

EDITORIAL

US-Marcos regime's fascist terrorism in the guise of national security

Heightedened state fascist terrorism, greater subservience to US imperialism and intensified suppression of patriotic and democratic forces are the directions set by the newly released "National Security Policy" (NSP) of the US-Marcos regime. It puts all aspects of society—from economics to the environment—within the "national security" framework which broadened the role of military state security officers in state affairs.

The NSP makes lofty but empty declarations of "stable, comfortable and secure lives", "national independence," "territorial integrity" and "peace." The truth is Marcos' policies and initiatives further reinforce foreign control of the Philippines, bury the country deeper in foreign debt, and subject the Filipino people to greater hardships,

hunger and oppression.

Officials of the Marcos regime claim that the NSP represents the strategic shift of priorities from internal security to external defense. But before it could "transition" the Armed Forces of the Philippines to external security, it prioritizes the suppression of all forces it considers as threats to the "political sta-

bility" of the ruling system.

Instead of scaling down, the approximately 150 battalions of military and police combat troops are being beefed up and remain deployed in guerrilla fronts across the country. Large-scale operations, intelligence and combat operations are being carried out in an attempt to encircle and suppress NPA units. At the same time, relentless aerial bombing and shelling endangering the lives of civilians and destroying the environment continue to be carried out.

Hundreds of rural villages are being occupied by several thousand



armed troops of the AFP purportedly to deliver services and economic projects through the National Task Force-Elcac. In fact, these anomaly-ridden programs which line the pockets of corrupt military officers, merely conceal the widespread grabbing of farmers and minorities' lands.

The NSP claims it "prefers" peace process over war but does not outline any plan to conduct peace negotiations with the NDFP to address the problems at the root of the civil war in the country and achieve a just and lasting peace. It does not change the old deceptive "localized peace talks" that is nothing but a campaign of suppression in the guise of a "surrender" and "amnesty" campaign.

With the NSP, Marcos openly declares plans to strengthen steps to suppress what it calls "legal fronts of the CPP-NPA-NDFP" supposedly to "stop recruitment, cut financial sources and debunk their propaganda." These mass organizations which exist legally under the constitution of the Republic of the Philippines are brazenly accused of complicity in armed resistance to justify state surveillance, harassment and armed suppression.

The NSP's declared purpose of

providing "a secure business environment" will also be used to further target unions and workers' organizations which stand for wage increases and regularization, and oppose the policy of cheap labor which Marcos wants to continue in compliance with the wishes of foreign capitalist investors.

In the countryside, the suppression campaign targets mass organizations of farmers and indigenous peoples who resist land grabbing, dislocation and environmental destruction by mining operations, plantations, as well as infrastructure projects of large capitalists in "renewable energy," ecotourism and more. Since Marcos assumed power, cases of murder, abduction, torture and other forms of violence against civilians perpetrated by armed agents of the state have been rampant.

State harassment and suppression also target organizations of students, teachers, health workers, church people and other sectors who are active in defending the welfare of their sector and the interests of the people.

US imperialism continues to instigate and arm the AFP to carry out armed repression against all the people's patriotic and democratic



forces. This is in line with the desire of the US to use the AFP as a force multiplier in provoking an armed conflict against its imperialist rival Chinese.

Through the NSP, Marcos makes false claims of defending the country's territory when it cedes vast tracts of Philippine land to US military control. Growing US military presence is being justified as a "deterrent" to China's interference. On the contrary, the increasing menacing US presence on Philippine land and seas is inducing China to encroach upon and occupy an increasingly wide part of the country's maritime territory. The NSP is heightening the risk of the Philippines being drawn in a possible outbreak of an interimperialist war between China and the US.

The US-Marcos regime claims that it will "soon crush" the revolutionary armed struggle being waged by the New People's Army, punctuated by bold declarations that there remains "only one guerrilla front," even if it daily releases news of armed encounters in different parts of the country.

