



EDITORIAL

Scorn the hostilities of the Marcos-Duterte fascist cliques

The people are firmly rejecting the conflict of the Marcos and Duterte fascist cliques, both of which represent the worst of the bureaucrat capitalists, and promote the interests of big landlords and comprador bourgeoisie, and imperialist domination in the Philippines.

The conflict recently broke out in the open when Duterte spoke against the charter change or chacha scheme being pushed by Marcos and his minions, at the same time calling on the military to act against congress in case it pursues the plan, and threatening to move for the "secession" of Mindanao.

Duterte is deviously riding on the rising wave of the people's resistance to chacha to defend his own interests and counter the Marcos clique's plan to take away his economic and political power. Duterte is fuming over the cancellation of the government contracts he entered into with China, which

would deprive him of billions of pesos of kickback, the cutting down Davao's once multi-billion peso budget. He also resents Marcos' refusal to block the investigation of the International Criminal Court and the possible issuance of a warrant for his arrest for crimes against humanity.

On the other hand, the Marcos camp remains busy in its push to amend the 1987 Constitution. To muzzle Duterte's rambling mouth, Marcos temporarily stopped the "people's initiative" which he said is too divisive. However, the Senate and the House of Representatives continue to push to amend the 1987

Constitution to enshrine in it the neoliberal policies of liberalization, deregulation and privatization, further reinforce foreign capitalist ownership of Philippine resources and economic domination, and strike out its anti-Marcos legacy.

The fascists Marcos and Duterte are openly feuding amid the crisis of the ruling system. In fact, their conflict itself is a result of the crisis which has shrunk the spoils being shared between them addicts to wealth and power.

The conflict of the ruling Marcos and Duterte ruling deepens the hatred and outrage of the Filipino people against the ruling reactionary regime, and strengthens their determination to build a broad united front against chacha, and against policies and measures that further oppress the people and

trample on the country's national freedom.

The conflict has deepened the masses' hatred of Marcos and Duterte who conspired to steal the 2022 election by creating the false "landslide victory." The people's anger is exacerbated by the Marcos' display of extravagance while the majority suffer from poverty and hardships. He is isolating himself further by ignoring the people's cry for wages increases, genuine land reform, greater spending for education, health and other social services, and other urgent demands; while providing foreign companies and its local partners with all incentives to make them earn large profits from the exploitation of the country's cheap labor and resources.

Marcos brazenly abuses his power to take control of hundreds of billions of pesos and funnel it into the business of his cronies. Like Duterte, Marcos is fattening the AFP unprecedented amounts of money that line the pockets of the favored generals, to secure their loyalty. The AFP's brutal war of suppression continues in the coun-

tryside to pave the way for the aggressive entry of foreign businesses, which rob the peasant masses and indigenous people of their agricultural and ancestral lands.

Marcos' subservience to US geopolitical interests is fanning the people's patriotism. He has allowed the US to take full control of the AFP to serve its strategy of encircling and containing the rise of China. The US is dragging the Philippines in its schemes to intensify military tensions in the South China Sea, Korean Peninsula and Taiwan, in an attempt to provoke China to an armed conflict. The growing presence of American soldiers and rising number of US military facilities inside the AFP camps

are a slap on freedom-loving Filipinos.



The broad antifascist, anti-imperialist and antifeudal united front against the US-Marcos regime continues to expand with patriotic and democratic forces at its head and core. Marcos's scheme to change the 1987 Constitution is bringing together a wide range of classes and sectors. Despite opposing chacha, Duterte is excluded from the broad united front against the US-Marcos regime, for having committed innumerable crimes against the Filipino people.

The broad united front condemns Marcos for colluding with Duterte to steal the 2022 election, for shielding him from accountability for crimes committed in the course of the war on drugs and the terrorist war of suppression, as well as for extensive corruption including the anomalies during the pandemic.

The people's united front against the US-Marcos regime's chacha continues to broaden. At the same time, there is rising clamor by the masses of the people for wage and salary increases, regular and decent jobs, genuine land reform, lower prices of food, fuel and other commodities, and other urgent needs. They are also firmly advancing their resistance to fascist repression of democratic rights, and US military intervention in the country. Throughout the country, the Filipino masses are steadily rising.

