

EDITORIAL

Fight worsening fascism against the Filipino people

Like rabid dogs, the state armed forces have been unleashed to carry out all-out attacks against the Filipino people under the brutal terrorism of the US-Marcos regime. This war is becoming more and more cruel in the desperation to silence and destroy all forms of the people's resistance to make way for even worse oppression, exploitation and plunder.

In the countryside or cities, troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) carry out relentless fascist attacks. The Philippines remains under undeclared martial law. Across the country, the AFP and PNP and state terrorism reign.

More than a hundred battalions of soldiers are scattered across the countryside, especially in villages where the peasant masses struggle for genuine land reform. They place villages under hamlet, control people's movements, impose food blockades and more.

The AFP focuses on areas where foreign capitalist-owned or foreign debt-funded mining operations, plantations or infrastructure projects exist or aim to ex-

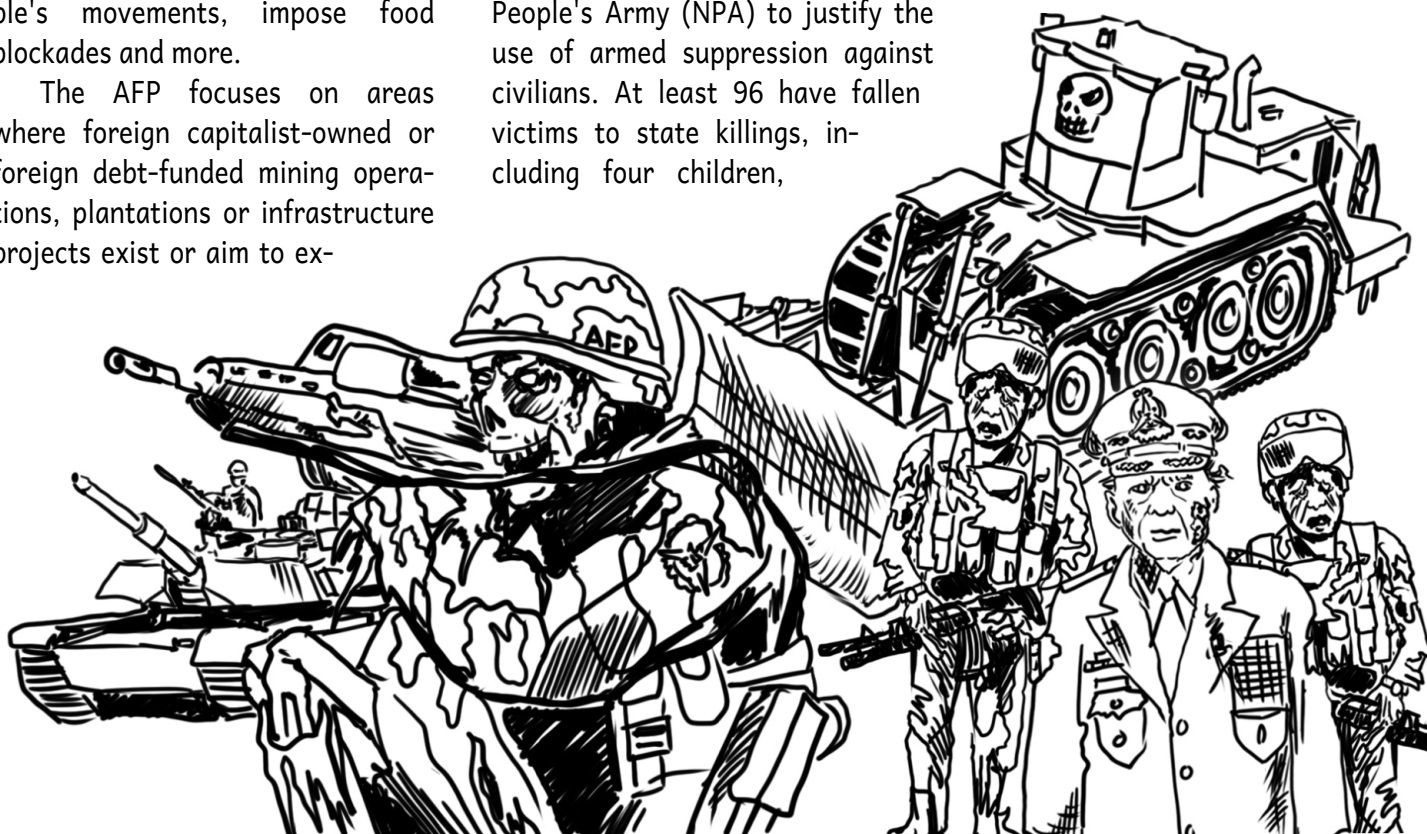
pand. They use as model Sara Duterte's false "Peace Economy" program in Paquibato District, Davao City where herds of armed fascists overrun communities to suppress the masses' resistance, and dull their senses with "livelihood" programs while plantation owners rob them of their land to expand production of banana, coffee, oil palm and others.