In fact, the armed conflict throughout the Philippines continues to intensify, especially in the face of widespread land grabbing, poverty and bankruptcy among peasants in the countryside, which heighten their desire to take up arms and defend themselves against the fascist state. With the support of the broad peasant masses and people, NPA units continue to persevere, expand under the enemy's radar, regain strength, and prepare for a renewed advance.

The Filipino people must denounce and oppose worsening state fascist terrorism under the Marcos regime and its US-dictated "national security policy." They must heighten their courage and vigorously carry forward all forms of struggle, especially the armed struggle, in order to advance continuously the people's aspiration for national and social liberation. **AB**

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Covering up rights abuses amid poverty and injustice

Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Union (EU), made the absurd claim that the human rights situation in the Philippines is "much better" under Ferdinand Marcos Jr during her visit to the country last July.

Marcos was utterly delighted by this statement which buttressed his regime's relentless whitewashing and public posturing. He makes it appear that the situation in the country is fine despite the rampant cases of killings and other abuses of power.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) expressed dismay over the EU president's declaration. This is a "distortion of reality," said Ka Louie Jalandoni, NDFP Chief International Representative.

Just last year, the European Parliament adopted a resolution urging the Government of the Republic of the Philippines to stop red-tagging progressive organizations and individuals. It also called for an investigation of cases of extrajudicial killings and ensure the accountability of police and politicians found to be involved in crimes against international humanitarian law and human rights.

The EU also called for ending political harassment against Sen. Leila De Lima who has been in prison for six years over trumped-up charges. It called for the immediate release of the senator and the prosecution of those behind her arbitrary detention.

Pursuant to the resolution, EU member states are prohibited from

providing arms, surveillance technology, and other weapons that may be used in state repression.

Von der Leyen's sudden reversal of the EU resolution is baseless. In reports gathered by Ang Bayan, at least 94,448 fell victim to human rights violations in the first year of the Marcos Jr regime. There were 954 incidents (or more than two cases per day) of human rights violations throughout the country. The number of victims of political killings reached 104.

"Instead of ending impunity in red-tagging... Marcos Jr empowered impunity," said Ka Louie. "He appointed the Vice President and his cabinet members in key positions in the NTF-Elcac. The NTF-Elcac orchestrates state-instigated terrorism."

Jalandoni also urged the EU to reevaluate its position in the face of Marcos' obstruction of the International Criminal Court's investigation into the bloody "war on drugs" of the previous Duterte regime, which will deny justice sought by thousands of

victims.

Von der Leyen acknowledged that the human rights situation under Marcos was "improving" to pave the way for the EU to dump surplus goods and capital in the country under the guise of a "free trade" agreement. In particular, the EU is using its flagship "green economy" to invest in infrastructure projects in the country under the "Global Gateway" program. In this program, the EU will finance the construction of digital, energy and transportation infrastructure projects.

During von der Leyen's visit, she awarded the country with a grant worth €466 million or ₱28.13 billion as inducement to Marcos and his officials. It will be invested in the regime's infrastructure projects supposedly in renewable energy, plastic reduction, and waste management.

Since Marcos took office, there has been a noticeable influx of foreign companies investing in various "renewable" energy projects by European companies.

In June, the National Democratic Front-Ilocos warned against these projects that harm the environment and the people's livelihood. According to the NDF-Ilocos, land grabbing and eviction of farmers and indigenous peoples in the forests and farms targeted for the construction of wind mill, solar power and other projects are rampant. Small-scale fishermen in the region are afraid of losing their fishing grounds due to the planned construction of an off-shore wind mill project in Ilocos.



Residents drive away 2nd IB camp in Masbate

RESIDENTS OF SITIO Baclay, Barangay Bacolod, Milagros in Masbate drove away the 2nd IB headquarters established in the said sitio after residents raised complaints against it.

They expressed their disgust by banding together to petition the eviction of the military camp. They said the camp has caused nothing but trouble against their livelihood and fear from the presence of soldiers, especially among the youth.

The battalion forcefully reestablished its camp in Barangay Panician in Uson after other barangays refused to host them.

Guerrilla life: Unity and determination in knowing oneself and one another

Every day, Red fighters face a life and death struggle. To overcome challenges, it is important that every member of the people's army knows himself and his fellow fighters.

In the people's army, fighters forge strong unity and determination. Regular assessments of their activities are held, including sharing their personal background. These have helped comrades see their progress and how they can further improve their contributions to the revolution. Comrades draw lessons and inspiration from each other's experiences. This practice forges discipline, unity and a strong determination to fight under the New People's Army-Western Samar (Arnulfo Ortiz Command).

Ka JI, a military cadre

Comrade JI has shown remarkable determination and commitment in his more than two decades of service in the people's army. He was recruited at the height of the Second Great Rectification Movement in the 1990s. He was one of the skilled

NPA-Western Samar holds training

More than 30 Red fighters and officers of the New People's Army in Samar graduated from a basic military course in the third week of July. The training was held amid continuous military operations in the area.

The training focused on selected topics which are most appropriate in the tasks ahead.

Lasting for 12 days, the training ended with a small celebration after the graduation.

Key to the successful training was the firm and warm support of the masses who tirelessly support and help comrades.

comrades who promoted the correct Party line against wrong ideas and disorientation in the island of Samar. From the peasant class, he quickly developed as a Party cadre and warrior. He led expansion work that opened new fronts in the province. He was captured and imprisoned by the enemy, but remained loyal to the Party and the masses despite being subjected to physical and mental torture. After his release, he immediately returned to the people's army with even greater conviction.

"When I die, then I die, but so long as I live I will continue to fight and help wage revolution," vowed Ka JI. Presently, he serves a platoon commander and a leading cadre of the Party. He serves as an example to new and younger fighters in preserving security, organizing and doing propaganda work among the masses, as well as in cultural work.

Ka Isang, a warrior mother

Ka Isang sacrificed a comfortable and easy life when she joined the people's army. She comes from the pettybourgeoisie, and was only a year away from completing her college course in psychology when she decided to live among the peasants in the countryside. This is where she formed her decision to serve the interests of the majority and completely abandon her own ambitions. In her three decades as a warrior, Ka Isang faced many sacrifices and hardships. These include being away from family, long treks, staying up late and hunger. Instead of getting discouraged, these sacrifices steered her to fully devote her ability, strength, and life to the revolution.



One of the biggest sacrifices Ka Isang faced was being away from her child as she continues to fulfill her responsibilities. Despite this, her determination remains solid especially knowing that her child is cared for by her parents who support the people's cause. Her child and all other children serve as inspiration for her to build a new society where mothers need not be separated from their children and where there exists genuine freedom and democracy for all.

Ka Niño, a working-class warrior

Hailing from the semi-proletariat, Ka Niño is used to working various jobs from a young age. At the age of 12, he experienced severe exploitation in the workplace. In exchange for low wages, he worked heavy loads, more than eight hours of work, and dangerous working conditions. Due to poverty, he once was forced to peddle and use drugs. While on vacation in the province to till the land and escape the desperate city life, Ka Niño met the New People's Army, and was taught a short course about Philippine society and revolution which made him decide to become a people's warrior.

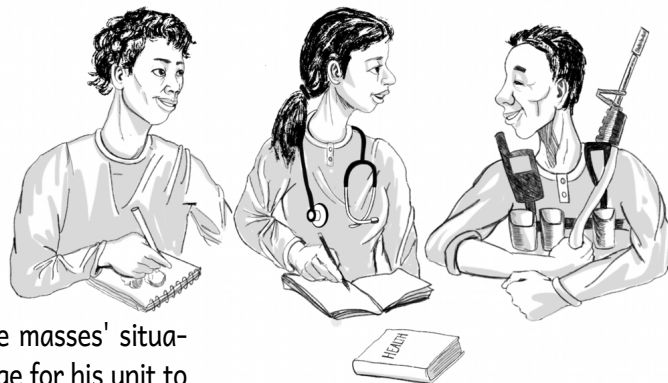
"If I hadn't been made aware of the revolutionary path, I probably would have been lost forever, or would have been killed in tokhang

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Correspondence:

Honing skills and abilities of national minorities in the NPA

National minorities face various forms of oppression and exploitation under the semicolonial semifeudal social system. They lack access to education and health services due to the reactionary state's neglect.



