

EDITORIAL

Anti-imperialist armed resistance needed worldwide

To maintain and expand its economic and political interests in the Middle East, US imperialism is now pouring support to Zionist Israel to suppress the Palestinian people's struggle for national liberation. On the mistaken notion that it can put an end to the Palestinian people's determination to fight, the US abetted and aided the Zionists in the bombardment of Gaza, killing more than 10,000 Palestinians, including over 4,100 children. The hands of US imperialism and the Zionist government of Israel are drenched in the Palestinian people's blood.

All-out US support to Zionist Israel's genocide against Palestinians take the form of a new \$14.5 billion military assistance package, deployment of warships, submarines and nuclear weapons in the Mediterranean Sea, flying Reaper drones, and other intervention. To

shield Israel, the US is threatening and aiming at nations and other forces supportive of the Palestinian people, such as Iran and Lebanon. The US has already dropped bombs on adjacent Syria.

The suppression of the struggle of the Palestinian people by the US

along with the Zionists in Israel form part of the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed people seeking national independence. The particular aim of US imperialism is to maintain its power in the Middle East through the Israeli government, in order to protect its interest in the region's oil resources.

Despite the fact that they are fighting colossal twin-monsters—US-Israel—the Palestinian people are showing iron will, courage and willingness to sacrifice to end their oppression, and fight for their right to national self-determination.



They have to bear arms to fight armed suppression against them. Without armed resistance, they will forever be prisoners in their own land.

The struggle of the Palestinian people is linked to the struggle of the working class and people around the world against the exploitative and oppressive system ruled by imperialism. Like the Palestinian people, all oppressed classes and people need to wage armed struggle, along with their mass movements, to fight the ruling state that employs armed violence to perpetuate the oppressive and exploitative system.

In many semicolonial and semifeudal countries, armed struggle takes the form of protracted people's war to encircle the cities from the countryside. It is waged together with a widespread democratic mass movement. In industrialized capitalist countries, all legal struggles being carried out by workers and the toiling masses serve as preparation for a future armed insurrection to overthrow the bourgeois state.

The Palestinian people's perseverance to tread the path of armed resistance again proves that people and classes who suffer the worst

forms of oppression and exploitation are the most determined to wage struggles for liberation. Like the Palestinians, the oppressed and exploited classes and people in the Philippines, India, Turkey, Myanmar, Kurdistan and other backward or semicolonial and semifeudal countries are determined to fight. In these countries, majority of people suffer the worst levels of hunger and poverty. They know that apart from the path of armed resistance, no other path exists to alter their destiny.

As in Palestine, the flames of armed struggle, the highest form of resistance required to crush the armed reactionary state and end its fascist and terrorist rule, will not be extinguished.

In various parts of the world, protests by great numbers of people are continuously erupting to demand an end to the brutal occupation of Palestine. In support of the Palestinian people who now are engaged in armed confrontation with the terrorist state of Zionist Israel, armed revolutionaries all over the world must launch tactical offensives to strike at imperialism and all those who support the genocide in Gaza.

While waging a war of intervention in the Middle East, US imperialism is also intensifying conflicts around the world. The US is heightening its contradictions with rival imperialist powers China and Russia. In Europe and Asia, even in Africa, the US is stoking wars all over. The US will take advantage of all conflicts that it can ignite in different parts of the world to expand the scope of its military power and give its military capitalists an opportunity to make fat profits.

Prior to the outbreak of Palestine's resistance, the 20-month war in Ukraine was the center of the imperialist clash between the US and its allies in NATO against Russia. In Asia, the US continues to grow its military presence to surround and provoke its rival China. The US is inciting Taiwan's separation from China, militarizing the South China Sea by dragging allies in "war games," and intensifying the tension between China and the Philippines.

Armed revolution is the most effective way to prevent and quell inter-imperialist wars being stoked by the US in various parts of the world, pulling in small countries, and causing great harm and pain to hundreds of millions of people. By waging armed struggle in the Philippines that keep puppet US troops engaged, the revolutionary movement prevents the outbreak of inter-imperialist war; and if this could not be prevented, will surely take advantage of such a war to further the armed revolution.

