions of dollars and were funded by increasingly bloated foreign debt now reaching \$120 billion. Each project was tainted with anomalies and milked by close cronies of each regime.

At best, these projects brought

about superficial changes. Even taken as a whole, these projects failed to alter the basic social conditions and state of livelihood of the workers and peasants and the entire people. These generated temporary jobs, but failed to resolve the chronic unemployment crisis. These projects are invariably accompanied by demolitions, forced displacements, destruction of productive lands and the environment. In many cases, these projects brought about militarization.






In planning several hundred billion-dollar infrastructure projects, it is not unlikely that the Duterte regime will trample on the welfare and rights of the toiling masses and ignite their resistance. Among his big plans is the Chico River Dam project. A similar project in the 1980s was militantly opposed by the Cordillera people because of the damage it will wreak on their lives and livelihood. The Cordillerans and the entire people will surely not remain timid if the planned dam project will threaten their lives, their rights and the environment.

The people's resistance will surely be roused if the plan to build railways will ram through the ancestral land, rights and welfare of the Lumad people and the toiling masses in Mindanao and other places; if the plan to build ports will displace the fisher-folk; if building bridges and paving roads will drive away peasants and ruin agricultural production; and if reclamations will destroy marine wealth and the environment.

The entire people will surely rise and resist if in pushing for these projects, the Duterte regime will put the entire Philippines deep into the foreign debt rut from which it can not rise and which will consequently tie the country to conditions involving the surrender of its patrimony and sovereignty. The people will also stand firmly if these projects will involve corruption and will be milked by the big bourgeois compradors close to Duterte. Even if the Supreme Court yields amid threats against issuing TROs on these projects, the people will not hesitate to stand against bureaucrat-capitalist corruption.

The people must be fully conscious that, contrary to Duterte's claims, China is not motivated by sincerity in offering hundreds of billions of dollars for such infrastructure projects. China is an emerging and continuously growing imperialist power that closely protects its own interests. China's offer of funds are loans which must be paid at an interest. These are debts allotted for specific projects that favor China and meant to be used to buy its oversupply of steel and other commodities.

All in all, it is not these infrastructure projects which the Duterte regime must prioritize. In any economic plan, it is the interests and welfare of the workers, peasants and entire people which should come first, not those of the big bourgeois compradors, big landlords and foreign big capitalists.

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The basic problems of the semicolonial and semi-feudal system must be addressed. If there are no fundamental changes, the Philippine economy will remain backward and be limited to supplying China and other imperialist countries with raw materials, cheap labor and semi-manufactures. Like the trains of US colonial days used to transport sugar cane and other commodities, the modern trains from China will primarily serve the transportation of raw materials and other semi-manufactures for China.

In the history of economic modernization, like in China, progress was attained by building its fundamental industrial capacity including that for iron, steel, chemicals and other capital goods in order to create the capacity to produce machinery and other means of production. Concurrently, agricultural productivity is raised through genuine land reform to break the old chains of feudal and foreign land monopoly, pushing cooperation

and other forms of mutual help and through mechanization.

We must inform China, if it wants to earn the Filipino people's friendship, it must be ready to support efforts to end the semicolonial and semi-feudal system which US imperialism brought about and continues to dominate. In particular, it would have to support the program for genuine land reform and national industrialization.

Both count as the principal content of the revolutionary movement's economic program as stated in the Party's program for a people's democratic revolution and in the 12 Point Program of the NDFP. This is what is detailed in the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER) which the NDFP has presented in peace negotiations with the GRP. The revolutionary forces anticipate that this matter will be given principal attention in the scheduled fifth round of peace talks. **AB**

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by command-detonated explosives. Up to 20 soldiers were killed or wounded.

In Benguet, the NPA-Benguet (Jennifer Cariño Command or NPA-JCC) successfully raided a police detachment in Brgy. Loo, Buguias last May 16 at 9 p.m. The Red fighters were able to immediately take control of the police station without firing a single shot. The NPA-JCC confiscated a 9mm pistol, a grenade, magazines and ammunition, and other military equipment. The Buguias police force is notorious for extorting from motorists and vegetable growers. They are likewise involved in the proliferation of anti-social activities.

In Agusan del Sur, 21 firearms were confiscated by the NPA-Northeastern Mindanao Region's Front 14 from the Lademora family in Sitio Sinug-ang, Bayugan 3, Rosario. The NPA undertook the operation last May 13 at around 7 a.m. The confiscated firearms include two M16s, one AK47, one BAR, one M14, one Garand, four carbines, three M79 grenade launchers, three shotguns, four .45 calibre pistols, and one .38 calibre pistol. The Red fighters also seized assorted ammunition, magazines and other mil-

itary equipment.

According to the NPA-NEMR, the Lademora confiscation is a punitive action in response to the family's long record of abuse, crimes, destruction of the people's livelihood and exploitation of small-scale miners. The Lademoras also employ the remaining members of the notorious Lost Command, the armed group formed by former Philippine Constabulary Col. Carlos Lademora in the latter part of the 1970s from criminal elements and former soldiers. Presently, the Lademora family utilizes this group to terrorize farmers and strip them of their livelihood.