Instead of teachers and doctors, the state deploys armed soldiers to indigenous communities to suppress their rights, especially their right to their ancestral land. In addition, they suffer from widespread chauvinism and discrimination.

Poverty and oppression are what roused indigenous youths Ka Lubid, Ka Ran and Ka Jana. It is these that led them to the path of the people's democratic revolution and ultimately to join the New People's Army (NPA).

Red Commander

"I realized leading the Army is difficult. Countless things have to be considered and accomplished, but I won't back down. To us comrades, everything can be done, as long as there's unity," shared Ka Lubid, a newly appointed NPA unit commander in Mindoro. He enthusiastically accepted the challenges whatever the situation, having long prepared to serve as Red commander since joining the NPA.

Last year, Ka Lubid's unit faced heightened and intensified enemy attacks. With firm grip on military discipline and mass line, they triumphantly thwarted the fascists' evil plans.

Ka Lubid's mastery of the terrain

and deep grasp of the masses' situation serve as advantage for his unit to carry out correct war maneuvers. Whenever the enemy approaches, he calmly prepares to fight.

He trained in various types of revolutionary work years before becoming a unit commander. He said: "I have committed my life to the revolution, thus I will do everything for it to triumph."

People's artist

Ka Ran, a Party branch's cultural officer in an NPA unit in Quezon, is a Dumagat youth teeming with energy and skills. He is a writer and a member of Pulang Bandila (Red Banner), the cultural arm of the NPA. He leads the cultural activities of his unit and in the production of literary works, particularly poems and plays.

Ka Ran already exhibited dedication to writing even as a child. He is also fond of writing letters to his family and friends. But because his family had to hide and frequently move from one place to another, he failed to finish elementary schooling.

Ka Ran was already involved in propaganda and cultural work in his community before joining the NPA. Within the revolutionary movement,

his writing proficiency and other talents were further developed. From poetry writing, he participated in composing action-songs and also directed plays.

"I want to express through art the correctness of waging revolution to encourage the masses to join the people's war," said Ka Ran.

Doctor, dentist, acupuncturist

Ka Jana sees herself fortunate for being the only one among all the youths in her community to have reached college. Elders told her to return to serve their tribe.

Jana fulfilled the advice. She finished her medical course, not from a bourgeoisie university, however, but in an NPA Red academy. Now she is serving full time as a doctor, dentist and acupuncturist to her tribespeople and people in the area covered by her unit.

"Ka Jana has great potentials in medical work. She has masterful hand control, is gentle but pinpoint in acupuncture, and precise in performing operations. Patients truly trust her," said Ka Maru, Ka Jana's medical training instructor. AB

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(war on drugs)," said Ka Niño. He became enthusiastic about political studies and immersing with the masses and comrades to better understand the revolution. At the age of 23, he assumed responsibilities as squad leader, political guide, and medic. Even as he brings with him influences of his old life such as arrogance in actions and speech, with constant proletarian remolding and

the help of comrades he is able to let go of his bourgeois attitude. His resourcefulness learned from difficult city life now serves to carry out tasks and ensure the welfare of the masses and comrades.

Many fighters in the unit of Ka Ji, Ka Isang and Ka Niño are young peasants who suffer landlessness, low wages for farm work, low farmgate prices of copra and palay, and lack of

social services. Because of these, it is easier for them to understand that only by collectively advancing armed struggle can they defend their rights. Some of them were leaders of mass organizations and barangay officials in their respective barrios who, because of the desire to fight for the rights and welfare of their fellow residents, were harassed and threatened by the fascist military. AB

Filipino people's money used to construct US military bases

So-called "EDCA sites" or US military bases are rapidly being constructed using public funds of the Filipino people and employing its minions in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Last week, Defense Sec. Gilbert Teodoro and AFP chief Romeo Brawner themselves went to Lal-lo, Cagayan, to speed up the "upgrade" of civilian airfields to serve as refuelling stations of US jet fighters. To make it appear that the facilities will be used for Philippine purposes, these supposedly will also be used by AFP airplanes.

In Palawan, the expansion of airfields and other military facilities in Balabac Island is in full swing since March 11. Despite being a US facility, funds amounting to ₱174.62 million for the Balabac Military Runway came from the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) under its TIKAS (Tatag Imprastraktura para sa Kapayapaan at Seguridad or infrastructure building for peace and security) program.

The island is located on Balabac Strait, which are regular sea routes of both US and Chinese ships. The US will use the runway and the entire island to monitor Chinese ships. The US will use the runway and entire island in the same way that China uses its facilities in the airstrips illegally built within the Philippine sovereign seas.

In addition to airfields, the DPWH also funds the construction of a command and control center worth ₱18.32 million. DPWH funds likewise will be used for expansion and dredging of the harbour on the opposite side of the island to serve large US war ships. Costs are estimated to reach \$5.5 million (₱308 million). In accordance with EDCA provisions, these facilities will be placed under US extraterritorial control, which Fil-

ipinos can enter or inspect if the former "agrees."

In Cebu, TIKAS also provides funds to build a hangar in Mactan-Benito Ebuena Air Base, one of the first five "EDCA sites." The construction was inaugurated on August 11. A fuel depot for US war planes in the said airbase is being built simultaneously. The project is worth ₱111.29 million.

Earlier, the TIKAS program also funded the construction of hangars and various infrastructure and facilities at Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, another "EDCA site."

The TIKAS Convergence Program allowed the use of the DPWH funds to build military infrastructure. This was done in exchange for

military "protection" for DPWH construction projects in "conflict-ridden" areas.

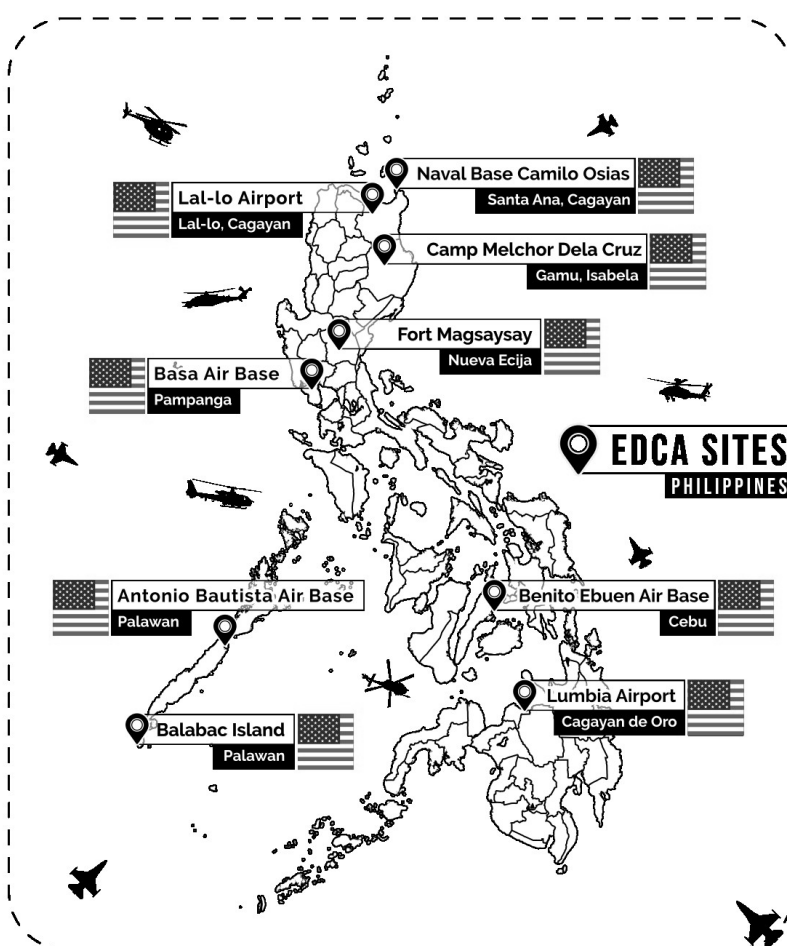
The program was launched by then president Rodrigo Duterte to fatten the military bureaucracy. Ferdinand Marcos Jr beefed it up further in May. The fund is on top of the "capital outlay" for buildings and other infrastructure already included in the budget of the defense department.

