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CPP's call for rectification does not run counter to objectives of GRP-NDFP peace negotiations

Last December, National Security Council assistant director Jonathan Malaya questioned the (Communist Party of the Philippines – New People's Army – National Democratic Front) CPP-NPA-NDF's motives for engaging in peace talks with (Government of the Republic of the Philippines) GRP saying he was "very perplexed and disappointed" of the CPP's recent statement reiterating the call for a Party-wide rectification movement.

It is worth noting that the CPP's statement reiterated a process that began as early as 2016 after the 2nd Party congress. The aim of the rectification movement is to further strengthen the Party by "raising the theoretical knowledge and revolutionary practice of Party cadres" and to overcome "weaknesses and shortcomings in the ideological, political and organizational fields."

Contrary to the NSC's insinuation, the Party's call for rectification does not run counter to the objectives of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. The peace negotiations serve as a venue to pursue systemic and deep socio-economic reforms – an endeavor that is fully aligned with addressing poverty and landlessness which are at the root of armed conflict.

In fact, the CPP fully supports the possible resumption of formal peace talks and, in their statement, even called to strengthen the NDFP's representation in peace negotiations to pursue just and lasting peace. The CPP referred to the NDFP's authority to represent the people's democratic government as the most consolidated underground united front organization united under the leadership of the Party.

The NSC's questioning of the NDFP's sincerity in the peace talks exposes their own militarist framework that aims to force the revolutionary movement to surrender instead of genuinely discussing and pursuing solutions to achieve just and lasting peace. The NDFP has restated multiple times that the aim of peace negotiations must be to address the demands of the toiling Filipino masses.

The CPP and the NDFP considers the peace negotiations as an additional battleground, albeit unarmed, to advance the people's democratic demands. The NDFP rejects any notion that misrepresents the peace negotiations as a 'negotiation for surrender.' The NDFP reiterates its commitment and full intent to engage in peace talks with the GRP with the aim of asserting genuine land reform, national industrialization, social justice, and true democracy. 

Latest Ayungin Shoal altercation raises tensions in West PH Sea

Tensions between China and the Marcos Jr. administration continues to escalate in the wake of the latest altercation in the Ayungin Shoal in the West Philippine Sea as each country blames the other for the incident.

The Marcos Jr. regime said that on 22 October during a resupply mission to the BRP Sierra Madre, China's "dangerous maneuvers" led to collisions between boats owned or sanctioned by the two governments. A China Coast Guard ship collided with a Philippine military-contracted boat Unaiza May 2, while a Chinese Maritime Militia ship collided with the Philippine Coast Guard's BRP Cabra. China on the other hand claimed it was the Philippines which provoked the incidents.

The Communist Party of the Philippines, in its 26 December, 2023, statement, pointed out that, "Marcos has allowed his government to be used as pawn in the aggressive push of the US to consolidate its hegemony in the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific region, in order to counter the military and economic growth of its imperialist rival China."

Under Marcos, the Philippines is increasingly being dragged into a rising military conflict between the US and China. In just over a year since assuming power, Marcos has allowed the US to construct at least four more military facilities (in addition to previous five) in "agreed locations" within the camps of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). These facilities can be used to build launching systems for US missiles, to stockpile and deploy weapons, in line with the US strategy of surrounding China with its military forces in the "first island chain."



image: philippinerevolution.nu

On 11 January, Germany's Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, in a press briefing after a bilateral meeting with Manila's Foreign Secretary Enrique Manalo, warned of "rough winds blowing across the South China Sea." She expressed concern over the tensions in this vital waterway through which one-third of the world maritime commerce passes.

China claims almost the whole of the South China Sea, including the West Philippine Sea in violation of international law including a 2016 arbitral ruling of the UN Convention of the Law of the Seas that invalidated China's nine-dash line claim.

China routinely harasses Filipino fishermen, observers and Coast Guard vessels using lasers, water cannons and "dangerous maneuvers". In June 2019, a Chinese steel trawler rammed and sank a Filipino fishing boat in the night. Only the presence of a Vietnamese fishing boat not so far away saved the lives of the 22 fishermen. 

GRP continues to violate international humanitarian law and CARHIRHL

Last December 25, the fascist Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) dropped several massive 250-lb bombs on a guerrilla camp of the New People's Army (NPA) in Malaybalay City, Bukidnon in the early morning of December 25 killing ten people. During the same attack, according to reports, the AFP repeatedly fired artillery rounds using the US- and Israel-supplied ATMOS stationed in their military camp in city. The AFP continued with the aerial bombardment in the evening and the following day.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has condemned this aerial attack, as another brazen violation of international humanitarian law and the civilized conduct of war as it involves an disproportionate use of force relative to its target. The attack caused excessive number of deaths. The bodies of some of fatalities were grossly mangled, while others were dismembered during the vicious overkill.

In addition, the repeated dropping of powerful bombs, overflight of drones and fighter jets, and firing of howitzers caused widespread fear and trauma among the tens of thousands residents in various nearby barangays. It also caused the destruction of large masses of forest resources which are source of livelihood of people.

"The use of massive 250-lb bombs against guerrilla fighters shows the war decadence and bloodlust of the AFP. This decadence is fed by the US military in its drive to unload its arsenal of surplus and antiquated military technology. They unleash their firepower without distinction of what is within bounds of reason and principles of laws of war. This is the same military decadence with which Zionist state of Israel has carried out its bombardment of Gaza since October," the CPP stated. This latest fascist aerial bombardment by the GRP's AFP highlights once more the litany of violations of International Humanitarian Law, the Geneva Conventions on War and the CARHIRHL.

In October 29, 2022, Ang Bayan, the official publication of the CPP has published a preliminary report (War Crimes of the AFP and PNP under the Geneva Conventions and the CARHIRHL) documenting these grave violations perpetrated against civilians, non-combatants and hors de combat.

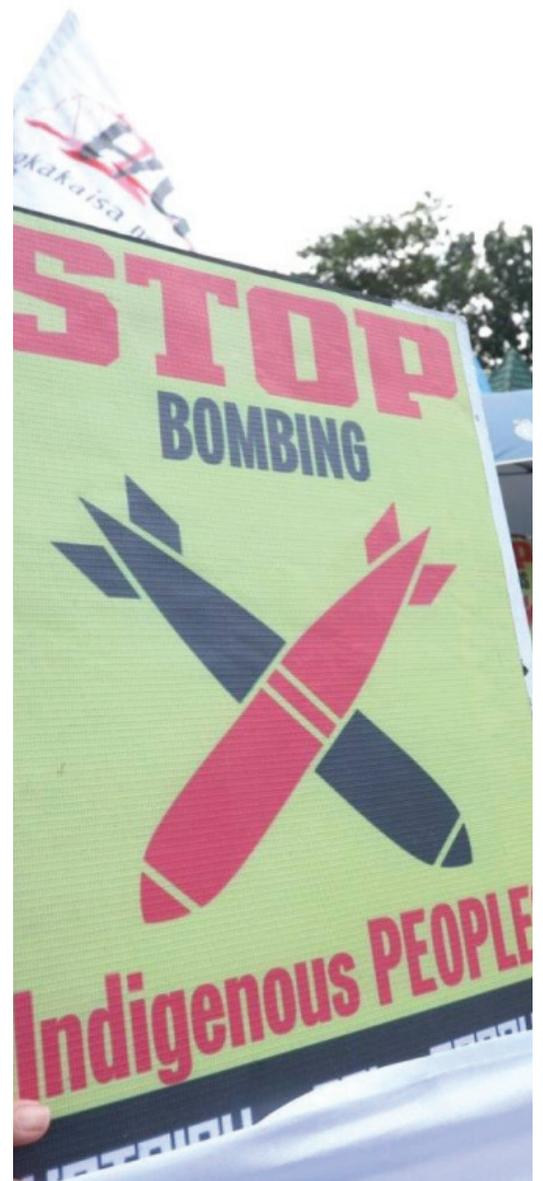


image: philippinerevolution.nu

The report documented indiscriminate killings and summary executions of civilians among them many children, illegal arrests, detention and torture. Of the non-combatants, the report said, 19 were members of the Party and the NDFP who were not directly involved in the armed conflict or were not in the battlefield. Ten were in possession of documents of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) identifying them as NDFP consultants in peace talks. Of the civilians, 20 were retired and elderly members of the Party and the NPA.

The AFP's aerial bombings have been denounced by the revolutionary movement and many local and international human rights groups as grave violations of the Geneva Conventions on War. These bombings do not distinguish between civilian and military targets, cause superfluous injury and unnecessary suffering, aside from the long-term damage to communities and the environment. The bombing Malabalay, Bukidnon, is the latest in the AFP's bloody list of bombings conducted in the Cordilleras in northern Philippines, Mindoro island, Samar, Negros and Surigao. 

Transport strikes force GRP to delay jeepney phaseout, modernization



image: philippinerevolution.nu

The series of transport strikes in the last quarter of last year pressured the Manila government to delay the implementation of its much criticized Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP).

House Speaker Martin Romualdez pressed the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to review and extend the enforcement of the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) that the government has been trying to implement since 2013. The Speaker said he received reports that “corrupt practices may have tainted the conceptualization and planned implementation of the jeepney modernization program.”

During the hearing of the House Committee on Transportation, driver-operator Philip Burata narrated how they lost ownership and rights over their jeepneys after joining a company, despite an earlier agreement that they would still be allowed to manage their fleet.

“We spent for our vehicles; our franchises were transferred to them (cooperative). We spent for the garage in compliance with the requirements of the Land Transportation Franchise and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), but our names were not included in the corporation,” Burata said.

“They filed carnapping case against us. Four of us were charged with 38 counts of carnapping. The 44 approved in our route were given to us to manage, but they forcibly took out 4 units out of the streets,” he said. After constant prodding from several lawmakers, LTFRB agreed to review the implementation of the program to address these concerns.

On Thursday, the transport group PISTON joined the Makabayan bloc in filing a House resolution calling for the repeal of the Omnibus Franchising Guidelines (OFG) and the deferment of the December 31, 2023, deadline for the application of franchise consolidation. The OFG, or the DOTr Department Order 2017-011, is the policy being used by the government to implement its Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP), including the franchise consolidation requirement.

Mandatory franchise consolidation is one of the first steps in the implementation of the PUVMP. According to PISTON, PUV operators are being forced to surrender their individual franchises to be consolidated into a single franchise per cooperative or corporation. This could result in a monopoly by a few large cooperatives or corporations with the necessary financial capacity to comply with the hefty capital requirements for “modernizing” and controlling PUV routes, thereby concentrating market control in the hands a few corporate entities.

A petition pending at the Supreme Court argues that the mandatory consolidation requirement infringes on the constitutional right to freedom of association, rendering it unconstitutional. “The constitutionally guaranteed freedom of association includes the freedom not to associate,” the petition states. The Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP) requires operators to consolidate their individual franchises into a single franchise under a cooperative or corporation. The petition further argues that: “[The right to freedom of association] does not include the right to compel others to form or join [an association].” 