In Bohol, one soldier was killed and three CAFGU elements were wounded when the NPB-Bohol (Francisco Dagohoy Command or NPA-FDC) attacked the 47th IB and CAFGU detachment in Brgy. Datag, Inabanga last May 3, at around 10 p.m.

According to the NPA-FDC, the attack serves as punishment for the AFP's abuses in the nearby civilian community and its all-out bombardment in Brgy. Napo last April 11 under the guise of "war against terror" against the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group.

In Cagayan Valley, three consecutive harassment operations were carried out by the NPA-Quirino (Venerando Villacillo Command or NPA-VVC) against three detachments of the 86th IB. Last May 4, the NPA harassed the Bravo Company's camp of the said battalion in Dinapatan, Maddela.

Also last May 6, the NPA harassed the Alpha Company's camp in Tappa, San Mariano. The 86th IB's detachment in Villa Gracia, Maddela was likewise harassed last May 10 at 9 p.m.

Meanwhile, Red fighters in Quezon and Mindoro Occidental valiantly faced the enemy's attacks last May 8. In Quezon, the NPA-Mt. Sierra Madre (Rosario Lodronio Rosal Command) foiled an attack by a company of the 1st IB in Brgy. Magsaysay, Infanta. A soldier was killed while two others were wounded.

In Occidental Mindoro, three elements of the assaulting 76th IB were killed when they were hit by command-detonated explosives set off by the NPA-Mindoro (Lucio De Guzman Command) in Sitio Tagbungan, Brgy. Barahan, Sta. Cruz. One Red fighter, Aileen "Ka Pia" Serna, was martyred in the battle.

# Dutertenomics: A heavy burden to the people

“Dutertenomics,” the much touted economic program for foreign-funded big infrastructure projects, will be a heavy burden to the people. Even now, it is clear who will benefit most from these projects. It is not improbable that it will result in big corruption cases.

The sheer size of needed funds will necessitate a large injection of loans that will eventually be passed on to the Filipino masses.

Dutertenomics is worse than the Public-Private Partnership program of the previous regime. According to the Ibon Foundation, what Duterte's technocrats promote as a “golden age of infrastructure” is actually a “golden age of oligarchs and foreign companies,” as they will benefit the most.

Under what the Duterte regime calls its “hybrid” PPP, the government will shoulder the funding and construction of infrastructure projects. Thus, under Dutertenomics, the people will directly carry the burden of loan payments, as well as profit guarantees and other private benefits. After the projects are completed, these will be auctioned off to private capitalists for operation. Included are projects being pushed by big compradors themselves for the benefit of their own

businesses.

Even before Duterte's second China visit last May 14-15, he already announced his plans to avail of loans, particularly from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, to fund his fancied projects. According to initial reports, China is ready to loan up to P172.4 billion to the Philippines this year. This is part of the P350 billion Duterte plans to borrow for 15 projects already earmarked for Chinese companies and their local cohorts. These include the South Line of North-South Railway Project in Luzon worth P151 billion and the Mindanao railway system worth P218 billion. Aside from China, the regime also plans to borrow an initial amount of P442.42 billion from Japan and P3.25 billion from the World Bank.

But on May 12, Sec. Benjamin Diokno of the Department of Budget and Management divulged that Dutertenomics needed a much higher amount. The Philippines will

need up to \$167 billion (P8.2 trillion) to fund the regime's six-year infrastructure plans, he said. This will

immediately bring the Philippine debt to \$290 billion at the end of the regime's term from \$123 this year, discounting interest rates. According to an article from the pro-US Forbes Magazine, the country's new debt can even shoot up to \$452 billion if China imposes a 10% interest rate, bringing the debt-to-GDP rate to 197%. Total debt can even reach up to a trillion dollars in 10 years, it says. The Philippine current debt-to-GDP ratio is at 44%.

In addition to the direct benefits for foreign companies and local oligarchy, the regime's minions who serve as intermediaries between Chinese banks and companies and local businesses will also rake in profits. Bureaucrat-capitalists under the regime can reap up to 2-5% in commissions in the form of finder's fees. This is similar to the corruption case of the Arroyo regime in favoring the anomalous NBN-ZTE agreement.

After the said article was published, Diokno and other Duterte technocrats denied that the Philippines will borrow the entire amount from China. The regime's plan is actually worse, as Diokno announced that 80% of the infrastructure funds will be generated through new taxes. These include increasing value-added taxes from 12% to 15% and imposing taxes on processed sugar and petroleum products that will mean an additional P6/liter. On the other hand, the regime will grant more benefits to businesses, including those owned by oligarchs poised to benefit from the new loans, as it plans to decrease real estate and other private transaction taxes.