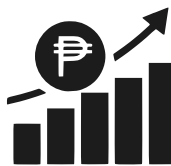
Meanwhile, US war games continue to be conducted in the Philippines, using the country's land, airspace and seas. The 6-day Pacific Airlift Rally 2023 held at the Clark Air Base in Pampanga, Villamor Air Base in Pasay City, and at Ebuena Air Base in Cebu ended last August 19. Fourteen countries participated.

The war game purportedly serve "humanitarian assistance" and "disaster relief operations." However, it had nothing to do with actual relief operations over the recent disasters in many parts of the

country due to intense rains, floods and damage brought about by typhoon Egay and the southwest monsoon.

At the height of the disaster, American forces at the "EDCA sites" took no part in "humanitarian operations". They only made a show of distributing 1,200 food packs and 56 solar panels as "aid" for typhoon victims in Fuga and Calayan Islands. This was done by the US after the Cagayan governor scoffed at the gross indifference of the US to the people's plight due to the storms.

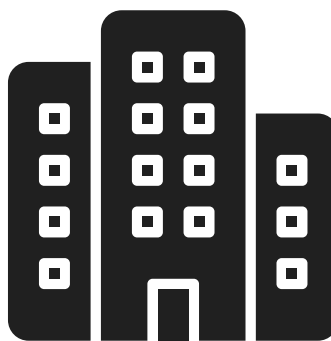




₱7/kilo

average increase in rice prices since the last week of July

caused by the impending shortage and price manipulation.



₱6.1T

Ferdinand Marcos Jr's allotted infrastructure budget for Luzon,

in which huge amounts will go to the Ilocos provinces, his family's bastion.

4

big unions are on strike in Los Angeles City, California, US, this August to demand for living wages and security and dignity in employment.

The unions represent the city's employees, hotel workers and Hollywood actors and writers.



83%

jump in Manny Villar's Vista Land & Lifescapes Inc net profits

from ₱3.2 billion during the entire 2022 to ₱5.8 billion in the first half of 2023. The company builds subdivisions and commercial centers, mostly in converted agricultural lands.



₱600M-₱1.5B

spent by leading candidates on social media "influencers" during the 2022 elections.

Source: *Political Economy of Covert Influence Operations in the 2022 Philippine Elections*

BRP Sierra Madre

the rotting and rusting ship deliberately run aground by the Philippine Navy in Ayungin Shoal in 1999 to serve as an outpost of the Philippine Marines and a symbol of the Philippines' assertion of sovereignty over the Spratly Islands.



1453%

or from P25 million in 2021 to P392 million in 2022

budget increase of the Office of the President for overseas travel expenses incurred by Marcos Jr, his family and minions during foreign trips in his first 6 months in power.

22

reclamation projects supposedly ordered suspended by Marcos Jr after the US complained over a Chinese company's involvement in these.

Despite this, dredging activities continued in Manila Bay near Cavite.

A few grow richer amid widespread suffering

Filipino multi-billionaires became richer amid people's sufferings and a slumping economy. On August 10, Forbes magazine published its 2023 list of Filipino "dollar billionaires." This list shows how the combined wealth of 50 richest Filipinos grew by ₱493 billion from ₱3.9 trillion to ₱4.44 trillion.

Leading the list are the Sy siblings, followed by Manny Villar, Enrique Razon, Ramon Ang, and Tony Tan Caktiong and family. These bourgeois compradors and bureaucrat-capitalists own the biggest companies in the Philippines employing thousands of workers, majority of whom are contractuels.

Three of them control large traditional parties who comprise majority of the Senate and Lower House in Congress. Villar controls the Nacionalista Party which has four senators and 38 congressmen. Villar's wife Cynthia Villar and their son Mark Villar are themselves senators, daughter Camille Villar seat as congresswoman. Razon leads the National Unity Party which has 39 congressmen, while the Nationalist People's Coalition, established by then Eduardo Cojuangco Jr, Ramon Ang's deceased boss, has five senators and 33 congressmen.

A worker earning minimum wages would need to work 2.4 million years to match Villar's wealth.

If a 1% to 3% "wealth tax" is imposed, these billionaires will be set back by only ₱259.4 billion. Their wealth will remain at ₱4.18 trillion, which is still larger than their wealth the previous year.

Meanwhile, a July survey saw that the number of families living below or on the poverty line increased by 1.5 million to 21.6 million between June 2022 and July 2023. Likewise, the number of families who lost their savings or have no capacity to save increased by 18.8 million, or by 100,000 from the second quarter of 2022 to the second quarter this year.

Economic growth slowed down over three consecutive quarters. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in April-June

20 RICHEST IN THE PHILIPPINES



SY SIBLINGS
\$14.4B **₱806.4B**



MANNY VILLAR
\$9.7B **₱543.2B**



ENRIQUE RAZON
\$8.1B **₱453.6B**



RAMON ANG
\$3.4B **₱190.4B**



TONY TAN CAKTIONG
\$3.2B **₱179.2B**



ABOITIZ FAMILY
\$3.15B **₱176.4B**



LANCE GOKONGWEI AND SIBLINGS
\$3.0B **₱168.0B**



ISIDRO CONSUNJI AND SIBLINGS
\$2.9B **₱162.4B**



JAIME ZOBEL DE AYALA AND FAMILY
\$2.8B **₱156.8B**



LUCIO TAN
\$2.6B **₱145.6B**

Source: Forbes

NPA in Negros seizes 9 firearms

FOUR RIFLES AND five pistols were seized by units of the New People's Army (NPA) in Negros island in two tactical offensives over the past two weeks. The NPA-Masbate also reported an ambush against CAFGU members and military agents.

The NPA-Northern Negros ambushed the counterinsurgency unit of the Philippine National Police (PNP) patrolling Sitio Calanugan, Barangay Minapasuk, Calatrava, Negros Occidental on August 9. Seized from them were four rifles, a .45 caliber pistol and bullets.

A policeman was killed and three others were injured in the ambush. Meanwhile, the people's army ensured the safety of civilians riding a canter truck and a rescue vehicle that were following the police patrol car.

In Negros Oriental, the NPA-Central Negros confiscated four pistols from military agent Pen-pen Fajardo at Sitio Mora, Barangay Pinukawan, Vallehermoso on August 13. Fajardo was known to work and collaborate with soldiers. He also has numerous cases of abuse and harassment of residents, including indiscriminate shootings in the community.

In Masbate, CAFGU elements and vigilante military agents were injured in an NPA ambush in Barangay Bonifacio, Uson, Masbate on August 9. They were riding in a pick-up truck which Red fighters blew up using explosives.

grew by only 4.3%, lower than the 6.4% the previous quarter and 7.1% in the last quarter of 2022.

All the major sectors slumped, especially the productive sectors of agriculture and manufacturing. Only tourism and some investments registered growth in the second quarter. The anticipated "revenge spending" (or post-pandemic binge expenses) did not happen, and instead household consumption (family expenses) dropped from 8.5%

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AFP, number one IHL violator

Consecutive cases of human rights violations by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) were recorded in Masbate, Isabela, Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, and Sultan Kudarat over the past weeks. These were committed while the International Day of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) was being commemorated on August 12.

These cases add to the 954 violations by the Marcos Jr regime during its first year in power.

In Sultan Kudarat, the 37th IB killed Rowe Jhon Libot, a Lumad school volunteer teacher, on July 27 in Kalamansig town. Human rights groups are seeking an investigation into the killing of Libot which they consider as a violation of international humanitarian law and of rules of war applicable in armed conflict areas.

In Masbate, the 96th IB and 2nd IB on August 5 arrested farmers Nonoy and Bongbong Francisco, and Ome Malaque between Barangays Bonifacio and Simawa in Uson.

Dante Dionan was also arrested and mauled by soldiers in the same place on August 6. Letot Francisco's house in Malapinggan, Barangay Sawmill, Mobo was ransacked and looted. On August 7, a yet unnamed civilian was riddled with bullets in Sitio Irong-irong at the boundary of barangays Mabuhay, Sawmill and Baang in Mobo town.

In Isabela, soldiers threatened and interrogated Ka Reolita Rivera, an elderly peasant leader, in Angadnan town on August 8. Rivera's local association is in

partnership with Danggayan Cagayan Valley, a regional association of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

In Negros Occidental, the 94th IB illegally arrested 60-year-old farmer Romeo Balsimo in Sitio Cunalom, Barangay Carabalan, Himamaylan City on August 7. He is being implicated in an NPA armed action in 2020 in a nearby area. In the last week of July, soldiers also manhandled his son Nono Balsimo.

In Negros Oriental, soldiers of the 62nd IB have been encamped in an elementary school in Sitio Agulang, Barangay Villegas, Guihulngan City since August 3. Elements of the CAFGU have also occupied the Kaimbaran Elementary School in Barangay Trinidad, Guihulngan City since August 5. Homes of residents are being relentlessly combed by soldiers.

Meanwhile, unidentified individuals repeatedly fired shots outside the house of peasant leader Alvin Dimaracut in Tarlac on August 6. Dimaracut is the new chairman of Makisama-Tinang, an organization demanding the immediate distribution of land in Hacienda Tinang in Concepcion, Tarlac to land reform beneficiaries. AB

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during the first quarter to 5.5% in the second quarter. This is the result of inflation and the failure of the Marcos regime to increase wages and salaries of millions of workers and employees, and inability to create decent jobs and boost the faltering economy.

Prices of rice, vegetable, fish and oil continued to rise in July despite the much-boasted lower

inflation rate of 4.7%. These are expected to surge again this August following increases in LRT fares and toll fees, and weekly and sharp oil price increases. Prices of these will continue to rise in the face of supply and price manipulation by monopoly oil companies, as well as burdensome taxes imposed on commodities by the reactionary state. AB



Employees demand salary increases. Government employees from the departments of education, health, and other agencies gathered in front of Congress last August 10 to demand additional budget for them while the House Committee on Appropriations deliberated the Marcos regime's ₱5.768 trillion proposed national budget for 2024.

Petition for wage increase in Regions 4-A and 7. Workers belonging to the Workers' Initiative for Wage Increase-ST gathered at the RWB 4-A in Batangas City on August 7 to demand a minimum wage of ₱750/day in the region. Meanwhile, workers belonging to the AMA-Sugbo-KMU picketed in front of DOLE-7 in Cebu City on August 9 as they submitted their petition for a ₱100/day wage increase for the entire Region 7.

Anti-mining in Samar. More than 2,000 residents from various parts of Samar marched to the center of Borongan City on August 7 to call for a stop to destructive mining projects on the islands of Homonhon and Manicani and other parts of the island.

First day fight! Students of the University of Sto. Tomas (UST) welcomed their first day of classes on August 9 with a protest right in front of their university to call for upholding the youth's right to education and the scrapping of the 6% increase in their tuition and other fees.

UP fight. Student leaders from various campuses of the University of the Philippines who participated in the General Assembly of Student Councils marched on August 16 in front of the UP Mindanao campus to call for additional budget for public universities and to condemn the harassment of students by state agents including the ordeal they suffered when police prevented them from converging at their original venue at the Freedom Park in Davao.