Military operations of the AFP target peasant leaders and activists. Even without proof, the AFP accuse them of supporting the New People's Army (NPA) to justify the use of armed suppression against civilians. At least 96 have fallen victims to state killings, including four children,

since Marcos assumed power, including eight farmers killed in Negros just this May 21-27.

In addition to the numerous killings are abductions and torture of farmers, kidnapping of children and infants (such as the cases of Baby Rhea and Baby Marx), suppression of families of suspected revolutionary, and other dirty tactics under the AFP campaign of "surrender" against civilians, a direct affront on human rights and even against the legal processes under reactionary law.

In the city, there is unabated harassment against progressive and democratic unions, semi-proletariat and urban poor associations, organizations of students, teachers, women, health workers



and others. As in the countryside, the AFP claim without evidence that these organizations support the armed revolution. Soldiers and police swarm factories, communities, campuses, even offices to spy on and intimidate the people.

Whether in the cities or rural areas, the AFP blurs the distinction between combatants and civilians to justify armed repression of activists and the use of armed violence to suppress democratic rights. Leaders and active members of organizations, as well as their families, are monitored, harassed and forced to "surrender" despite facing no charges.

There are rising number of cases of enforced disappearance—mostly activists, organizer or mass leaders who are illegally abducted by armed state agents. They are secretly detained and subjected to intense torture—physically and mentally—to force them to give up their principles of serving the people and break their will to fight for democracy and freedom. Those they succeed to break are publicly presented as "surrenderers." While those who remain strong are summarily killed—such as in the recent ab-

duction and murder of NDFP consultants in Negros and Bohol—or disappeared.

Marcos' iron-hand rule is patterned after the military rule of his father's 1972-1986 dictatorship. US imperialism supports and instigates Marcos' fascist rule by pouring weapons and military assistance, in line with US economic and political interests in the country and the Asia-Pacific region.

The attacks against the people by fascist soldiers and police on Marcos's orders serve to perpetuate the oppressive and exploitative social system, expand the economic interests of landlords, big bourgeois compradors and their foreign capitalist partners, and defend the rotten and corrupt reign of the






Marcos family. Marcos, his minions of large bureaucratic capitalists and favored businessmen enrich themselves in power amid the endless suffering of workers, peasants and the toiling masses, as well as the pettybourgeois rank-and-file employees, students and others oppressed sectors.

The Filipino people should firmly defend themselves and thoroughly resist the relentless attacks of the crazed armed forces of the US-Marcos fascist regime. They must strengthen their organized ranks and steel their determination to fight for their democratic rights against military rule and state terrorism. They must untiringly document and expose all cases of human rights violations and international humanitarian laws, and the AFP's lies to cover up their crimes. Strengthen the cry for Justice! for all victims of fascist killings and abuses by Marcos' soldiers and police. Build and further strengthen the centers to defend human rights.

The relentless terrorist attacks by state armed forces further stoke the Filipino people's anger against the puppet, fascist and oppressive Marcos regime. In the cities and countryside, the masses are constantly being compelled to join the people's army as the only means to defend themselves.

We must further expand and strengthen the NPA and further advance the armed struggle to defend the lives and livelihood of the masses. Stage tactical offensives to punish the criminal soldiers and police behind the killings and other atrocities against the masses. The weapons of the fascist must be seized in order to arm more and more people who wish to fight, to strengthen the people's army, and carry forward the people's revolutionary struggle for social liberation and genuine national freedom.

AB

 <p>Vol LIV No. 11 June 7, 2023</p> <hr/> <p>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>	<h2 style="text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <p>Editorial: Fight worsening fascism against the Filipino people 1</p> <p>AFP rampage: 25 victims in 2 weeks 3</p> <p>Destructive effect of AFP bombings 4</p> <p>Nestle workers fight back 5</p> <p>Reinstate the Wyeth-Nestlé 145! 6</p> <p>Protests 6</p> <p>In short 7</p> <p>Suffering under privatized power transmission 8</p> <p>Rising cost of tertiary education 9</p> <p>G7, provocation of war in Asia-Pacific 10</p> <p>NPA-Aurora kills 2 91st IB troops in snipe 10</p>
<p>Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	
 ang.bayan@cpp.ph	 @angbayan_1969

AFP rampage: 25 victims in 2 weeks

Ten were killed, 13 were illegally arrested and two were abducted in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)'s rampage in just two weeks. Nine of those killed were farmers while the other one was a wounded Red fighter.