## Loans in exchange for national rights

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) also raised questions on the Duterte regime's plan to borrow from China, the concessions that will be demanded in exchange and its implic-



ations to the negotiations regarding socio-economic reforms. According to Jose Maria Sison, chief political consultant of the NDFP negotiating panel, if the Philippines borrows from China such large amounts in such a short time, it will become a “debt slave” to China. In addition, its “build-build-build” program will siphon the needed funds and resources needed for national industrialization.

There will come a time, Sison said, when China will demand the Philippine surrender of its sovereign and exclusive rights to the islands and formations in the South China Sea in exchange for loan payments. Even now, the Duterte regime's minions have already offered these territories for joint explorations. Duterte is also silent on China's militarization of Philippine islands and reefs in the area, including the latest installation of rocket launchers in the Kagitingan islands.

In addition, it is not far-fetched that China will keep the Philippines as a producer of raw materials and semi-processed manufactures to supply its own industries. What China has touted as “zones of economic cooperation” it has built in other countries (especially in Africa) are actually labor enclaves for the processing of raw

materials. These zones serve as dumping ground for China's excess heavy machinery, steel and consumer products, and at the same time, produce commodities for export to countries which have stringent standards for Chinese products, such as the US and countries in Europe. Other enclaves produce manufactures that are exported back to China for the final stage of production. In Asia, this arrangement is under the framework of building its Factory Asia.

As such, the Philippines can be kept as a mere consumer of Chinese products and manufactures that will bloat its trade deficit, and will eventually need more loans to pay off, Sison said. In addition, the Philippines has already numerous bad experiences in trading with China, including the overpriced NBN-ZTE deal under the US-Arroyo regime and the purchase of substandard train coaches under the US-Aquino regime. Chinese companies involved with the Duterte regime are known for being involved in big corruption cases.

Sison raised his views to ensure that the Filipino people's rights and interests are respected and that the best deals based on mutual respect, non-interference and mutual benefit will be achieved. AB

## CASER should come before ceasefire—Sison

**T**he NDFP cannot agree to any prolonged or indefinite ceasefire before the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-economic Reforms and the amnesty and release of the political prisoners.

Jose Maria Sison, Chief Political Consultant of the NDFP for the peace talks, reiterated this stand which he had already explained in the fourth round of the peace talks last April.

At the last round of talks, the NDFP and the GRP signed an agreement to agree on a ceasefire as soon as the guidelines and ground rules are agreed upon. “The GRP will no longer be interested in the accelerated negotiation of CASER after getting first a prolonged and indefinite kind of ceasefire,” he added. Sison also stressed that socio-economic reforms include agrarian reform, national industrialization, wise utilization of the environment, and people's rights to free social services, among others.

NDFP and GRP teams held bilateral meetings on the CASER and the ceasefire in the Philippines during

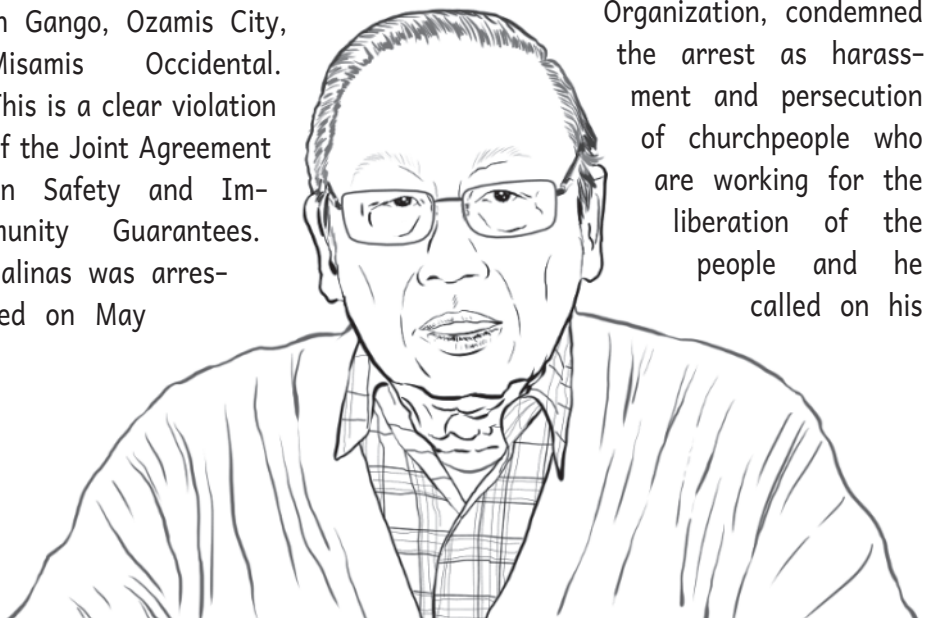
the last week of April until the first week of May. This was held to sort out and arrange the contentious issues between the respective drafts to accelerate the coming talks.

In this connection, Fidel Agcaoili, NDFP chief negotiator, slammed the illegal arrest of NDFP consultant Rommel Salinas in Gango, Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental. This is a clear violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees. Salinas was arrested on May

11 despite showing his ID as NDFP consultant number #ND978453.

