

cratic Government of the Philippines sprang out. These are represented in general by the NDFP in relating with different movements, nations and governments overseas. The NDFP has excellently upheld and represented the interests of the Filipino people in peace negotiations with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines since 1987, which highlighted the just demands of the people and bore some significant agreements.

The upcoming NDFP anniversary has deep historical significance. It symbolizes the more than five decades of the people's persistent resistance for national freedom and genuine democracy. The extreme suffering of the majority of the Filipino masses under the current puppet and fascist US-Marcos regime II highlights the need to further strengthen and expand the NDFP



and its allied organizations, the mass struggles and the revolutionary armed struggle across the country.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr's gross subservience to the geopolitical, economic and military interests of the US imperialists is unfathomable. He surrenders the Filipino people's freedom, livelihood and life in exchange for investments, military aid and loans.

With Marcos' further push for neoliberal policies, the toiling people are being dispossessed of their sources of livelihood and exploited by foreign monopoly capitalists. Mountains, wide swathes of land, and even oceans are being swooped and plundered. The environment is being destroyed, and the peasant masses, fisherfolks and the rest of the toiling people are being driven out and deprived of their livelihood. To attract investments from big foreign capitalists, Marcos turns a deaf ear to the demand of workers and ordinary employees for wage increases amid the unimpeded skyrocketing of food and commodity prices.

Under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), Marcos Jr opened four additional locations (from five) to establish US military bases and facilities, display-



ing subservience to the US imperialists. Two of these are in Cagayan, and one each in Isabela and Palawan. These are additional components to the US strategy of surrounding and provoking its imperialist rival China. The Philippines is part of what the US calls the "First Island Chain" where it aims to establish a network of missiles aimed at China. Under the EDCA, the US can stockpile nuclear arms or any other weapons without the knowledge of Filipinos. This unduly involves Filipinos in a war that is not theirs, and turns the Philippines into a possible target of any action or counter-action by China.

Amid all these, the Filipino people must come together under the banner of patriotism and genuine democracy, to defend the life and freedom of the country. They need to fight in all possible fields of resistance, mobilize the broadest number of people, and exercise their strength to change and carve their own historical destiny.

The role that the NDFP in gathering the strength of the people and creating a powerful wave of protests and resistance cannot be understated.

The NDFP's national-democratic program must be rigorously propagated to unite the Filipino people. It primarily aims to end the ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system, and to free the country from foreign domination and control. These are the basic conditions to change the Filipino people's destiny, end the hundreds of years history of oppression and slavery, and bring the country to a new chapter of progress and development.

The Filipino people's aspiration for genuine freedom and democracy is immeasurable. It cannot be quelled even by the puppet state's brutal terrorism. Let us draw strength and inspiration from the thousands upon thousands of Filipinos who offered their lives in the now centuries long revolutionary struggle. Let us wholeheartedly give everything to serve the people. **AB**

 <p>Vol LIV No. 7 April 7, 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray, English and Spanish. 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>	<h2 style="text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <p>Editorial: Celebrate the upcoming 50th anniversary of the NDFP 1</p> <p>Tactical offensives of the NPA in Masbate 3</p> <p>NPA mounts ambushes in Albay and Quezon 3</p> <p>Wawa-Tayabasan Dam plague Rizal 4</p> <p>NPA-Negros launches armed actions 5</p> <p>Conditions in NCMR are fertile for revolution 5</p> <p>Revolutionaries celebrate NPA anniversary 6</p> <p>In short 7</p> <p>Protests for wage increase continue 8</p> <p>Protests 8</p> <p>Military abducts 3 civilians in Batangas 9</p> <p>AFP willfully kills 3 sick Red fighters in NEMR 9</p> <p>Philippines, a US pawn against China 9</p> <p>Plunder in Surigao del Sur 10</p>
<p>Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	
 ang.bayan@cpp.ph	 @angbayan1969

NPA-Masbate mounts consecutive tactical offensives

Units of the New People's Army (NPA)-Masbate mounted consecutive guerilla actions in the last half of March. These are part of the efforts of the people's army to defend the Masbateño masses and dismantle the existing military rule in the province.

Not less than 20 forces of the butcher 2nd IB, CAFGU and police were killed in the four guerilla actions of Red fighters in three towns of the province.