In Camarines Norte, the 9th IB bound, tortured, and then summarily killed 42-year old Romeo Agua, a resident of Barangay San Jose, Panganiban, on May 15. Agua is the 16th victim of state killings in Bicol since Ferdinand Marcos Jr took office.

In Negros Oriental, the 16th Scout Ranger Company raided and strafed the Babor family residence at Amumuyong, Barangay Trinidad, Guihulngan City on May 20. Antonio Babor, 77, and his son Jurielen Babor, 27, were injured. Instead of being treated or rushed to the hospital, they were summarily killed by soldiers.

On the same day, the 62nd IB raided and strafed the Ramirez family residence at Sitio Napiluan, Barangay Quintin Remo, Moises Padilla in Negros Occidental. Red fighter Alvin Bayno (Ka Dagger) was wounded in the incident. Instead of providing first aid, the soldiers summarily killed him. At the same time, civilian spouses and homeowners Evelyn Meren and Julieven Ramirez as well as their neighbor Ruben Obidas were killed.

Another civilian was killed by the 15th IB on May 21 at Sitio Bajay, Barangay Caliling, Cauayan. Farmer Gusting Mapos was on his way to his farm when soldiers crossed paths with him and shot him around 3:30 p.m.

A few days later, the 15th IB arrested 27-year old Jonel Bayno, a resident of Barangay Manlucahoc, Sipalay City. Later, his remains were found at Crossing Tanduay, Barangay Camindangan on May 25. The military also arrested Rogelio Lacton, a resident of Barangay Camindangan. He was later found dead at Sitio Sadlum in

the same barangay on May 27.

The 15th IB started conducting focused military operations as early as April 23 in Cauayan and Sipalay City. The operations covered at least 46 sitios in seven barangays of Cauayan town, while it combed seven sitios in Barangay Camindangan, Sipalay City.

Arrest. Joint forces of the police raided the house of Adolfo Salas Sr at Purok 5, Barangay Tubod, Candijay, Bohol on May 25. His house was ransacked by authority of a search warrant and claimed to have found in his possession a .45- and a .38 caliber pistol, ammunitions and a grenade. Salas is a founding member of the provincial chapter of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Hugpong sa mga Mag-uumang Bol-anon (HUMABOL-KMP).

On May 14, the 11th IB illegally arrested Miralyn Fortunado, who just gave birth, and her husband Rani Casilao in Barangay Talalak, Santa Catalina, Negros Oriental. They were taken to the 11th IB headquarters in Barangay Salag, Siaton. While in military custody, Casilao was forced to "cooperate" and serve as a guide in military combat operations.

Detention. Ten residents, including children and elderly people, of Sitio Undol, Barangay Talalak, Santa

Catalina, Negros Oriental were illegally detained on May 17. They were prohibited from going out to tend to their fields and livestock. Earlier, the soldiers indiscriminately strafed the area to vent their rage against the civilians after two soldiers died on May 16 in a misencounter between them and the police in the said barangay.

Abduction. Elements of the 501st IBde of the AFP abducted Cedrick Casano and Patricia Nicole Cierva, peasant and youth organizers, from Barangay Cabi-raoan, Gonzaga, Cagayan on May 18. After more than half a month under secret detention and psychological torture, they were presented as "surrendered fighters" on June 2 in Barangay Bangag, Lal-lo.

Sierva is a former student leader at the University of the Philippines-Manila and former official of a student council alliance throughout the UP system. Casaño was a former student of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. AB



Destructive effect of AFP bombings on environment and communities

The devastating impact of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' indiscriminate bombing and shelling on the environment and civilian communities is undeniable.

These include physical damage to the environment, deformation of terrain and destruction of habitat or survival of wildlife, air and water pollution, noise, and contributing to greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming. These also cause destruction of homes, farms, and endangerment of life on civilian communities and populated areas. This has led residents to flee their communities to crowded and precarious evacuation centers.

In a forum led by the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE) on May 24, environmental activists discussed the particular effects of these on some key biodiversity areas in the country.

According to the group's report, at least seven major biodiversity areas and forest reserves were endangered by AFP bombing and shelling from June 2022 to the present. In total, at least 62 endemic species and more than half a million hectares of key biodiversity areas were affected during this period. The group's report covers the mountains and forests of Bukidnon, Cagayan, Kalinga, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental.

The AFP recently dropped two bombs using a drone on Mt. Katarugan in Barangay Lobo, Cantilan, Surigao del Sur on May 11. Located here is the Cabitoonan forest, which contains at least 23 species of endangered trees.

The forum also discussed the damage caused by the bombing



and shelling carried out in the war games between the US and the Philippines. In the first half of the year, three war games were staged in the country's sovereign territory in which live-fire exercises were conducted and various types of bombs were detonated causing harm to the forest and ocean ecosystems. These include the Balikatan exercises from April 11-18, followed by the Kasangga exercises with Australia and the recent joint naval drills in Bataan with the US and Japan.

Irreparable damage

From 2017 to 2022, the AFP dropped more than 591 bombs, fired 589 artillery shells and conducted 74 rounds of strafing. Incidents were recorded in the mountains and forests of Bukidnon, Cagayan, Kalinga, Samar, Panay and in the provinces of Mindoro, Negros, Surigao, Agusan, Davao, Cotabato, Lanao and Maguindanao. Many of these incidents are not disclosed to the public. In some incidents admitted by the AFP, the bombings were described as "close aerial support" despite the fact that these usually precede the movement of their

ground troops in the area.

One of the cases is the destructive bombing of the Saldab Complex on November 2, 2021, which ignited a fire that razed the mountaintop in Gabunan, Barangay Dumalaguing, Impasugong, Bukidnon. The forest here has long been declared protected because it is adjacent to the protected Mt. Kitanglad Range. It serves as an extended habitat for endemic species of birds, including the Philippine eagle.

In Panay, the bomb dropped by the military in December 2021 left large craters. The craters near the farms were 20 feet wide and 15 feet deep. The bombardment and concurrent shelling caused trauma.

The AFP attack on Marawi City in 2017 was the most brutal and biggest AFP bombing campaign. More than 1,000 people were reported killed, and property and infrastructure damage were estimated to reach ₱17 billion. Until now, more than 80,300 people or 16,070 families, crammed-up in evacuation centers, have not returned home. It is estimated that the government squandered ₱5 billion to pulverize the city. **AB**

Workers fight back:

Defense against Wyeth's union busting

In the 64 years of the union's existence at Wyeth, capitalists have devised various schemes to reclaim the workers' hard-won benefits. The Wyeth Philippines Progressive Workers' Union (WPPWU) has become one of the models among workers in the country because of the extent of its achievements in its fight for additional wages, benefits and regularization. In fact, prior to the layoff of 140 workers on May 18, it gained the regularization of 30 contractual workers.

According to WPPWU president Debie Faigmani, talk of factory layoffs have been circulated prompting them to seek a dialogue with the company. The management refused the request and instead, closed the factory on May 15-17 purportedly for "extensive cleaning." When they came to work on May 18, they were barred at the gates, denied entry, and only granted audience after the union insisted on a dialogue. Only then did the management announced the dismissal of 140 workers. Among them are 125 rank-and-file (including 10 union officers), 14 are supervisors and a manager.

Nestlé purchase and series of illegal layoffs

Wyeth Nutrition Inc. Philippines is a company that produces infant and child milk such as Bonakid, Promil, Bonamil and S26. Wyeth Philippines started in 1964 in Makati City as the first milk plant in the Philippines. In 1992, its factory was moved to Canlubang, Laguna for its capitalists to exploit state policies such as contractualization laid down by the Herrera Law and Wage Rationalization that set a lower minimum wage in Region IV.

In 2009, workers were laid off en masse when the American company Pfizer bought Wyeth Nutri-

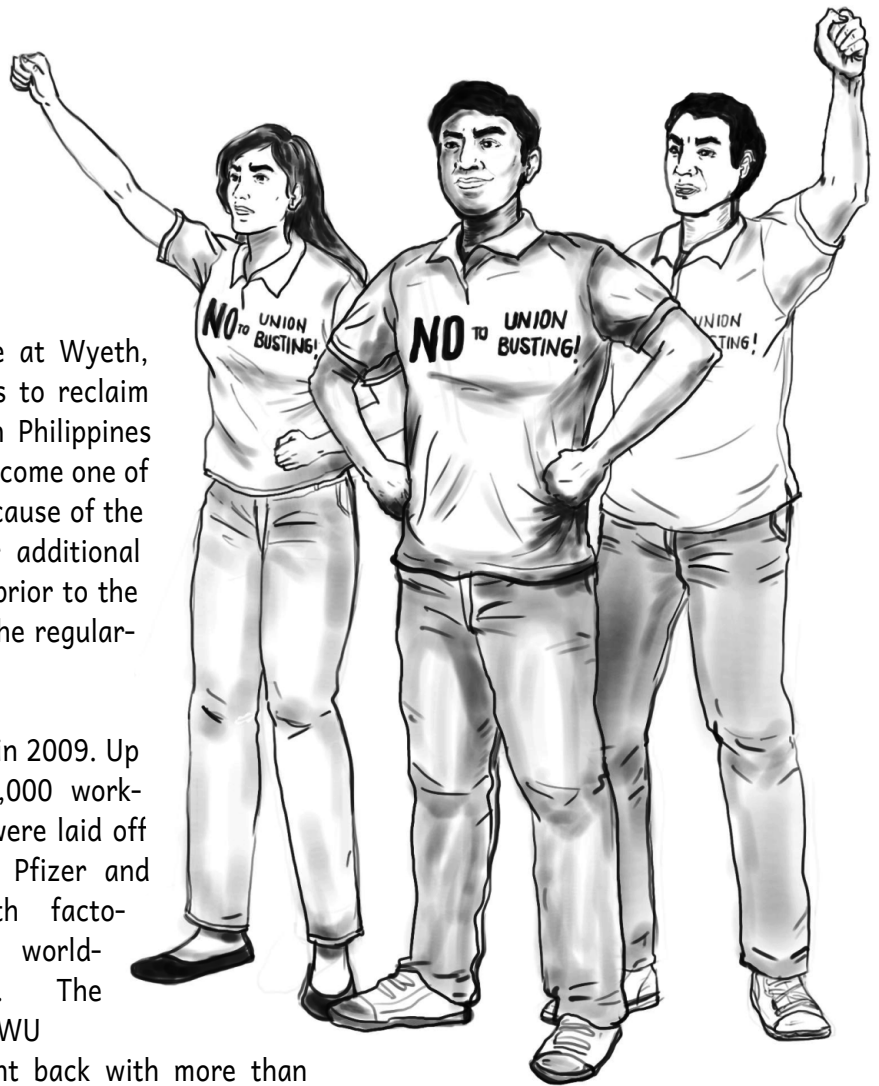
tion in 2009. Up to 7,000 workers were laid off from Pfizer and Wyeth factories worldwide. The WPPWU fought back with more than 20 picket protests to defend the company jobs of workers and defend the union's previous gains.

In 2012, Nestlé bought from Pfizer its entire Nutrition Division for \$11.85 billion. It was touted as Nestlé's largest purchase of a single company in its history. With this purchase, Nestlé monopolized 85% of the market share of infant formula milk held by Wyeth. For example in China, Nestlé only has a 4% share of formula milk sales compared to Pfizer's 8% share. China is now Nestlé's second largest market in the world, and the Philippines is seventh.

Amid the economic crisis caused by the widespread lockdown, Nestlé remained one of the largest corporations in the Philippines in 2021. It has ₱134.2 billion in total revenue and ₱133.9 in net sales. Its revenue grew further in 2022 to ₱164.4 billion.

Layoffs as a ploy for union busting

The May 18 layoffs event was the third in the series of mass lay-



offs that workers faced since Nestlé bought the company. In 2014, 87 contractual workers were terminated despite having worked for the company for an average of eight years. In 2021, the company laid off 21 regular workers.

"We are aware of Nestlé's reputation as a violator of labor laws, of not honoring agreements and CBAs, of violently breaking strikes, and of killing labor leaders. It earns billions every year, but greed emboldens them to jeopardize the lives of hundreds of workers and their families," said Kilusang Mayo Uno chair Bong Labog.

Nestlé is notorious worldwide for violations labor rights. In fact, Nestlé has already killed two union leaders in the country and many others in South America.

Workers clearly know that the purpose of the illegal layoffs is to crush the union. According to Romy, one of the dismissed union

Continue on page 6

Reinstate the Wyeth-Nestlé 145!!

WYETH-NESTLE WORKERS and their supporters mounted consecutive mass actions and activities to demand the reinstatement of 140 workers who were illegally terminated by the company on May 18 and five other workers who were fired earlier.

Members of Wyeth Philippines Progressive Workers Union (WPPWU) protested on May 30 in front of the Nestlé Cabuyao Factory before heading to Halang, Calamba, Laguna for the hearing of the National Conciliation and Mediation Board of Calabarzon. The mass action was held in time for the third hearing on the "notice of strike" filed by the union. They were joined by youth groups, church people, other unions and workers, federations, union centers, migrants and artists. Their call includes the reinstatement of workers who were removed in April.



Meanwhile, the Makabayan Bloc filed House Resolution 1067 on May 31 in congress. It called for an investigation into the unfair "cost cutting and restructuring strategy" used by Nestlé to justify mass layoffs.

The Wyeth union won the support and solidarity from other Nestlé unions in Cagayan de Oro City and Lipa City, Batangas. On May 26, these unions wrote to Nestlé demanding the reinstatement of their fellow workers. They urged the management in Canlubang to implement the company's touted policy of open communication and dialogue to safeguard the rights of its workers.

From page 5

officials in 2021: "That's a significant step because they want to increase the profit. When the number of regular workers decreases and is replaced by contractuales, it means that the company's profit will magnify because the wages of the contractual workers are lower compared to regular workers."

(On the initial estimate of workers in 2019, despite being paid far above the minimum wage in Region 4-A, the rate of exploitation against Wyeth workers still reaches 800%. The daily wages they receive is equivalent to merely one hour and six minutes of factory work. The surplus value

they create in the remaining six hours and 54 minutes of work already counts as Wyeth-Nestlé's profit.)

Crucial struggle

For the WPPWU, the capitalists may simply be using them as a model for an even stronger attack against the entire labor movement. Therefore, this fight is significant because beyond just their family's livelihood, this is a fight for their fellow workers.

Faigmani added, "they didn't scare us at all by firing us, now that they fired us, we have no other recourse but fight for our rights." AB



Junk the MIF. On May 31, progressive groups led by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan protested the railroading of the Maharlika Investment Fund in the senate. They staged protest actions in front of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas in Manila to oppose plans to use hard-earned pension funds and contributions of workers and government employees in the anomalous MIF.

Paperland workers plan strike.

Workers of Paperland Inc filed a notice of strike (NoS) on May 26 after collective bargaining agreement (CBA) negotiations for year 2022-2025 went into a deadlock. The workers decided to go on strike after management rejected all the requested additional economic and political provisions in the proposed CBA.

Anti-quarry in Silay. Peasants from Silay City staged a picket on May 19 in front of the Provincial Environment Management Office (PEMO) in Bacolod City to call for the cessation of quarrying operations in their city. They also held a dialogue with PEMO officials who promised to visit and investigate the quarry.

Investigate Ungka. Various progressive groups led by Bayan-Panay staged a picket on May 24 in front of the Ungka Flyover together with workers, members of the transportation sector, church people, and professionals to demand an investigation and accountability on the failed and anomalous road construction.

770



sugar planters in Batangas received the initial **₱10,000** DSWD upon the prodding of Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Arlene Brosas and the Congress leadership.


They are part of those who lost livelihood after the sugar milling plants of CADPI closed.

₱1.11 T

additional debt of the Philippines in the first year of the Marcos Jr regime.

Presently, the Philippines has an outstanding **₱13.91 trillion** total debt.

700



Duty Free Philippines employees who will be terminated because of the state's "right-sizing" scheme.

According to workers, this will bring about the company's privatization.

104,117

number of residents affected by the entry of **Typhoon Betty** in the Philippines on May 31.



Source: *NDRRMC*

\$100 million

World Bank loans to permit plunder of **26 ancestral lands** in Mindanao by foreign and local companies in the name of development.

50 MILLION

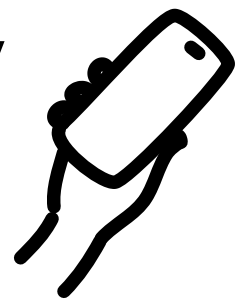
people are forced to work and treated as "modern slaves."

More than half of them can be found in the 20 richest countries.

Source: *Walk Free Foundation*

#MaharlikaInvestmentScam

trended on social media on **May 31** while the Senate railroaded the bill establishing the anomalous **Maharlika Investment Fund**.



₱13.8 billion



people's funds spent by the AFP to buy **T129B ATAK** helicopters which are used in its indiscriminate firing and bombing campaigns against civilian communities.

July 1989

last time a wage increase was **enacted**.

The congress was then pushed to grant it amid mammoth protests of hundreds of thousands of workers and their unions.

Suffering under privatized power transmission

While the Filipino people suffer from poor power transmission services, officials of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) pocket huge amounts of profits.

On May 8, residents of Metro Manila, neighboring provinces and some parts of the Visayas experienced extreme heat during several hours of widespread brownout because the NGCP grids (cable system and power lines) malfunctioned. According to the company, the power supply was insufficient because five of its grids failed and three others slowed down. This caused massive problems to hundreds of thousands of Filipinos. In Metro Manila alone, 300,000 consumers were affected.

Profit from people's suffering

The NGCP was established in 2009 to privatize the operation, maintenance and assets of the National Transmission Corporation, a government-owned and -controlled corporation. This was done under the 2001 Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA).

The then Arroyo regime sold NGCP to a consortium consisting of Monte Oro Grid Resources now controlled by Henry Sy Jr, and Calaca High Power Corporation by Robert

Coyiuto Jr. and Pedro Goza. NGCP's 40% stake was bought by the State Grid Corporation of China, which is owned by the Chinese government. NGCP was awarded a 25-year concession and a 50-year franchise. The consortium paid \$3.95 billion to the state, which was quickly recovered in just four years. By 2015, the company had more than doubled its original investment.

In a senate hearing, it was disclosed that NGCP's income from 2009 amounted to ₱286 billion. Of this, ₱208 billion was given to the company's shareholders, and not reinvested to develop the transmission infrastructures. The company's revenue grew due to its high service charge.

Recently, the Energy Regulatory Commission reported the delay of 72 NGCP projects meant to improve its services, including 33 in Luzon, 19 in Visayas, and 14 in Mindanao. In addition, six of the 16 energy projects it identified as having "national significance" were not completed by the corporation. Despite this, the costs for these are already

part of what NGCP collects from consumers in the form of "transmission charges" since 2020.

Privatized power sector

Transmission is just one of the privatized part in the power sector. Under EPIRA, a large portion of electricity services, from production, transmission to distribution, are held by private businesses.

The power generation subsector is lorded over by Ramon Ang's San Miguel Corporation. The company holds 20.76% of the subsector followed by the Aboitiz family's Aboitiz Power Corporation (APC) with 17.67% and Federico R. Lopez's FirstGen Power Corporation with 14.12% market control.

In 2022, SMC power subsidiary San Miguel Global Power Holdings Corp recorded a net income of ₱3.1 billion. Meanwhile, APC recorded a 32% growth in its net income to ₱27.5 billion.

Meanwhile, power distribution is dominated by the Manila Electric Company (Meralco), owned by Manny V. Pangilinan and the Lopez family. In 2022, the company's net income grew by 21% from ₱23.5 billion to ₱28.4 billion. The company covers nearly 6.5 million customers nationwide while other private companies control distribution in other regions.

When EPIRA was enacted, it promised the provision of cheap and reliable electricity. After more than two decades, power rates are rising and electricity service is poor.

Compared to 2001, power rates have increased by almost 200% from ₱5.76 per kWh to ₱11.4929 per kWh as of May 2023. Latest comparisons made in December 2021 show the Philippines charges the highest power rates in Southeast Asia. In a 2022 data, local rates (\$0.173 per kWh) are also higher compared to the global average (\$0.168 per kWh). AB



Rising cost of tertiary education

Petitions for 2 to 10 percent increase in tuition and other fees increase (TOFI) for academic year 2023-2024 have been submitted by private universities and institutions to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). If approved, these will add to the already heavy burden of students and parents.

On average, one needs ₱130,000 to send a student to college. The entire annual income (₱120,000) of an average minimum wage worker is not enough, even if everything is spent for education. It is estimated that up to ₱2 million is needed for the completion of a 4-year college course at the country's major universities.

Tuition, which form a large part of the cost of education, has been steadily rising in recent years. In academic year 2017-2018, tuition increases were implemented in 262 schools and other fees were raised in 235 institutions. The average that year was 6.69% or ₱86.68 per unit increase. Even at the height of the pandemic (2021-2022), CHED allowed 56 schools to increase tuition (estimated at 4.74% or ₱29.15 per unit) and other fees (10.61% or ₱50.51).

To justify the increases, universities commonly cite the general increase in the prices of goods and for the salary of teachers and other employees. In truth, tuition and other fees are increased in the name of profit.

On May 30, for example, Centro Escolar University declared that its net income grew by 64% from ₱116 million to ₱332 million from February 2022 to February this year. This income will be distributed by the university to its shareholders in the form of dividends. The school boasts



that the income comes from tuition and other fees increase, which amounts to ₱120,000 per semester. The CEU has petitioned for a 4% tuition increase for 2023.

The Far Eastern University's net income also increased by 55.72% in 2022 to ₱1.538 billion. Despite this, it petitioned for a 4% tuition increase for 2023. The FEU is headed by Aurelio Montinola III, a businessman who formerly headed the Bank of the Philippine Islands.

Due to the very high cost of education, education becomes more inaccessible to the youth. The World Bank recorded in 2021 that for every 10 entering elementary school, only one graduates from college.

In response, hundreds of students protested on April 28 at the CHED to oppose increases in tuition and other fees. Under the banner of Rise for Education (R4E), an alliance of students fighting for their right to education, they condemned the profiteering of capitalists in the education sector and the CHED as their "business partner."

Fee hikes in public universities

With the end of the TOFI moratorium in public universities, the

government will now permit state universities and colleges (SUCs) and local universities and colleges (LUCs) to increase fees. This means that it will require additional funding from the government to cover the additional fees charged to students under its Free Tuition Act.

As education remains underfunded, the government will push public universities to the path of privatization and implementation of "income generating schemes" such as socialized tuition and leasing of their lands to private businesses. It is also highly likely that admissions to public universities will be reduced and limited to accommodate shrinking budgets.

The state's neglect of education is fueling widespread indignation among the youth across the country and pushing them to the path of collective action to defend their right to education. Their anger is focused on the Marcos regime which is now the main hindrance for the promotion of genuine national, scientific, and mass-oriented education for all.

G7 in Hiroshima, provoking war in Asia-Pacific

Group of 7 (G7) countries leaders' meeting on May 19 to May 20 in Hiroshima was met with protest led by the International People's Front, International League of Peoples' Struggle and other allied groups in Hiroshima, Japan.

Protests led by the International People's Front, International League of Peoples' Struggle and other allied groups were staged to oppose the Group of 7 (G7) meeting last May 19 to 20 in Hiroshima, Japan.

A forum was launched by anti-imperialist organizations in Kyoto, Japan on May 18. It exposed maneuvers by the US and other powerful countries to intensify the proxy war against Russia and oppose the accelerating militarization of the Asia-Pacific aimed at provoking China.

The groups called to intensify the rejection of the G7 as one of the instruments that play a major role in the US imperialist strategy to incite war in different parts of the world. The US does this by building and expanding military bases, increasing nuclear weapons, and adopting unequal security agreements.



The G7 is led by the US and consists of large capitalist countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. Its annual meeting is held to consolidate the pro-US bloc of imperialist countries and formulate policies to tighten political, economic and military control over their respective semi-colonies.

Militarist agenda

The primary agenda of the G7 meeting was the US proxy war against Russia in Ukraine and its war provocation against China.

In Ukraine, the military and financial aid of the G7 is crucial to prolong the war at the expense of not only the Ukrainian people but the people of their respective countries. Despite skyrocketing global inflation and workers' demand for subsidies and wage increases, the

G7 presidents still managed to allocate \$115 billion in aid for Ukraine to prolong the war.

The G7 meeting was held within the framework of the US' war theater preparations in Asia against China. Part of this is its active positioning of troops and weapons and deployment of missile systems in what it considers the "First Island Chain."

Holding the G7 meeting in Hiroshima underscores Japan's role in rising militarism in the region. Like the US, it uses the "threat" of China and North Korea to strengthen its own military power. Recently, it doubled its defense budget to increase weapons and strengthen the armed forces, despite constitutional prohibitions. It is pushing for military agreements with various Asian countries for the deployment of troops and weapons. This includes pushing for its own Visiting Forces Agreement to facilitate the entry of its troops in the Philippines.

To press China, the G7 asserted that China's extensive claims in the South China Sea "have no legal basis" and pushed for the recognition of UNCLOS and the Arbitral Tribunal's July 12, 2016 decision favoring the Philippines. It opposed China's militarization of the region, but made no mention of the growing US military presence in the form of deploying its warships, and launching war games with its allied countries.

91st IB suffers 2 KIA in NPA-Aurora snipe ops

TWO TROOPS OF 91st IB were killed in a sniping operation by the New People's Army (NPA)-Aurora on June 3, around 9 am in the Diamuloc river in Barangay Punglo, Maria Aurora, Aurora. With prompt report from the masses of the military combat operation, Red fighters immediately positioned themselves and hit the operating troops.

According to the NPA unit, "the masses are also the key for comrades to study the terrain and the possible route of operation. This is proof of the unconditional love and support of the masses for their people's army."

After their losses, the military indiscriminately fired their weapons and bombed the area.