With Salinas were Bishop Carlo Morales of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, the latter's wife, teacher Ma. Teofilina Morales, and driver Isadome Dalid. Salinas and Morales were charged with illegal possession of explosives based on planted evidence.

Rev. Jonash Joyohoy, General Governor of the National Priest Organization, condemned the arrest as harassment and persecution of churchpeople who are working for the liberation of the people and he called on his



congregation to "take all opportunities to expose and denounce the evils unleashed by PNP and AFP. In whatever forms imaginable, these evils must be stopped," he said.

Salinas is the third consultant to be arrested since the start of the peace talks. Still imprisoned are Promencio Cortez, who was arrested on February 9, in Baguio City, and Ferdinand Castillo who was arrested February 12 in Caloocan City.

There are also several cases of harassment against other consultants. On May 9, obvious military agents on motorcycles tailed Benito and Wilma Tiamzon after they visited the peasant campout in Mendiola. They noticed the surveillance for the third time since January when they arrived from The Netherlands. Last April 24, Cordillera Day, soldiers at a checkpoint on a Balbalan highway were looking for Kennedy Bangibang, another consultant. It has also been reported that the AFP Eastern Mindanao has released a shoot-to-kill order against Pedro Codaste, and there are also plans to abduct Porferio Tuna Jr.

On the other hand, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana again showed his interference when he spoke at the Regional Peace and Order Council meeting in Davao City that if he were to decide, he would rather stop the peace negotiations with the communist rebels, since the NPA is not stopping its offensives. It is clear to the revolutionary movement that the NPA has the right to engage in active self-defense and defend the people in the face of brutal AFP and NPA attacks even as the peace talks continue.

The fourth round of the series of peace talks will resume on May 27 to June 22 in Noordwijk Aan Zee, The Netherlands.

## Balikatan 2017 commences under Duterte

BALIKATAN 2017 pushed through last May 8-19 despite GRP President Rodrigo Duterte's previous stance against it. "Despite declarations of an 'independent foreign policy' by the Duterte regime, US military presence in the country remains pervasive," declared the Communist Party of the Philippines on the "Balikatan" joint military exercises between American and AFP soldiers.

The military exercises of the two armed forces were set to be held in the provinces of Samar, Panay, Nueva Ecija, Isabela, Aurora and Cagayan. This is the first Balikatan under the Duterte regime and among the scheduled 257 military exercises between the US and the AFP. The pro-US officials inside Duterte's government prevailed to continue the military exercises contrary to the latter's declarations last October 2016 that he will put an end to these.

Participating in the Balikatan are 2,600 American troops and more than 2,800 AFP soldiers carrying out so-called "humanitarian assistance and disaster response" and also exercises on "counter-terrorism" in the said provinces. These conceal the US military's aim to more firmly establish foothold in the Philippines amid the Duterte regime's efforts to establish closer military and economic links with China. Duterte shifted the "Balikatan" exercises on "territorial defense" and "maritime security" from the South China Sea in order not to provoke China.

However, the joint US and Philippine naval maneuvers like the one carried out in Calayan island in Cagayan last May 16, seek to reinforce US military presence in the Philippine eastern seaboard. At present, the AFP pushes for the construction of a naval base for the

US in Casiguran, Aurora. This will reinforce the military facilities built by the US in Guiuan, Eastern Samar since 2013, and likewise in Nueva Ecija. These aim to impede China from its increasing presence in eastern Philippines or the Pacific Ocean.

US military bases and facilities are also being constructed in Clark and Subic, Palawan, Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Zamboanga City and others. The Duterte regime has so far failed to carry out steps to abrogate several unequal military treaties between the Philippines and US.

The Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, Visiting Forces Agreement and the Mutual Defense Treaty all serve to further US military interventionism.

In any case, the "Balikatan" exercises, as well as China's incursions into Philippine territory, are both violative of national sovereignty and will face firm opposition. Only

a few weeks earlier, three Chinese naval ships docked at the Sasa Wharf in Davao City. This move by China, including its patrolling of Philippine territorial seas and building spree of military facilities in and around the Spratlys, are parallel to the projection of military might and extension of reach by rival imperialist US.



AB

## NPA-EV military actions in response to US

"THE NEW People's Army-Eastern Visayas' (NPA-EV) more than 14 offensives are in defense of the people against the US and its militarist stooges in the Duterte government." Thus stated Fr. Santiago "Ka Sanny" Salas, spokesperson for the NDF-EV, in connection with Balikatan's conclusion in the region. He added that these likewise uphold national sovereignty and democracy.

NDF-EV's statement is also in relation to the resumption of the fifth round of the NDFP-GRP peace talks. Fr. Salas criticized the militarists' influence on the talks and their moves to force a ceasefire agreement which would lead to the eventual surrender of the revolutionary forces. He asserted that the matter of any ceasefire agreement should only be brought about in connection with the release of all political prisoners and the signing of the CASER.