First in its series was the coordinated guerilla actions in Barangay Locso-an, Placer and Barangay Gaid, Dimasalang on March 22. Killed in these armed actions were 10 2nd IB and police troops while not less than seven were wounded. Some of the wounded elements died eventually.

On March 24, NPA operatives bombed the CAFGU detachment in Barangay Manlut-od, Placer. The operation was mounted at 11 p.m. which surprised the enemy's armed forces in the detachment. Four soldiers and CAFGU elements were killed. NPA operatives also destroyed three huts of the said detachment.

This was followed by a demolition operation on March 27 by the NPA in Barangay Marcella, Uson against the Task Force Sagip cre-



ated by Marcos Jr. Meanwhile, the unit reported its active defense against attacking 2nd IB forces in Barangay Villahermosa, Cawayan on March 20. The commander of the attacking AFP unit was killed.

AFP violation of the international humanitarian law

Amid the peak of NPA's guerilla actions, the AFP spread lies that the NPA attacked near a school. The lies were repeatedly echoed by Department of Education (DepEd) secretary Sara Duterte.

In truth, the firefight between the NPA and the AFP was far from civilian population and schools. But in extreme shock and fear, 2nd IB forces ran towards schools in two barangays and fired shots from within. On March 20, soldiers fired shots and launched M203 grenades

near the Villahermoso National High School in Cawayan. Meanwhile on March 22, military and police troops retreated to Locso-an National High School after an encounter with the NPA. These incidents caused extreme fear to students and teachers.

The Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) in the province mocked the operating AFP-PNP-CAFGU troops calling it "cowards" and with "shivering knees." They use civilians, even children, as human shields to evade NPA attacks.

Meanwhile, police arrested four civilians in Cawayan town on accusations of "harboring" Red fighters in their own houses a day before the encounters. The four were charged with murder.

To further sow fear and terror in the province, the AFP poured 500 additional troops under the pretext of defending the welfare of students and teachers. These add up to the not less than five battalions of military and police which sow terror among the Masbateño masses.

According to the NPA-Masbate, the newly deployed military troops aim to protect the interests of big businesses, mining companies and ecotourism projects which are detrimental to the welfare of the Masbateños.

NPA mounts ambushes in Albay and Quezon

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Albay ambushed and killed a police intelligence officer at Sitio Agna, Homapon, Legazpi City on April 5. A 9mm pistol was seized from him.

In Quezon, the NPA ambushed forces of the 85th IB in Barangay Vista Hermosa, Macalelon on March 24. The 85th IB suffered two casualties.

Meanwhile, four were killed and three wounded from the PNP's 10th Special Action Battalion after the NPA-Mindoro repelled their attack in Sitio Naksib, Barangay Sta. Cruz, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro on March 15.

Wawa-Tayabasan Dam plague Rizal's environment and people

A soldier was killed in an ambush by the New People's Army (NPA)-Rizal against 80th IB troops guarding the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project, known locally as Wawa-Violago Dam. The ambush took place in Sitio Karayupa, Barangay San Rafael, Rodriguez (formerly Montalban) on March 31. It was followed by an encounter on April 1 at Sitio Makopoy, Baragay Mascalap, Rodriguez where two 2nd ID soldiers were killed.

Soldiers have been conducting operations in the barangays covering Wawa-Tayabasan Dam, a major part of the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project, since February. Cases of harassment and surveillance against residents opposing the project and refusing to leave their houses and farmlands are rampant.

The Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project is a project of the Wawa JVCo, a joint venture of the big bourgeois and crony Enrique Razon Jr. and Oscar Violago of the San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders and Developers. The project is funded by Chinese loans on conditions that Chinese companies will benefit from it. One of this is PowerChina which is contracted for the design, supply of materials and construction of the dam. Like the Kaliwa Dam, it is one of the "flagship" projects under the Duterte regime's Build Build Build program which the current Marcos regime continues to implement.

Rushed construction of the two dams

In June 2022, Razon inaugu-

rated the Tayabasan Weir which completes the project's Phase I. The construction of the bigger and more destructive Upper Wawa dam covering the ancestral lands of the Dumagat/Remontado is now being railroaded. Bulldozing of farms around the project is round the clock. The mountains are also continuously bombarded.

The two dams will supply about 600 million liters of water daily to Manila Water Corporation, one of the two water concessionaires in Metro Manila. This company, notorious for its poor services and soaring charges, is also owned by Razon.