Under the leadership of the Party, the working class and the masses of the Filipino people are fully determined to advance the armed revolution. The revolutionary forces are determined to further strengthen the NPA and advance the people's war to end imperialist oppression, seize political power and establish the new democratic government to represent the people and lead the country to a free and bright future. **AB**

 <p>Vol LIV No. 21 November 7, 2023</p> <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: Anti-imperialist armed resistance needed worldwide 1</p> <p>Armed perseverance in Gaza 3</p> <p>Anti-junta groups launch offensive in Myanmar 4</p> <p>Israel turns Gaza into children's graveyard 5</p> <p>94th IB soldiers rape 15-year-old, one other 6</p> <p>250 factories in Bangladesh close 6</p> <p>Protests 6</p> <p>In short 7</p> <p>Rottenness of the last barangay elections 8</p> <p>Save Cancabato Bay from reclamation 9</p> <p>8th ID's military rule over Samar 10</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	
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Armed perseverance in Gaza against US and Israeli genocide

After 20 days of threatening "all-out occupation" of Gaza, a limited number of Zionist Israeli troops invaded the northern part of the Palestinian land on October 27. Under the cover of massive bombings targeting cables and communication lines, troops on tanks, bulldozers, armored vehicles and other military vehicles invaded with complete arrogance.

They were met with bombs, explosives, mortar and grenades from fighters of the Izz Ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the armed branch of the Hamas group (Islamic Resistance Movement). In intense battle of tanks versus fighters, Al-Qassam demonstrated its deep knowledge of Israeli tactics and equipment.

According to its spokesman Abu Obeida, al-Qassam blew up and destroyed at least 22 military vehicles in the first 48 hours alone of the occupation. For the second time, it stung the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), most of whom had no actual combat experience. Many of the IDF were killed, including the tanks battalion commander.

Hamas is confident of defeating any Israeli forces on land where they have the superior advantage of terrain and mass support. Its fighters can quickly and secretly move around along miles of tunnels beneath Gaza. These are bomb-proof, impenetrable by tanks and equipped with its own communication system beyond the range of Israeli's electronic surveillance.

Hamas is the ruling party in Gaza. It was a product of the first intifada or mass uprising in 1987 and has close links with other Islamic groups in the Middle East. In 2006, it was elected to administer Gaza. It did not relinquish armed resistance as its main weapon against Israel's brutal occupation. In recent years, it developed its own production of mortar, rocket-propelled grenade (RPG), submarines, drones and other weapons.

Parallel to Hamas operations are those of other Gaza armed groups such as the Al-Quds Brigade, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Liberation Front of Palestine.

Al-Qassam initially took Zionist Israel by surprise when it launched the Al-Aqsa Flood on October 7. This surprise attack was not prevented, nor detected, by Israel's advanced surveillance system, drones, electronic equipment, satellites or by its daily attacks.

According to Obeida, the operation consummates several years of preparation and training, studying the enemy's character and equipment, and circumventing its huge intelligence system. Its attacks, staged from the ground, water and even from the air using paragliders, were well-planned, swift and had clear aims.

Israel has gone berserk in retaliation to the embarrassment caused by the operation. Working with the US, it has intensified its genocide against the Gaza civilian population. On November 2, the US and Israel had dropped up to 25,000 tons of bombs at Gaza, equivalent to two nuclear bombs. It has relentlessly destroyed homes, hospitals, schools, churches, evacuation centers and

water, electric and telecommunications infrastructure.

Since October 7, Israeli bombs have killed more than 10,000, including over 4,100 children and 2,600 women. Over 500 entire families were massacred. Nothing is safe in Gaza, where journalists and even ambulances are targeted.

While dropping bombs, Israel has taken hostage of Palestinian civilians. Around 4,000 Palestinian workers are being kept as hostages in IDF military camps. Up to 1,070 were arbitrarily arrested in West Bank and East Jerusalem. They suffer severe torture, beating, humiliation and physical abuse in the hands of Israeli soldiers and armed settlers.

Despite Israel's terrorism, Hamas expressed willingness to release all its al-Aqsa Flood captives through negotiations. It has, in fact, already released women, children and elderly people on humanitarian grounds. Those released revealed they were treated well and fairly by the fighters.



Anti-junta groups launch 1-week offensive in Myanmar

At least 100 detachments of the reactionary Myanmar army were seized by armed counter-junta forces in week-long coordinated offensives in the Shan region. Four cities were occupied and hundreds of firearms, mortar, cannon shells, and ammunition, even six tanks and an armored vehicle were seized.

Dubbed Operation 1027, the offensives began on October 27. It was launched by the Three Brotherhood Alliance, consisting of the Arakan Army, Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army, all armies of Myanmar ethnic groups. In a statement, the alliance said the offensive was motivated by the desire to "defend civilians, assert the right to self-defense, maintain control of its own territories and face attacks and bombings by the military-junta." The immediate goal is to drive away the junta from the northern part of Shan State. It is determined to continue fighting until the military dictatorship is completely defeated, a common aspiration of all the people in Myanmar.

In support, troops of the People's Defense Forces, Kachin Independence Army and Karen National Liberation Army simultaneously attacked junta forces in their respective areas. Many other ethnic armed groups supported and actually participated in the offensives.

According to the alliance's statement, over 100 junta troops were killed and many were wounded merely in the first five days of the offensive. Rather than fighting, over 60 troops, including an entire unit of 41 soldiers, sur-



rendered.

In retaliation, the junta intensified aerial bombardment of civilian communities in Shan. More than 25,000 were forced to flee their communities and take refuge in neighboring states or cross to China.

Shan State is a region on Myanmar's border with China. It is a major trade route between the two countries. Two pipelines carrying millions of cubic meters of oil from Myanmar's offshore rigs to China cross the area. The region is crucial to China's One-Belt-One-Road project.

On October 31, the alliance announced that it seized control of six towns in Shan, including two where junta exports pass to China. Due to effects on commerce, China has called for an "urgent ceasefire" to let trucks carrying products cross.

"Raging fire" of brutality

Since seizing state power in 2021, the junta has killed up to 4,000 civilians and arbitrarily detained more than 10,000.

On October 24, the United Nations released a special report detailing the junta's war crimes and crimes against humanity. Most

prominent are the brazen bombing of civilian targets, the killing of civilians or combatants captured in operations and the widespread and deliberate burning of homes and other civilian infrastructure.

In the last few months alone, the number of junta airstrikes increased by 600% compared to the previous year. One of the most recent cases was the bombing of a refugee camp in Mung Lai Hkyet in Kachin State on the night of October 7. Twenty-eight refugees, including nine children, were killed instantly. More than 60 were injured.

Mass killings of civilians and wounded fighters are widespread in the Sagaing region. Deliberate burning of houses, shops, churches and vehicles were recorded in the regions of Sagaing, Magway, Chin, Kayin and Kayah. There were cases where entire communities were burned to the ground.

There is enough evidence gathered by the UN in relation to junta forces inflicting "the highest level of cruelty and harm" to its victims such as rape with objects and various forms of humiliation, mutilation, gang or serial rape and sexual slavery. Among the victims were children. AB

Israel turns Gaza into children's graveyard

Ang Bayan interviewed Comrade Coni Ledesma to get the views of the Special Office for the Protection of Children (SOPC) of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) on the situation of children in Gaza amidst Israel's relentless and indiscriminate attacks. According to various news sources, Gaza has become a graveyard for children, where children compose at least 40% Palestinians killed.

Ang Bayan (AB): Following the NDFP SOPC's most recent statement on monitoring and ensuring the rights of children in armed conflicts, what is the NDFP's stance on the ongoing occupation and human rights violations in Gaza?

Coni Ledesma (CL): The NDFP has always stood for the right of the Palestinian people to their land. The war now being waged by Hamas and the Palestinian people is a war of liberation.

What is happening now in Gaza is genocide. What the Israeli army is doing is a violation of International Humanitarian Law.

And the tragic thing about this is that children are the greatest victims of this war. The estimate is that about 40% of the victims are children. And that is not counting the newly born babies in incubators who died because of lack of fuel—fuel that Israel has not allowed to be brought to Gaza.

The war in Gaza kills the future Palestinian people. But the Palestinian people are resilient. They

have been waging their struggle for their return to their homeland for over 75 years now. The bombs may kill hundreds of them, but hundreds more will rise and continue their struggle.

AB: What are the parallels and differences of the situations of Filipino and Palestinian children in armed conflict?