The Party and all revolutionary forces will continue to strive to rouse the vast masses of workers and peasants, the pettybourgeois intellectuals and professionals, and all other progressive and patriotic forces, to take action and fight. Amid conditions of crisis, the revolutionary mass movement in the cities and countryside is bound to intensify and fight with ardor, together with the revolutionary armed struggle being waged by the New People's Army.



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Party anniversary celebrated in Rizal, Metro Manila and Central Panay

Party units in Rizal, Metro Manila and Central Panay recently reported their activities celebrating the 55th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

In Central Panay, the New People's Army (NPA) and revolutionary masses held a week-long series of activities on the last week of December 2023. The unit had a simple get-together, to conduct studies, collective discussions on the Central Committee's anniversary statement, and cultural presentations and tributes to martyrs. These inspired the participants to raise their spirit to face the upcoming challenges of 2024 with full courage.

In a city in Metro Manila, Party leaders offered revolutionary songs and tributes during a clandestine celebration. They honored Jude Fernandez, valiant labor leader. They self-critically discussed the Party's message, and highlighted the identified weaknesses, especially the prevalence of empiricism and bureaucratism. As part of the pledge to rectify and take on revolutionary responsibilities, the secretaries and various branches in the city renewed their Party oath.

In Rizal, representatives of the National Democratic Front-Rizal gathered on January 12. Representatives of revolutionary organizations delivered messages of solidarity and cultural performances in celebration of the Party's anniversary. Each expressed acceptance of the challenge to continue rectifying and re-strengthening to continue the revolution.

Party members collectively renewed their vow to reaffirm their revolutionary duties and principles for the advancement of the people's democratic revolution. This is a pledge to hold fast to Party principles even if this means sacrificing one's life in order to reinvigorate and bring the national-democratic struggle to a higher level.

NPA-Rizal ambushes troopers protecting Wawa-Violago Dam

A UNIT OF the New People's Army (NPA)-Rizal ambushed troopers of the 80th IB operating in Lukutang Malaki, Barangay San Isidro, Rodriguez, Rizal on January 31, at 5:10 in the morning. One soldier was killed, while two others were wounded. The said unit secures the destructive Wawa-Violago Dam project in Rizal.

According to the report, the 80th IB's intense and relentless focused military operations in Rodriguez have been going on for nearly a year. Apart from serving as guards of the dam being built, the unit also protects the interests of the ruling big land grabbers like the Aranetas, Villars and Robles, in Lukutang Malaki.

The AFP unit is involved in multiple human rights violations including the illegal detention of indigenous people and peasants defending their right to livelihood. Since January 31, the 80th IB intensified and tightened surveillance on the residents' entry and exit in the community. Soldiers set up checkpoints and went door-to-door intimidating residents and subjecting them to illegal interrogations.



Unions fight SkyCable layoffs. The unions of SkyCable supervisors and employees oppose the layoff of 80 workers of SkyCable Corporation set for February 26 after finalizing the sale of the company to PLDT. Workers will be laid off due to "redundancy."

CBA negotiations in Nexperia. Nexperia Phils Inc. Workers Union (NPIWU) and the management of Nexperia Philippines started new negotiations to forge a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for 2024 to 2026. The union will demand fair wage increases, benefits and other economic rights of workers. They last negotiated in 2020.

BACIWA employees stage 5-day picket. Employees fired from the Bacolod City Water District (BACIWA) went to Manila to picket and protest at the national office of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in Quezon City from January 29 to February 2. They demanded scrapping the joint venture agreement (JVA) between Prime Water of the Villars and BACIWA which took away their jobs and subordinated BACIWA's service to the control of a private corporation.

Bataan workers demand separation pay. Workers of Chun Chiang Enterprises Manufacturing Incorporated reiterated their demand for a separation pay. The payment has been severely delayed since the company shut down due to alleged losses in 2022 at the height of the pandemic. The company produces men's trousers.

Laguna workers mount caravan. Workers from Laguna staged picket protests before four government labor agencies in the province on February 5. They called for wage increases, employment security, and the right to unionize. They said this is part of preparations for planned broad mass actions on Labor Day in May 1.

Price and fee increases, strike successive blows at start of 2024

The Filipino people suffered successive blows from relentless increases in oil and LPG prices, as well as water and electricity bills at the outset 2024. While bringing further suffering to the masses, these further enriched private companies long satiated by profits made from running public services and utilities as businesses enterprises

For five consecutive weeks, oil companies raised the prices of diesel and gasoline five times as well. On January 30, they also raised the price of LPG by up to ₱0.95 per kilo or up to ₱10.45 per tank.

Petron, Shell Pilipinas, Caltex Philippines, Total Philippines, Filpride Resources Inc/Mobility Group, Petro Gazz, Seaoil, City Oil, Jetti Petroleum Inc, Unioil, PTT Philippines Corporation, Flying V, Eastern Petroleum and Clean Fuel acted like a cartel in simultaneously and uniformly raising oil prices. This is contrary to claims when the deregulation law was enacted (1997) that "competition" between more "players" will lower the price of fuel.

According to data from the Department of Energy, the net increase of gasoline and diesel prices have reached ₱5.15/liter and ₱4.40 liter on January 30. This adds to the net increase of ₱12.60/liter in the price of gasoline and ₱5.65 in diesel in 2023. Meanwhile, kerosene prices rose by by ₱1.24/ liter in 2023.

Oil prices will continue to rise in February, supposedly due to the conflict in the Red Sea and the bombing of oil refineries in Russia, both of which are used to justify increases in global crude prices.

Meanwhile, last 2023, the Marcos regime allowed Meralco to raise electricity rates by ₱0.0846 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) starting January. With a minimum consumption of 200 kwh, a household's bill will increase by ₱17 per month.

The regime also allowed increases in charges of two private water companies in Metro Manila. Manila Water was authorized to raise its rates by ₱6.41 per cubic meter to ₱42.26 from ₱35.85 in 2023. Meanwhile, Maynilad Water Services Inc increased its charge by ₱7.87 per cubic meter from ₱39.70 in 2023 to ₱47.57.

Overgorged foreign capitalists and local bourgeoisie

Along with price increases, the income of private companies and the personal wealth of the biggest compradores who own them also rose.

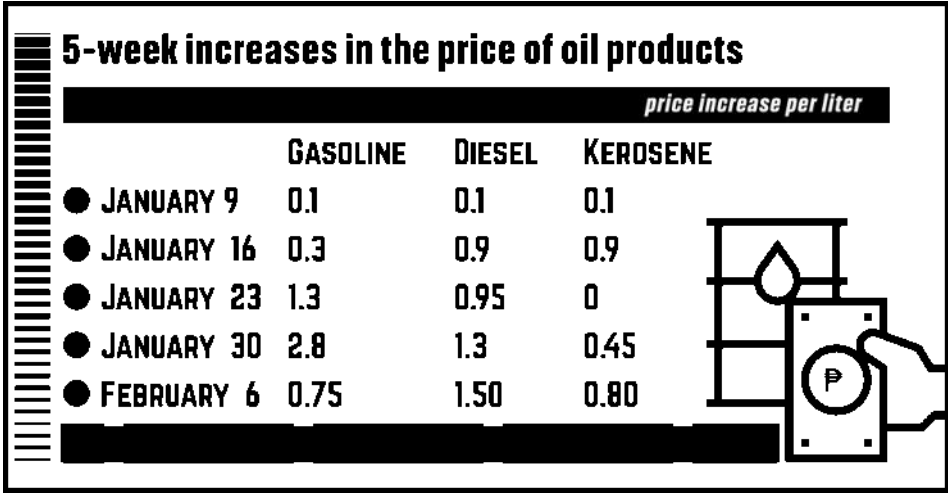
Petron, the country's largest oil company, is estimated to have amassed ₱12 billion in profits for the whole of 2023. This is double the company's net income of ₱6.7 billion in 2022. Petron is owned by Ramon Ang, who also owns San Miguel Corporation, Eagle Cement and other large companies.

Meanwhile, Shell Pilipinas, a subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell of The Netherlands, made a profit of ₱2.1 billion in the first nine months of 2023.

Meralco and Maynilad are both owned by Metro Pacific Investments Corporation (MPIC), which is run by Manuel Pangilinan. Meralco's revenues is estimated to have reached a staggering ₱37 billion in 2023, 36.34% higher than its ₱27.1 billion revenue in 2022. Not to be outdone, Maynilad recorded a 46% increase in revenues or ₱6.8 billion in the first nine months of 2023. The MPIC is under the First Pacific Company Limited based in Hong Kong and owned by the Salim family of Indonesia.

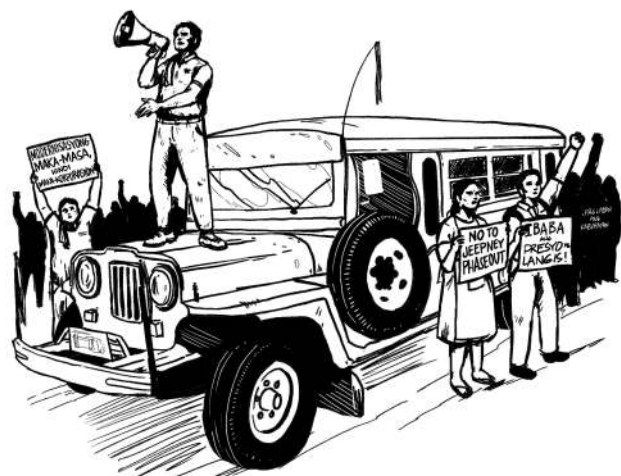
Meanwhile, Manila Water is owned by Enrique Razon Jr, which earned ₱7.26 billion in revenue in the first nine months of last year. This is 61% higher than its earnings in the same period in 2022.

Ang, Pangilinan and Razon are among the biggest comprador bourgeoisie with billions of pesos in wealth. In the Forbes list, Razon's wealth grew by \$0.9 billion in 2023 from \$7.2 billion in 2022 to \$8.1 billion. The wealth of Ang, the third richest Filipino following Razon, also increased by 40%! From \$3.4 billion in 2022, Ang's wealth reached \$8.1 billion in 2023. Meanwhile, MPIC chief officer Pangilinan's net worth is estimated at \$105 million.



PUV forced consolidation deadline pushed back anew

The collective action of drivers and operators, led by the Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston), Samahang Manibela Mananakay and Nagka-Isang ng Transportasyon Association (Manibela), and Tanggol Pasada Network, pushed the US-Marcos regime to once again extend the deadline of the forced consolidation of the franchise of public utility vehicles (PUV) at the end of January. Forced consolidation is part of the government's bogus PUV Modernization Program (PUVMP). The regime moved the deadline to April 30 from the previous December 31, 2023 which was earlier extended to January 31.



The deadline extension was announced after the second hearing of the congressional transportation committee on January 24, which discussed the uselessness and utter failure of the PUVMP. Until now, a large number of jeepney drivers and operators refuse to consolidate, contrary to the regime's statement. Many more routes do not yet have consolidated franchises.

The groups consider the deadline suspension as victory of their collective action. Nevertheless, they continue to demand the scrapping of the entire scheme of forced consolidation and PUVMP. They said they will use this as platform for launching bigger actions against the program.

The third hearing on January 31 meanwhile discussed the issue of forced consolidation which ac-

cording to some lawmakers could be considered unconstitutional and a violation of the rights of drivers and operators. The two groups also protested before the Supreme Court in Manila on January 23 to call for its support in relation to their petition to stop the forced consolidation of the franchise and the PUVMP. They timed the protest while the court was holding an en banc session. AB

Signature campaign for chacha suspended amid anomalies

The Commission on Elections suspended indefinitely last January 29 the process of receiving signatures from the People's Initiative for Reform Modernization and Action (Pirma) to amend the 1987 constitution (chacha or charter change). This contradicts the commission's earlier statement that it only "receives" signatures. It now claims it needs to reexamine the rules governing such an initiative.

Nevertheless, it already received seven million signatures which were very hastily gathered from 209 districts. According to the rules of the people's initiative, only 11.4 million signatures or 12% of the 91.9 million registered voters are needed to propel such a scheme.

Signature collection was halted amid widespread opposition by various sectors. At the onset, the use of public funds for signature gathering was exposed. It was widely exposed that signatures were gathered in exchange for ