

Reject the AFP fake encounter scheme and fight for Negros Island

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The Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) 3rd Infantry Division is again stepping up its fake news factory after declaring two successive fake encounters in Cauayan and Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental. As per their usual deceptive storytelling, they declared supposed "NPA casualties," "rebels-turned-surrenderees," "temporary encampments," and "recovered firearms" to cover up crimes that state forces systematically committed.

According to both the Armando Sumayang Jr Command (ASJC-NPA) and the Mt. Cansermon Command (MCC-NPA), no armed encounters took place on November 7 and 8, respectively. Once again, the fascist AFP has targeted defenseless farmers in an attempt to give credence to their claim of "weakened" or "dismantled" NPA guerrilla fronts.

In the Barangay Yaoyao, Cauayan fake encounter on November 7, Warren Cadarin was earlier abducted and then butchered by the 15th IB. He was falsely tagged as NPA casualty. He was a charcoal burner from Sitio Indangawan, Barangay Manlucahoc, Sibalay City, Negros Occidental who came across 15th IB soldiers conducting combat operations in their barangay on November 4. His family approached their barangay officials to help search for him, but Barangay Tanods only found his slippers. Therefore, he was under military custody for 72 hours before he was arbitrarily killed. The other victim has not been identified yet.

Meanwhile, in the fake encounter at Sitio Pisok, Barangay Buenavista, Himamaylan City on November 8, two farmers were illegally arrested by

94th IB soldiers. One of them was Joel Casusa, a former chairperson of Kahugpongong sang Mangunguma sa Buenavista (KMB). He was also a victim of illegal arrest in 2019 and the trumped-up charge has already been dismissed.

As of today, there have been 19 fake encounters this 2023 on Negros Island that was used to coverup 29 cases of human rights violations. Of these, 11 are extrajudicial killing cases involving 19 victims (11 farmers and eight hors de combat). Warren Cadarin is one of the most recent victims.

Aside from this bloody trail, fake encounters also whitewashed cases of indiscriminate firing, indiscriminate shelling, frustrated killing, physical assault or injury, illegal arrest, and violation of rights of hors de combat. Reactionary state forces dare to be so brutal believing that they can get away with over-used and now unbelievable encounter narratives. Fake encounters this year were declared in Himamaylan City, Kabankalan City, Moises Padilla, Isabelita, Binalbagan, EB Magalona and Cauayan, in Negros Occidental and Guihulngan City, Canlaon City and Sta. Catalina in Negros Oriental.

To summarize, fake encounters are nothing but human rights violations wrapped in a duplicitous facade. Such culture of impunity and deception must be stopped.

A surge of human rights violations is expected in Southwest Negros or the CHICKS (Cauayan-Hinobaan-Ilog-Candoni-Kabankalan-Sipalay) area after the 3rd ID declared it as a focus area. The November 7 fake encounter is but a part of a brutal scheme that the 15th and 47th IB will indubitably perform. As their illusory deadline draws to a close this December, these mercenaries will step up its brutal and terroristic acts that will endanger the lives of Negrosanons. They desperately try to justify and gloat about a victory that they will never achieve.

Additionally, the state is ramping up its attacks against communities especially in the countryside to push further imperialist and local comprador-landlord business interests.

With this, the National Democratic Front (NDF)-Negros calls on the Negrosanons, especially the people in Southwest Negros, to be vigilant against simultaneous atrocities committed by the reactionary state forces and militantly defend their communities. The NDF-Negros also urges human rights defenders, church people, civil society groups, and concerned individuals to help expose military abuses mainly against peasants, demand justice for all victims of human rights violations and call for an end of these barbaric acts of the AFP.

The ruling class is in shambles due to internal fighting and nepotism. Thus, it is of utmost importance that the oppressed and exploited people unite to fight the common enemy, the US-Marcos regime, and to overthrow a system rotten to its core, and establish a genuinely democratic and just system to achieve lasting peace.