Alongside this, progressive organizations in EV staged a protest action against Balikatan. Spearheaded by Bayan-Sinirangan Bisayas, national democratic organizations marched along Rizal Avenue in Tacloban City last May 12 to declare their opposition to the "Balikatan" and demand the expulsion of US troops from the region and the country. Balikatan was held in Ormoc, Leyte and Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

According to the group's statement, exercises on "humanitarian assistance and disaster response" conceal the US objective to condition the people's minds to accede to their basing in the Philippines. For its part, the alliance of calamity victims People Surge said that "aid" from the US cannot redress its violation of the country's national sovereignty. AB

## "Junta" joke not funny—CPP

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is not amused by Pres. Rodrigo Duterte's joke that his "junta" would be complete with the appointment of another retired military official in his Cabinet.

"Duterte's joke must be severely criticized. It smacks of contempt of the hardships, oppression and military abuses which the Filipino people were subjected to under the 1972-86 military dictatorship of Marcos and his military and police clique, as well as under the successive AFP oplan wars of suppression from Oplan Lambat Bitag up to the current Oplan Kapayapaan," the CPP said.

Duterte's appointment of Palparan-trained Gen. Eduardo Año, current Chief-of-Staff of the AFP and former Philippine Army commander, last May 15 as secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government is a "shameless act against the thousands of victims of his reign of terror. By heading the DILG, he is set to further enrich himself through bureaucrat capitalist corruption, as he has done in the military," CPP added.

Año is notorious for his dirty methods of suppression, such as his involvement in the abduction and disappearance of Jonas Burgos in 2007, and the illegal arrests and killings of Lumads in Paquibato and

other places in Mindanao when he headed the 10th ID in 2014-15.

Two days prior, Duterte appointed former AFP chief-of-staff Gen. Roy Cimatu to the DENR to replace Gina Lopez. Cimatu is one of the principal implementers of the Arroyo regime's violent Oplan Bantay Laya, especially extra-judicial killings of anti-mining activists. He initiated the formation of the "investment defense force", special AFP units funded by mining companies.

There are now no less than 27 former military officials occupying key positions, which comprise the biggest clique within the Duterte regime. They bear the fascist military orientation and are pro-US

### FORMER MILITARY OFFICERS IN DUTERTE'S GOVERNMENT

	<b>LT. GEN. ROY CIMATU</b> DENR Sec.		<b>MAJ. GEN. DELFIN LORENZANA</b> DND Sec.
	<b>GENERAL EDUARDO AÑO</b> DILG Sec.		<b>GENERAL HERMOGENES ESPERON</b> National Security Adviser
	<b>PNP/Gen. Dir. CATALINO CUY</b> DILG Usec.		<b>Ret. PNP/ Gen. EDWIN QUINSAY</b> DILG Asec.

**PDEA  
PNP GEN. DIR.  
ISIDRO LAPENA**

**NDRRMC  
GENERAL  
RICARDO JALAD**

**BFAR  
COMMODORE  
EDUARDO GONGONA**

**PDEA  
MAJ. GEN.  
JESUS FAJARDO**

**NIA  
GEN.  
RICARDO VISAYA**

**BCDA  
MAJ. GEN.  
ROMEO POQUIZ**

**NFA  
MAJ. GEN.  
JASON AQUINO**

**LTO  
PNP/Gen. Dir.  
EDGAR GALVANTE**

**PCSO  
MAJ. GEN.  
ALEXANDER BALUTAN**

**LRTA  
RET. PNP GEN.  
REYNALDO BERROYA**

**MRT3  
CAPT.  
JIM SYDIONGCO**

**OPAPP  
COL.  
DICKSON HERMOSO**

**BOC  
CAPTAIN  
NICANOR FAELDON**

**NICA  
PNP GEN.  
PAUL MONTEAGUDO**

**Philippine Center on  
Transnational Crime  
PNP Sr. Supt.  
ALLAN GUISIHAN**

**NICA  
Rear Admiral  
RUFINO LOPEZ JR.**

**CAAP  
RET. PNP GEN.  
RODOLFO GARCIA**

**BID  
PNP GEN.  
JAIME MORENTE**

**CAAP  
CAPT.  
MANUEL TAMAYO**

**BCDA  
COL.  
YUSOP JIMLAN**

**Clark Development Corp.  
RET. PNP GEN.  
FRANCISCO VILLAROMAN**

zealots who follow US imperialist direction. These past several months, former military officials like Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and National Security Adviser Hermonogenes Esperon have been the most virulent against the peace negotiations.

This prompted Jose Maria Sison, NDFP chief political consultant, to declare that the said junta can be “a threat at the expense of the peace negotiations, the people and Mr. Duterte himself...He must remember that Gen. Fidel V. Ramos turned against his second cousin Marcos. And Gen. Angelo Reyes also turned against his compadre, Joseph Estrada.”

The dominance of the military clique, combined with Duterte's authoritarian rhetoric, raises the level of impunity of military forces in the conduct of their campaigns of suppression, and a new wave of attacks against activists, advocates of the interests of the toiling masses and defenders of the country's environment and patrimony.

There will be worsening all-out campaign of aerial bombings and shelling of rural communities where people have actively struggled for genuine land reform and resisted landgrabbing by big landlords, mining companies and big plantations.

The pro-US clique will ensure imperialist policies against Duterte's independent foreign policy declarations, to the extent of removing him from power if the US decides that he poses a threat to their control.

The number of appointed former military and police officers in the Duterte government are almost as many as the six appointed to the Ramos cabinet (Barbers, Abat, Aguirre, Yan, Alunan, Enrile) and four to the Arroyo cabinet (Ermita, Ebdane, Reyes, Mendoza). One hundred former military officers were in the Ramos government and 51 in Arroyo's.

## MARBAI successfully reclaims land from LFC

AT THE third attempt, peasant members of Madaum Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Inc. (MARBAI) successfully claimed their lands from Lapanday Foods Corporation in Madaum, Tagum City last May 18.

Together with 5,000 farmers from different towns, supporters and officials from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), the group marched from Madaum Gym towards the gate of the plantation to press for their right to land.

Lapanday security guards met and taunted the farmers, saying, ‘Welcome to dying field, you are free to enter.’ The guards declined to open the gates citing their supposed job to prevent anyone from entering the plantation.

LFC also hired an additional 800 guards to stop the farmers and their supporters. They even set up booby traps and threatened an armed confrontation even if it is against the government.

Peasants had to forcibly take down the barricades to enter the plantation.

During the program, leaders of MARBAI congratulated their members and supporters and expressed gratitude to DAR Secretary Rafael Mariano in his solidarity with the farmers to ensure their installation to their lands.

According to the Ugnayan ng Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA), it was the mass of peasants

who persevered to achieve victory. Because of their persistence during the campout and after the dialogue with Duterte, a task force was set up, led by DAR to finally reclaim their land. Even the local police force was compelled to assist them.

Their victory will serve as inspiration for farmers who had been robbed of their lands by landlords through agribusiness ventures agreements paving the way for large banana plantations and other products for export.

Since last year, members of MARBAI have attempted several times to take back their lands but they had been dispersed, harassed and threatened by Lapanday's private goons. The company and local police officials disregarded DAR's order. Because of this, more than 200 members of Marbai trooped to Manila last April 20 and set up camp in Mendiola, in front of Malacañang, from May 2 until May 13. Duterte visited the campout last May 9 and pledged to support their struggle. They returned to Tagum City in time to prepare for their mobilization to decisively reclaim their lands. **AB**





## End to RCEP negotiations demanded

THE PEOPLE Over Profit Network held a picket in Manila last May 10 to demand the halt of the 18th series of negotiations for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The following day, the group, along with Bayan, went to Mendiola to criticize the Duterte regime's hosting of the negotiations and warn about the agreement's subsequent destruction. People Over Profit Network is composed of progressive organizations of peasants, workers and professionals.

According to the group, the Philippines does not need the RCEP. What the people need are land, support services from the government, living wage and protection from foreign monopoly corporations. The RCEP will only bring about further destruction to the local economy because this institutionalizes neoliberal policies which have long devastated the people.

## Negros farmers protest

FARMERS UNDER the National Federation of Sugar Workers, Pamalakaya, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and National Network of Agrarian Reform Advocates launched a protest action last May 10 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental.

The rallyists marched to the office of the Department of Agrarian Reform to protest the snail-paced processing of the Hacienda Felomina case in Escalante. Because of this, the hacienda owner is able to plot the eviction of the farmers. The protesters stood firm that they will not leave their farms since these are the source of food for their families. They demand land, food and justice.

## Seized land reclaimed by the Lumad

THROUGH LAND occupation in Sitio Saboy, Brgy. Lunen, Tupi, South Cotabato, around 70 Lumad families from four clans successfully reclaimed last May 3 part of the ancestral land stolen from them for many decades. The Lumads come from the Aksasato Dad Blaang n' Tboli. They are reclaiming at least 125 hectares.

Tupi Mayor Reynaldo Tamayo, Jr. negotiated with the Lumads who came with their farm implements, indigenous weapons, and posters made of sacks bearing their stand "To grab our lands is to kill us!"

## 100th day of HTI fire commemorated

PAMANTIK-KMU launched a protest action last May 12 to commemorate the 100th day of the fire that gutted the HTI factory. The group lambasted the Cavite provincial government's silence regarding the tragedy that beset the workers. Oliver De Guia of Pamantik-KMU said that Gov. Crispin Remulla even served as HTI spokesperson in saying that no worker was killed and that only 126 were wounded. In truth, 1,328 workers are still unaccounted for up to the present.

Pamantik-KMU urged the workers to expose the real events that transpired inside HTI.

Likewise, family-members and workers of Kentex commemorated the second year of the fire that hit the slippers factory, killing 72 workers. Justice for Kentex Workers Alliance and Kilos na Manggagawa assailed the schemes of the Kentex management to divide the ranks of the workers and evade any accountability.

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# No respite from violence in the Duterte regime

**U**nder the Duterte regime, reactionary troops relentlessly wage destruction upon peasants and indigenous people in the countryside, likewise against human rights advocates. Bombings, killings, abduction, illegal arrests and other brutalities continue to be perpetrated by the state to suppress the resistance of the people.

**Davao City.** In Calinan District, the AFP launched aerial bombings for two successive days, coordinated with 3rd IB combat operations on the ground. The violence of the 3rd IB soldiers began on May 5 in Sitio Cabagtukan, Brgy. Dominga in Calinan. That same day, one resident was gunned down by the soldiers. The next day, bombings by AFP helicopters began.

The AFP again conducted bombings the next day, May 7, around 7 a.m. A resident with family name Lascuna was mauled by the

soldiers. At least six bombs were dropped by the AFP in the community. In addition, Rodolfo Dagahuya, 33, a farmer, was killed when 3rd IB soldiers relentlessly fired upon his house.

Some 990 residents in seven sitios in Brgy. Dominga were affected by the bombing and rampage of the 3rd IB. This prompted the residents to evacuate, but soldiers barred them from leaving. One barangay official was threatened by a soldier who accused him of being an NPA member.

According to some residents, they cannot return to their fields to attend to their farm animals and go on with production. They were able to take along only a few items and food is very scarce.

**Maguindanao.** Almost 5,000 residents from the towns of Datu Saudi Ampatuan and Shariff Aguak were forced to flee from their communities due to bombings and AFP operations. The AFP wrought the disaster on this town on May 8, when reactionary troops launched operations against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.

**Batangas.** The Scout Rangers are serving as instruments of the big bourgeois comprador Ramon Ang in evicting the residents of

Calatagan.

On May 10, some 100 soldiers launched operations in Brgy. Hukay to abuse the peasants and fisher folk who are strongly fighting Ang's seizure of their land. In the aforementioned operation, four civilians were held at gunpoint by the soldiers. Ang attempted to grab the 2,300-hectare land for his Asturias Mining Corporation.

**Cavite.** The state also continues to support Henry Sy's attempts to grab peasants' and fisher folk's land in Brgy. Patungan, Maragondon. On May 12, the court issued orders to demolish more than 300 households to give way to Sy's tourism project. This covers 602 hectares of prime agricultural land that serve as the residents' source of livelihood. The said project will also seize abundant fishing grounds of residents in Brgy. Patungan and adjacent areas.

In response, the residents and their supporters organized a "Bantayan at Kampuhan" to resist the demolition.

**Compostela Valley.** The picket line of Shin Sun Tropical Fruit Corp. workers in Brgy. San Miguel, Compostela was attacked last May 15. This was after Judge Jill Rose

Jaugan-Lo of the Regional Trial Court Branch 14 issued orders to break up the line and arrest 13 union officers. The case is already with the Department of Labor and Employment so the court no longer has jurisdiction over this.

A hundred elements of the combined forces of PNP Compostela Valley and the 66th IB attempted to break up the workers' picket line.

In other provinces, the state continues to attack activists and their families. In Batangas, elements of the PNP-CIDG Region 4A, Philippine Air Force and Intelligence Service of the AFP illegally arrested Jacqueline Alog on May 3. Alog was a former member of the Karapatan-ST regional council and presently Gabriela-ST volunteer. She was arrested after attending the wake of a relative. Trumped-up charges had been filed against her in the past, together with 71 other activists. It was only a day after she was arrested when Alog was shown a warrant of arrest based on trumped-up charges. The day the military was searching for Jacqueline, her brother-in-law Roderick Alog was also arrested in his house in San Carlos, Pangasinan.

In Bohol, men believed to be

soldiers of 47th IB and ISAFP abducted a student, Rey Anton Olayvar, 21, son of peasant leader Adolfo Olayvar on May 8, around 7 p.m. He was taken away in a van but was able to escape at a stop, and was assisted by farmers in the area.

The Olayvars are activists in Bohol. Adolfo is presently an officer of the Hugpong sa Mag-uumang Bol-anon (HUMABOL-KMP) and staff of the Farmers Development Center (FARDEC). Rey Anton's mother Regina had been abducted by military agents in 2008. Meanwhile, his uncle Victor Olayvar, who was once a leader of HUMABOL and Bayan, was a victim of extra-judicial killing under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime.

In Quezon, 69 members of a Karapatan-led fact-finding mission in Lopez were surrounded and threatened by AFP soldiers of the Southern Luzon Command last May 10. The group was on its way to Sitio Alat-alatin, Brgy. San Francisco to investigate the military's human rights violations in the area. The soldiers took pictures of the area's residents and illegally detained a farmer, Ruel Segui, for several hours.

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## Militarization victimizes Lumads in Sultan Kudarat and Bukidnon

Elements of the Marine Battalion Landing Team-2 and police personnel terrorized groups delivering relief goods to Dulangan Manobo evacuees in Sitio Blanga, Brgy. Nalilidan, Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat last May 18. The military, police and the local government headed by Mayor Ronan Garcia connived in denying the evacuees much needed help and support.

Around 1,000 Dulangan Manobos have evacuated since last May 12 due to the continuing militarization of their communities. This came after an encounter last May 10 between the New People's Army (NPA) and soldiers who were assisted by the security force of David M. Consunji Incorporated (DMCI), the biggest plunderer in the area.

The National Democratic Front-Far South Mindanao strongly condemned the collusion of the local government with the military and their servility to the interests of DMCI. Intensified military operations in Sultan

Kudarat have been ongoing since March. These have resulted in the hamletting and food blockade of 11 communities in three of Kalamansig's villages. Alongside these are gross violations of the residents' human rights such as illegal detention, coercion and destruction of properties.

In Bukidnon, up to 50 Lumad families were evicted from their communities as a result of the militarization by the AFP and the paramilitary group Alamara in the last week of April until the start of May.

In San Fernando, 24 Tigwahanon families were forced to leave their homes in Sitio Salumpikit, Brgy. Bunacao last April 23, when the 60th IB launched operations following an encounter with an NPA unit nearby. According to the residents, soldiers ransacked their homes purportedly in search of Red fighters. Ugsalay Lagundong's house was also fired at with M203 grenade.

This forced around 99 residents to evacuate to the

barangay center taking with them only a few of their belongings. It took two days since their evacuation before officials from the local government visited them, but only to prod them to return to their communities despite the dangers.

Fearing the 60th IB's retaliation, the Tigwahanons again evacuated, this time from the barangay to the provincial capitol in Malaybalay City last May 1. There, they set up a protest camp to demand assistance from the local government.

Meanwhile, 25 Umayamnon families evacuated last May 4 from the sitios of San Vicente, Saloringan, Mahinaga and Tagbacan in Brgy. Cananga-an in Cabanglasan. They too, went to the capitol in Bukidnon because of threats from the Alamara, the paramilitary group controlled by the AFP.

Headed by Sammy Diwangan, the Alamara accused the Umayamnon datus as the ones behind the recent NPA attacks against the Alamara. The group threatened the datus that they will be killed along with their families.

The Umayamnonns asked the mayor of Cabanglasan

to mediate on the Alamara's harassment. But on the designated day of dialogue last April 20, only the armed men of the Alamara led by Diwangan and the Delamance brothers arrived. Because of this, around 100 Umayamnonns were forced to flee to safety.

Meanwhile, seven more Umayamnon families who were to join the evacuees were blocked by Diwangan's group at the marketplace of Centro Iba, Cabanglasan. The Alamara terrorized the evacuees and confiscated their belongings. Despite this, and the standing warrant of arrest against Diwangan, the police and the local government unit of Cabanglasan took no action.

In connection with this, the group Katribu filed a formal complaint with the NDFP-GRP Joint Monitoring Committee against the AFP. The filing of charges was done at the same time that the United Nations is conducting its Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights in the Philippines. According to Katribu, the AFP brazenly violates the CARHRIHL most especially with its continuing counterinsurgency operations which targets indigenous people's communities all over the country. AB

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## PLGA ambushes kill 37 paramilitary forces in India

**T**hirty seven (37) members of the Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF), a paramilitary group funded and ran by the Indian reactionary state, were killed in two successful ambushes by the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) of the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M) this March-April.

An ambush occurred in the Chintagufa-Burkapal border in Sukma, Bastar in Chhattisgarh state last April 24 where 25 paramilitary forces were killed. The PLGA seized 22 high-powered rifles (including 13 AK and five INSAS rifles), up to 4,000 rounds of ammunitions and other military materiél.

Prior to this, on March 11, the PLGA raided another CRPF detachment in Bheji, Sukma where 12 paramilitary forces were killed. On both occasions, the PLGA used indigenous firearms, such as the Rambo arrow (an arrow with a small explosive on the tip) to drive the forces away from their camps and defeat them in open battle.

According to the spokesperson of the Danda Karanya Special Zonal Committee of the CPI-M, both ambushes were punishments for the abusive paramilitary forces which carry out widespread abuse and ex-

ploitation of women in the area. These attacks are in retaliation, in defense and to defeat the anti-people policies and carry forward the people's struggles; in particular, the Bheji and Chintagufa-Burkapal ambushes are in defense of, and respect for the indigenous women's dignity.

CRPF forces are deployed on the said towns to provide security for road construction companies in the area. According to the DK-SZC, these roads are being built mainly in areas where the revolutionary army is present. They serve in facilitating the extraction of raw materials and exploitation of the masses, as well as transportation of state security forces to the said areas.

At present, there are 118

battalions or 120,000 forces deployed in Chhattisgarh to defeat the revolutionary forces. They sow terror among the people, particular among the Adivasi or indigenous peoples. They drive away the Adivasis from the forests to pave the way for the entry of big foreign companies intent on mining, logging or constructing mega dams. The rape and exploitation of Adivasi

women are among their most heinous crimes. AB