"The forced acquisition [by JVCo] of residential and farm lands began last year," a resident said. "In some parts of San Rafael, many were forced to accept payment because of the harassment they experienced." Some who sold their land bought a parcel of land in a different sitio which is also set to be covered by the project. "They were dismayed because the land where they transferred will also be affected."

JVCo offered the peasants as low

as ₱50 per square meter or ₱500,000 per hectare, excluding the value of their farms, plants and houses. Some peasants accepted lower compensation after they were harassed. Some feared being driven out without receiving a single cent so they consented even if it went against their will. The company told the residents that their houses and farms were erected on public land, and as such, they do not have rights over it.

Apart from peasants and indigenous peoples, the project has a huge impact on the livelihood of people reliant to the local tourism of Wawa Dam in Montalban and hiking trails in San Mateo. Thousands upon thousands of local tourists visit these places due to its proximity to Metro Manila. The river is in the middle of Mt. Pamitian and Mt. Binacayan and has many gorges and caves which are visited by nature lovers. Hikers go to Mt. Purro, Barumbibit Falls, Balon, Lanawan and Kapananan hiking trails in Sierra Madre also go through the area.

Since March last year, JVCo banned tourism in Wawa. This adversely impacted the residents working as tourist guides. In Casile alone, there are 55 tourist guides. They earn a daily average of ₱1,000 on Mondays up to Fridays, and a daily average of ₱2,000 on Saturdays and Sundays. In a year, a tourist guide can earn up to ₱469,000.

Apart for tourist guides, cottage owners, small boat owners and tricycle drivers dependent on local tourism will also lose their livelihood. They earn as much as the tourist guides.

Most of them were paid by the company ₱100,000 each to leave the place. This is only a quarter of their possible income if they stay in the area.



NPA-Negros launches armed actions

The New People's Army (NPA)-Central Negros mounted three guerilla actions during the last half of March in response to the deployment of additional military forces in the island.

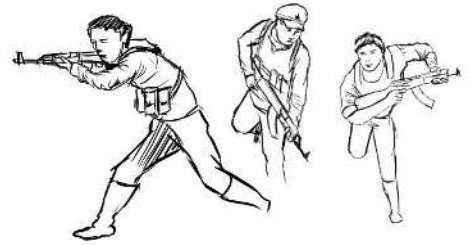
On March 20, the NPA fired at the 7th Regional Mobile Force Battalion's detachment at Sitio Hinugpayan, Barangay Luz, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental. Two police elements were wounded. The NPA also fired at the 62nd IB's detachment in Barangay Sikatuna Proper, Isabela, Negros Occidental on the same day.

Meanwhile, the NPA captured two short firearms from a land-grabber and his armed goon at Sitio Manlama, Brgy Montilla, Moises Padilla, Negros Occidental on March 30.

Intensified militarization

The NPA-Negros criticized the task force created by Ferdinand Marcos Jr supposedly to "maintain peace and order" in the island. The regime used the murder of Negros Oriental Governor Roel Degamo in March as pretext to deploy additional military forces. This will surely engender further terrorism and fear in the island.

The Marcos regime first ordered the creation of the task force on March 10 which was composed of two brigades and six battalions from the PNP and the AFP. The order was



formalized after he signed the Administrative Order No. 6 on April 3.

A 50-element Light Reaction Company, a US-trained unit involved with terrorizing Marawi City, was deployed in the island. The 47th IB also arrived in Negros from Bohol in March.

Marcos' order comes on top of the Duterte regime's Memorandum No. 32 which resulted to gruesome crimes against the people of Negros.

This includes the massacre of peasants in what is called the Oplan Sauron 1 and 2 in 2018 and 2019. **AB**

Conditions in NCMR are fertile for armed revolution

On the anniversary of the New People's Army (NPA) on March 29, the Communist Party of the Philippines North Central Mindanao Regional Committee ordered NPA units under its leadership to tighten their grasp on the principles of guerilla warfare. It called on NPA units to mount tactical offensives and to frustrate the enemy's focused military operations.

In the past five years, the CPP and the NPA in NCMR confronted the intensified operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) aimed to crush the revolutionary movement in the region. The AFP mobilized thousands of troops and used modern weapons such as drones, fighter jets, helicopters and artillery. State terrorism heightened in the region, where mothers and their babies are arrested, imprisoned and put under intense pressure, family members of martyred fighters are intimidated and charged with trumped up charges, civilians are murdered and threatened and their houses are ransacked, and where cases of illegal detention, food blockades, and many other human rights violations were recorded.

These were all done amid the livelihood crisis which has caused widespread hunger and poverty in

the region. There have been widespread eviction and land-grabbing of peasant lands for commercial plantation expansion. This include eviction of peasants in Malitbog, Bukidnon to give way for San Miguel Foods Inc's cassava plantation; demolition of peasants in Balingasag, Misamis Oriental for Del Monte's pineapple plantation expansion; and many others. Military harassment is widespread in barangays Manalog,



Kibalabag, Silae and Miglamin in Malaybalay City in line with Del Monte's plan to seize 6,000 hectares of land for its pineapple, papaya and avocado plantation.

The low farmgate prices of peasant's produce add to the burden they shoulder, as prices of basic commodities continue to skyrocket. In the past year, a kilo of rubber was bought at around ₱22-₱26 only. Manila hemp was at a low ₱48-₱60 per kilo only, and corn at ₱15-₱22 per kilo.

For Region X, the law mandates a ₱390 daily minimum wage for non-agricultural workers and ₱375 for agricultural workers. In reality, majority of workers only receive ₱250-₱300 due to rampant contractualization.

Many peasants in the region today continue to demand their right to land through collective cultivation and land occupation, confrontation with businesses and landlords and other means. From these struggles arise new youth fighters of the NPA. This validates the justness and importance of the people's revolution. **AB**

Revolutionaries celebrate NPA's 54th anniversary

Celebrations for the 54th anniversary of the New People's Army (NPA) were held on March 29 in the entire country and even overseas. Activities were conducted inside the NPA guerilla fronts, in urban centers through clandestine gatherings of National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) allied organizations, and in other countries through meetings and assemblies held by organizations supporting the people's war in the Philippines.

In its statement, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines paid tribute to the exceptional martyrs and Red fighters of the NPA who offered their lives for the people's democratic revolution. The Party called on the NPA to "stir up and spread the flames of the people's war for national freedom and democracy."

According to the Central Committee, the NPA has steadily advanced and surmounted every disadvantage and setback at every historical juncture in its 54 years of resistance. "It has frustrated the enemy's campaigns of encirclement and suppression," the Party added.

Meanwhile, in statements issued by the Party committees in the North Central Mindanao Region, Southern Tagalog Region and Mindoro Island, local victories of the NPA in its areas of operations were laid out. NPA commands in Panay island, Southern Panay, Negros islands' guerilla fronts, Masbate, Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte, Batangas, Surigao del Sur and NDF chapters in Ilocos, Cavite, Laguna, Palawan and others also released their statements.

The NPA-Central Negros command reported its victories the past year. Its mass base expanded by severalfold and its operations has

reached not less than 400 sitios in eight municipalities. It recruited new Red fighters from the intellectual youth in the countryside. Units of the people's militia in the guerilla front continued to expand which is now composed of hundreds of peasants.

In other fronts in the country, units reported the completion of several batches of Party courses, holding of medical services, and other social services in their areas of operation. These were held despite the brutal and focused military operations in their fronts.

Red fighters and the masses were able to gather in Camarines Norte, Central Negros and South Central Negros and other places for the anniversary.

In Eastern Visayas, celebrations were held despite the onslaught of additional three battalions in the last four months. The fighters held a 21-gun salute for Comrade Jose Maria Sison, martyrs of the Central Committee and of the island.

The activity was successfully concluded by the people's army and the masses without the enemy's knowledge. They showcased cultural performances and shared simple food and rice cakes.

In Metro Manila, members of

the Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (Kaguma) held a lighting protest on March 25 and members of the Kabataang Makabayan on April 2. Meanwhile, members of the Liga ng Agham para sa Bayan held a secret gathering.

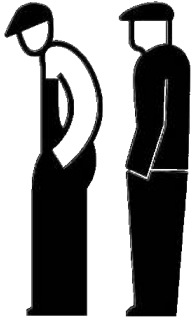
In the days running to the anniversary, NDFP allied organizations held streamer hanging, wall painting and leaflet distribution in promotion of the people's war in Metro Manila, Cebu City, in the provinces of Rizal, Laguna, Iloilo, Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur. Outside of the country, similar activities were held in Ireland.

Overseas, the Friends of the Filipino People in Struggle (FFPS) spearheaded fora, discussions and gatherings in the US and the United Kingdom. Groups from Ireland, China and other countries also expressed solidarity.