CL: The Palestinians have been driven off their land. In a way, there is that similarity with the Lumads who have had to leave their fields and homes because they have been driven out by the military. Like the Palestinians, the Lumads and others who are in the Philippine countryside are being bombed. The Palestinians are victims of Israeli bombs and the Filipinos in the countryside of bombs from the reactionary army.

The difference in the situation is that all the people in Gaza are targets of Israeli bombings, strafing and arrests. They are ordinary citizens whose homes are being destroyed and whose families are being killed. In the case of the Philippines,

it is those in the countryside, where the people are suspected of supporting the New People's Army, that are targets of the bombing, not the people in the cities.

AB: What steps are the NDFP taking to bring these gross and grave violations to light in the local and international arenas?

CL: The NDFP has issued a statement condemning Israel's aggression. The Special Office for the Protection of Children has also issued a statement condemning the killing of children. The CPP has issued several statements condemning the aggression.

Aside from that, NDFP forces in the Philippines and abroad join the different demonstrations condemning Israel's genocidal war.

AB: What should children's rights advocates, human rights defenders, freedom-loving citizens and revolutionaries in the Philippines and around the world do amidst the escalating Zionist attacks on the people and children of Palestine?

CL: First of all, I would suggest holding information sessions to inform the general public about the reasons behind Israel's war against the Palestinian people. To talk about the history of the Palestinians being driven out of their homes, of Nakba. There are still many people who believe that Israel is the aggrieved party. They do not realize that it is the Palestinians whose land has been taken away from them and who live in occupied territory.

Then, I would call on all freedom-loving people, not only in the Philippines but in the world, to join the demonstrations calling for an end to Israel's aggression. It is the united voices of the people of the world that can make a difference in this war. AB



94th IB soldiers rape 15-year-old, one other

Two cases of rape by soldiers of the 94th IB were reported by residents of Barangay Carabalan, Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental. The crime happened when soldiers held a *bayle* (dance) in the barangay in the last week of August. That night, residents witnessed five male soldiers of the 94th IB in civvies forcing a 15-year-old and another girl to go with them to their camp.

Residents recognized the five troops as part of the Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP) staying in the area. According to victims' families, the two girls came home the next day wearing military uniforms.

Killing. Still unidentified people shot journalist Juan Jumalon of 94.7 Calamba Gold FM in Calamba, Misamis Occidental while reporting on radio in the morning of November 5. The shooting was captured on a Facebook live video.

In Sorsogon, paid military hitmen killed farmer Arnel Halum on November 5 in Sitio Kamandag, Barangay San Pascual, Casiguran. He was helping his brother-in-law harvest coconuts when he was shot.

Arrest. The 203rd IBde secretly detained and denied rights to Red fighters Sonny Rogelio (Ka Ed) and Sonny Sambutan (Ka Omeng) who were captured on October 17 in Sityo Manambao, Barangay Santa Cruz, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro. The family traced Rogelio's whereabouts on November 2 at the AFP Medical Center in V. Luna, Quezon City. Sambutan has not been found to date.

In Camarines Norte, the 9th IB arrested and detained Erick Andaya on September 23 in Barangay Malaya, Labo. The victim along with his fellow tribesmen scampered away when the soldiers shot at them.

Food blockade. The economic blockade imposed by the 2nd ID units in Barangay Lumutan and Barangay Pagsangahan, General Nakar, Quezon is causing widespread hunger and poverty. The blockade was imposed several weeks since the 80th IB, 1st IB and police began a combat operation in the town in September.

Bangladesh protests close 250 factories

MORE THAN 250 garment factories in Bangladesh closed since last week in the face of protests by thousands of workers. Workers' anger erupted after the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), an association of factory owners, offered a mere 25% increase in monthly minimum wages or 10,400 taka (\$90) from the current 8,300 taka (\$75 or ₱4,125). This is grossly below their demand for 23,000 taka (\$209) monthly wage which they say is the "bare minimum" to be able to support their families. The last time there were negotiations for wage increases was in 2017.

In response, police violently broke up the protests with tear gas, sound grenades and shotgun pellets. Two workers were killed in these dispersals.



Free Palestine! More than 600 protested at the Israeli embassy in Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City on October 31, to condemn the occupation, relentless bombing, and genocide by the Zionist Israel government in Gaza. The protest was spearheaded by the International League of Peoples' Struggles (ILPS) and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan). On October 26, Moros protested in Manila as part of a series of protests by Bangsamoro people over the past weeks. A protest was also held in Cebu.

Surface the desaparecidos. Families, supporters and human rights groups gathered in Quezon City on November 2 to reiterate the call for the surfacing of victims of enforced disappearance by the state. Under Marcos Jr, records show 11 cases of disappearances.

Protest against petroleum price increases. A coordinated protest by drivers and jeepney operators was held in Metro Manila on October 24 to condemn a new round of increases in the prices of petroleum products, the 13th since July. With the last increase, diesel prices have gone up by around ₱19/liter while gasoline and kerosene, by almost ₱14/liter. Simultaneous protests were held in Baguio and Cebu, and in Iloilo and Bacolod a day before.

Riders demand just compensation. Hundreds of riders or delivery drivers of the Grab company protested in Quezon City on October 25 to condemn the unjust deduction of ₱10 from their income per delivery. Due to the deduction, their previous ₱45 minimum income per delivery will become only ₱35. The group also condemned Grab's dismissal of nine drivers who participated in the previous assembly on October 19.



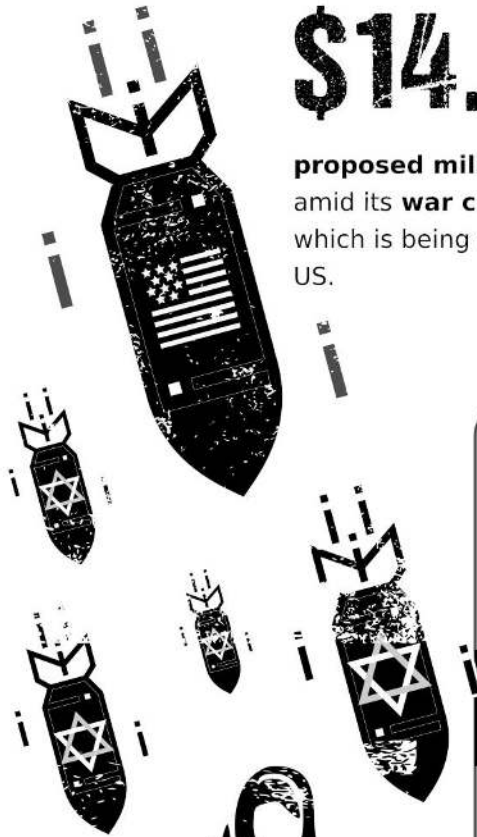
November 8, 2013
water engulfed
Tacloban City
amid the supertyphoon

YOLANDA

where up to
10,000
were **killed** or
gone missing.

\$14.3 billion

proposed military aid by the **US** to **Israel** amid its **war crimes** and **genocide** in **Gaza** which is being widely condemned even in the US.



120

countries favored the resolution of the **United Nations** for a "**humanitarian truce**" in Gaza on October 27, while 14 voted against it upon instigation of the US and Israel, and 45 abstained, including the Philippines.

5.9 million

Palestinian refugees in the entire world, most of them are descendants of families evicted during the **Al Nakba**. They are considered the biggest and longest refugee group in the world.



57.37%

increase in Philippine debt payments in September 2023 compared to the September 2022 amount, along with the increase in debt **from P13.5 trillion to P14.2 trillion** during the same period.



160,000

cases against Monsanto (presently owned by Bayer) in relation to the destructive effects of the pesticide **Roundup** to people's health



MONSANTO

This November, a US court ordered the company to pay **\$332 million** as reparations to a cancer victim caused by the pesticide.

90%

of data on cloud servers are considered junk.

According to critics, these data centers (composed of 100 million computer servers), such as those run by Google and Microsoft, waste energy and water.



Rottenness of the last barangay elections

Corruption in Philippine reactionary election was yet again exposed glaringly during the recent barangay election. As in the past, it was exploited by political dynasties to consolidate their power and prepare for the next elections.

From August 28 to election day, October 30, violence and harassment of politicians against rivals, vote buying, meddling of big politicians, landlords and businessmen, and military interference, were widespread.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) recorded a mere 32 incidents of election-related violence. In these cases, 19 people were killed while 19 were injured. In the agency's report, vote buying cases were less than 200. These numbers are grossly far from the truth.

Widespread vote buying

In Bukidnon alone, vote buying was been recorded in all its 464 barangays. The province's politicians and businessmen poured millions of funds to ensure their bet's victory. The going rate for votes for village captain was at ₱700-₱1,000.

Notorious criminals were supported by rotten politicians including the Delamace family of Cabanglasan who control three barangays (Freedom, Dalacutan and

Silae). This family is responsible for innumerable crimes against locals including beatings, landgrabbing and murder of rivals.

In San Fernando town, police and soldiers took no action amid the terror sowed by Nonong Salusad, a paramilitary leader. He extorted ₱200,000 from village chief candidates in five barangays. In Barangay Kibungkog, he stole the ₱750,000 election kitty of two candidate captains competing against his supported candidate.

In Sorsogon, votes for village captain were reportedly bought at ₱300-₱1,300. There are cases where rival candidates for barangay captain were both minions of the mayor.

Soldiers and police collude with big politicians. In Sorsogon, a squad of soldiers were deployed in each barangay since October 27. In Laguna, 1st IB soldiers and tanks were deployed widely in Santa Maria town from October 1. These troops were deployed in the area under the guise of maintaining the town's security in

connection with the barangay election.

Attack on progressive candidates

As in the past, state forces targeted a few progressive and patriotic candidates for the barangay election.

In Batangas, the 59th IB attempted to block Ronald Ramos's candidacy for captain of Barangay Macalamcam A, Rosario. Soldiers maliciously accused him of having links with the revolutionary movement in the province in an attempt to justify his suppression.

In Quezon, Bukidnon, the town mayor's staff themselves interfered and vilified activist candidates. The mayor fears that if progressives win, they might link arms with the people in their struggle for their rights.

The National Task Force-Elcac also slated some of its minions to run in Bukidnon. In the cities of Malaybalay and Valencia, they fielded and funded traitor "surrenderers." All of them were flat-out losers.

Red-tagging incited by state agents was widespread in many parts of the country. Cases were documented in Cebu City, in Tondo, Manila, and elsewhere. Fliers vilifying leaders who led mass struggles in their areas were distributed in adjacent towns of Pavia, Zarraga and Iloilo City in Iloilo.

In addition to cases of violence and vote buying, the Kontra Daya group condemned the testing of the electronic election system in two barangays in Cavite and one in Quezon City. According to Kontra Daya, the use of the electronic system will only exacerbate election fraud which will be easier to conceal. **AB**



Save Cancabato Bay from reclamation

Ten years after super typhoon Yolanda's storm surge ravaged Tacloban City, the local government has yet to make a significant step to avoid the next disaster. Instead, it further pushed a reclamation project that was not only the opposite of preparation, but will destroy the entire Cancabato Bay ecosystem and kill the livelihood of many fishermen who rely on it.

The storm surge left the bay filled with debris from shattered houses, vehicles and various items. This affected the harvested fish and marine resources. Instead of clearing and cleaning up the bay, the local government's solution is to completely fill and kill it.

In 2015 the local government of Tacloban first pushed the ₱3.46-billion Tacloban causeway project purportedly to serve as storm surge barrier, alleviate traffic, and boost tourism. It is lumped with other bridge and road projects in Samar and Leyte pushed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Loans from the Asian Development Bank and other imperialist institutions will partly fund construction.

The project aims to build a 2.6-kilometer long and over four-meter high causeway over Cancabato's embankment or coast from the city center (Magsaysay Blvd.) to Barangay San Jose (Kata-Sisan Point). For this, rocks and soil will be dumped on soft parts of the coast to support the road. To avoid com-

pletely blocking the water flow, culverts will be placed in five strategic structural points.

From the outset, affected residents and fisherfolk have strongly opposed the project. It will destroy the coast where their boats and even houses are located. They know this is no different from the 2013 "no build zone" city ordinance, or the prohibition to build houses 40 meters from the coast, which drove them out of their communities. Instead of real rehabilitation, the government and its accomplice foreign bank exploited the typhoon to divest land from the fishermen, as well as the coast and bay.

According to Save Kankabatoc Advocacy, an alliance of residents, fisherfolk and environmental groups, the claims of JICA and the local government that Taclobanons will gain "benefits" and "savings" from the reclamation and causeway are baseless.

The causeway will not stop any storm surge, according to the group. It is not even in the right location.

Instead, it will block the outward flow of water from the city and may result in frequent and endless floods. It will deprive 1,000 fisherfolk and families of their livelihood. Neither will it resolve traffic because drivers already refused to ply on it. They say they will get no passengers along its entire length. The bay also plays a major role in Tacloban's culture and history.

The group knows the causeway is part of a more comprehensive and devious plan of the local government to reclaim or fill the 400-hectare Cancabato Bay and "transform" it into a central commercial district. "It will kill the bay and its entire ecosystem to give way to the construction of buildings and commercial centers that will mainly benefit foreign businesses," they say.

Cancabato Bay is not "dead," contrary to government claims to justify the reclamation projects. The city local council even declared the bay a protected reservation area in 2003. In fact 3,649 fishermen from 16 barangays rely on it for livelihood. Danggit, seashells, crabs, and other marine life thrive here. It has 26 hectares of mangroves remaining.

Just on October 1, the local office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources suspended all reclamation operations in the bay due to the lack of proper permits and the destruction of protected mangroves. Despite this, the city's mayor, Alfred Romualdez, continues to defend the project. **AB**



8th ID's military rule over Samar

The iron fist rule of the 8th ID of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) prevails in the remote barangays of Samar. Away from public and media scrutiny, they carry out secret abductions, detention, imprisoning civilians in their communities and various forms of military abuses. Military units completely subjugate civilian authorities.

Abduction and extrajudicial detention

There are at least 10 victims of abduction secretly being detained by the 8th ID at its camp in Barangay Maulong, Catbalogan, Samar since last year. They remain imprisoned, denied family visits legal representation, and subjected to emotional, physical and mental torture by butcher soldiers.

Among the victims are Mariel Rebato and Monica Ogacho, both new mothers, together with their infants. Imprisoned with them in the camp are Marygrace Tambis Bicina, Renato Chokoy Rufo and three others also abducted by the military in March. Some of them were arrested from their rented home in Calbayog City as early as December 2022.

The revolutionary movement discovered their situation when some victims were temporarily released and made to report to the

NPA. Among those released were four Red fighters ordered to serve as military agents.

Military control over civilian lives

In six towns in Northern Samar, the villages are like prisons guarded by soldiers.

In Silvino Lobos, soldiers control the entry and exit of residents in every village. Anyone who goes to farm or to work signs the logbook and anyone outside who failed to log is arrested. The duration of their stay outside is limited.

In April, Barangay Senonogan de Tubang, Silvino Lobos was bombed five times from the air and strafed. Bombardment was once carried out five times in a single day, using 10 rockets, together with four cannon firings and strafing. Three farmers were directly shot at by soldiers. Apart from this, military crimes such as theft of chickens and

agricultural tools, damaging of houses, destruction of crops, and illegal detention are widespread.

The situation is almost similar in the towns of Las Navas and Catubig where the 3rd IB, 20th IB and 19th IB are encamped. Everything farmers bring to the field are meticulously monitored. In some villages, bringing out even a can of rice is prohibited unless cooked and packed.

In Mapanas, Gamay and Palapag, the 74th IB's military rule is far more repressive. Soldiers mandate farmers to list down their exact destinations and photograph them. They forbid bringing of uncooked rice to the farms and sardines should be uncanned and packed. They arbitrarily enforce lockdowns on false claims of a Covid-19 breakout.

At night, soldiers inspect every house to count the people inside. If the number is inconsistent, barangay officials are held liable. Villagers are surveilled and eavesdropped in their homes. Small stores are required to list every item sold, for monitoring.

Five years of MO 32

In the past five years, military violence has intensified in Eastern Visayas. Using Memorandum No. 32, four battalions were deployed to the region between December 2022 and February to "defeat" the "remaining four active guerrilla fronts" in the northern part of Samar. These add to the three brigades of the 8th ID currently led by Maj. Gen. Camilo Z. Ligayo.

In fact, Memorandum 32 first imposed by the Duterte regime on November 22, 2018 is no longer valid. The "state of national emergency" in Mindanao that served as its basis has already been lifted on July 27.