These advances belie the empty statements of the National Task Force-Elcac on April 3 that only two NPA guerilla fronts remain active while 15 others are "weakened" fronts. NTF-Elcac director Ernesto Torres Jr deliriously declared that it dismantled what it said "72 of the 89 guerilla fronts" since 2018. The US-Marcos Jr regime has once again pushed its deadline to crush all NPA guerilla fronts by the end of 2023.

BHIB





1.8 million

job loss in January. Number of employed decreased from **49 million** on December 2022 to **47.4 million**.

In addition, the number of workers in the labor force was also decreased by **1.5 million**, while the number of unemployed increased by **153,000** and the underemployed by **458,000**.

₱13.75 trillion

total debt of the Philippines, which is more than 60% of the total local production.

For 2023, ₱1.630 trillion is automatically allocated for debt payment. This is 18.65% higher compared in 2022 and equivalent to the 6.85% GDP of the country.

V20

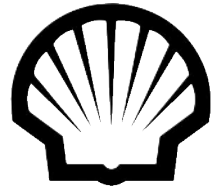
20 countries most vulnerable to climate change which includes the Philippines

On 2024, it is estimated that these countries would need **\$69 billion** as debt service.



Source: V20 and Boston University Global Development Policy Centre

₱4.1 billion



net income of **Shell Pilipinas** in 2022 amid rising prices of petroleum products and skyrocketing inflation.

₱1.3 billion

current amount allotted by the US to repair airports in the **Basa Air Base in Clark, Pampanga** for the exclusive use of its troops and warplanes.

This is one of the so called "**EDCA site**" or **foreign military base** constructed without permission from the Senate, contrary to what the reactionary 1987 constitution mandated.



Credit Suisse Bank

167-year old and second biggest bank in Switzerland collapsed on February after a series of loss of investment, payment of fines due to money laundering, various scandals and withdrawal of **\$119 billion capital** by its clients.

99%

of the Philippines' milk is **imported**.

1.8 million metric tons (value: \$694.51 million) is imported, including infant formula.



29.12%

or only 49.20 million of the 169 million subscribers are registered as of March 21

With this, about **119.8 million subscribers** are facing the threat of disconnection from communication services as the April 27 registration deadline nears.

Protests for wage increase continue

As May 1 approaches, more sectors are mounting mass actions to call for wage increases and job security, alongside calls to lower commodity prices. Some of the mass actions are the following.

Kadamay held the yearly Kalbaryo ng Maralita, a week-long protest of the urban poor in time for the Holy Week of the Christian faith. A People's Mass was held on April 2 at the Bustillos Church in Sampaloc, Manila. The urban poor brought with them palm leaves with written demands for wage increase, job security and decent housing. On Holy Monday, they once again gathered at the Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila for wages and livelihood. The activities will conclude with the Pasyon ng Masa on April 4.

Petition for wage increase in Calabarzon. Workers under the Workers Initiative for Wage Increase (WIN4WIN) filed a petition for wage increase to the Calabarzon (Region IV-A) wage board to reach

the ₱750 minimum daily wage. At present, there are four different minimum wage categories in the region.

Payday Protest. Workers under the Unity of Wage Increase Now trooped the DOLE national office on payday, March 31 to call on the agency to act on its demand and petition for wage increase.

Regularize contractual government employees. On March 24, government employees protested to call for the junking of DBM and COA's Joint Circular No. 2 S. 2020 which authorized government agencies to hire workers from labor agencies. At present, there are 700,000 contractual, casual and



hired through job order government employees.

They also called for salary increase of all government employees to ₱33,000 monthly. The protest was held in front of the DBM office.



International Day of the Landless. Peasants gathered in front of the Department of Agriculture in Metro Manila in commemoration of the International Day of the Landless on March 29. Globally, about 800 million peasants do not own land due to the absence of genuine land reform and because of neoliberal policies driving land grabbing and plunder by imperialist companies of their farm fields, fishing waters and ancestral land. Farmers also held mobilizations in Panay, Bicol and Lupang Ramos in Cavite.

Negros detainees fast. Political detainees in Negros observed a day of fasting on March 30 to commemorate the 4th anniversary of the "Oplan Sauron 2" and call for justice for its victims. On March 30, 2019, 14 peasants were killed by the police and military in Canlaon, Manjuyod and Sta. Catalina in Negros Oriental after they were maliciously associated with the armed movement.

Address jeepney drivers' concerns. In Cebu, Piston-Cebu member-drivers protested on March 31 to call for the resignation of LTFRB-7 Regional Director Eduardo Montealto because of his inaction on the issue of jeepney phaseout.

Defend the North. Indigenous people's groups and human rights defenders from Northern Luzon trooped to state agencies in Metro Manila from March 20-21. They demanded the junking of trumped-up cases against seven activists known as the NL7, called for a stop to the bombing of civilian communities and other human rights violations in the North.

Youth against ROTC and tuition increase. Simultaneous protests were held by youth groups in eight schools on March 24 to oppose the proposed mandatory ROTC of the Marcos II regime. The youth also expressed their opposition to the impending tuition fee and other fees increase in private universities. Youth groups from the Far Eastern University, University of Sto. Tomas, Ateneo de Manila University, University of the East and other schools in Metro Manila took part.

Oppose privatization of CENECO. Employees and consumers of the Central Negros Energy Cooperative protested in Bacolod City on April 4 to reject the privatization of electric services. They said that it will cause the increase of electricity fees and unreliable service similar to what happened with the Bacolod City Water District.

Military abducts 3 civilians in Batangas

The 59th IB abducted on March 27 three civilians in Batangas and held them incommunicado for almost three weeks. Lloyd Descallar, Alfred Manalo and Angelito Balitostos were abducted in front of the Medical Center-Western Batangas in Balayan. Balitostos, 65, was incidentally passing by while the first two were being abducted.

Manalo and Descallar are volunteers for the Sugarfolks Unity for Genuine Agricultural Reform (SUGAR)-Batangas. After several days of searching and demanding their release by human rights groups, the 2nd ID was forced to admit custody of the three.

Forced surrender in La Union. Police forced four fisherfolk members of the Timek ken Namnaman dagiti Babassit a Mangngalap iti La Union (TIMEK La Union-Pamalakaya) to "surrender" in the second week of March. The four are

residents of Barangay San Manuel Norte, Ago, La Union. They were invited to a police station to supposedly receive aid but upon arrival were presented as "surrendered rebels."

Harassment of civilians in Negros Occidental. Danilo and Libeth Gerunda were interrogated after 62nd IB soldiers forcefully entered their house at Sitio Caliban, Barangay Banog-banog, Isabela on March 26 and March 28. Soldiers took photographs of the couples' children aged 16, 12 and 5 years

old.

Militarization in Tondo and Batangas. More than 90 soldiers of the 11th IB scoured the communities of Hapilan and Aroma of Barangay 105, Vitas, Tondo on March 9. They searched the community to pinpoint the whereabouts of members of women's group Gabriela and Kadamay. Hapilan and Aroma are communities facing impending demolition to give way for the Skyway Extension project and land reclamation.

Elements of the 59th IB also went house-to-house in Barangay San Isidro Sur, Sto. Tomas, Batangas on March 12. The said community will be displaced by the Sto. Tomas-Malvar Diversion Road project.

AFP willfully kills 3 sick Red fighters in NEMR

THREE SICK RED fighters of the New People's Army (NPA)-Northeastern Mindanao Region were abducted and summarily killed by soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). On March 26, husband-and-wife Dano and Rosalia Caindoy were abducted in a hospital in Misamis Oriental while waiting for treatment. They were claimed to have been killed in an encounter between the AFP and NPA in Barangay San Juan, Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur the following day.

On March 29, the AFP abducted 67 year-old and ailing Emanuel Llanos Anob in a Butuan City highway. He also visited a hospital for treatment. His relatives were even able to report his abduction. He was then claimed to have been killed in an encounter in San Miguel, Surigao del Sur the following day. His remains were unceremoniously dumped in a funeral home in Bayugan City.

Another case of international humanitarian law violation was recorded in Kalinga when 50th IB soldiers desecrated the corpse of Red fighter Onal Osia Balaoing (Ka Puk-et) who was martyred in an encounter in Balbalan town on March 9. Soldiers repeatedly fired shots at his dead body until his internal organs spilled out. His arms and legs were broken in many parts.

In Sorsogon, the 9th ID paraded Nestor Estillon and Edwin Jimenez as "surrendered" on April 3.

Estillon was illegally arrested by the 22nd IB in Barangay Fabrica, Barcelona while Jimenez, known as Ka Bro and member of the people's army, was arrested by the 31st IB in Barangay Lapinig, Gubat on March 9 while visiting his family.

Philippines, a US pawn against China

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of the Philippines joins the Filipino people in condemning the Marcos regime in its connivance with the imperialist US to build four additional US military bases in the country. On April 3, Ferdinand Marcos Jr announced its approval to grant "access" to US troops and military equipment in the Camilo Osias Naval Base in Sta. Ana, Cagayan; Lal-lo Airport in Lal-lo, Cagayan, Camp Melchor dela Cruz in Gamu, Isabela and Balabac Island which is part of Palawan.

These locations are identified as "agreed locations" under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). The US military is granted extra-territorial rights in these sites. This means that the Philippines has no authority to regulate nor even investigate activities or armaments stockpiled by American troops in these facilities.

With the puppet state's approval of the "EDCA locations," it also permits the US to use the Philippines as a pawn to the US strategy against China. This endangers the freedom and lives of Filipinos. All freedom-loving Filipinos have the duty to defend the country by opposing the EDCA and demanding to dismantle foreign military bases in the country.

Mining and foreign plantations plunder Surigao del Sur

Peasants and Lumad people of Surigao del Sur see no benefit from the big agricultural machines and instruments "awarded" to them by the Department of Agriculture Caraga Region on March 30. For them, these are mere ornaments. They ask: in which farmlands will we use these when agricultural lands in the province are being grabbed by big plantations and mining operations?

Surigao del Sur has a total land area of 523,050 hectares wherein 214,032 hectares of this is supposedly designated as agricultural land. The province's primary produce are palay, corn, coconuts, banana, manila hemp and other rootcrops such as cassava. But instead of developing agriculture, agricultural lands are surrendered to mining operations and explorations and expansion of foreign plantations.

Just this March, Surigao Greens Agri Corp, a subsidiary of A. Brown, bought a 70,000 square meter land in Barobo town for its oil palm plantation expansion. The company also bought an oil palm milling plant in the said area. A. Brown is known for dislocating and harassing Lumads and peasants, usually in connivance with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), similar to the evictions they carried out in Opol, Misamis Oriental.

In the whole CARAGA, the region that covers Surigao del Sur, an estimated 25,827.93 hectares of land comprise oil palm tree plantations. These plantations produce 150,000 metric tons of unrefined palm oil for export. These plantations are set to be expanded by 50,000 hectares up to 200,000 hectares in the whole region by the American company Eastern Petroleum Group of Companies.

Apart from this, banana plantations of the Japanese company Sumifru also hold the agricultural lands in Tagbina ang Barobo. There is also a wide banana plantation in Tago owned by the Falcon company. Produce from these plantations are for

export.

Numerous mining companies also thrive in the province. Because of the province's rich mineral resources, especially the Andap Valley Complex which has the largest carbon block reserve in the whole world, bureaucrats and their foreign company partners salivate over its resources.

These companies include Clarence T Pimentel Mining Corporation, Vicente T Pimentel, Marc Venture Mining Corporation, Carascal Nickel Corporation and many others. Abacus Mining Corporation, also planning to cover the towns of San Miguel, San Agustin, Marihatag, Cagwait, Tago and Lianga for carbon exploration, is among them.

These operations are paired with widespread militarization against peasants and Lumad's resistance. The Manobos and Mamanwas, who survive from the forests' resources for their food, medicine and primary needs, live in the Andap Valley. Using military and paramilitary forces, they are driven out of their ancestral lands.

In the past five years, focused military operations, bombings and militarization in the province's 309 barangays are ceaseless and sus-

tained. These operations caused unimaginable crimes against humanity, including the two Lianga Massacres in 2015 and 2021. The town experienced repeated and widespread dislocations and evacuations of Lumad because of military operations. Not only were the lives and livelihood of residents affected, but also their schools which were shut down by the military under the then Duterte regime.

The province and the whole Caraga region has been a focus of ceaseless militarization for more than a decade in the name of mining and plantations. In 2008, the state positioned in Caraga what it called the Investment Defense Force (IDF), military and paramilitary forces whose mission is to defend the properties, infrastructures and projects of plunderous mining companies and plantations.

Agricultural lands in the province are also being converted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Expanded National Greening Program. The DENR is hoodwinking peasants to join the said program, do away with traditional food crops, and plant commercial seeds such as falcatta, fruits and others.

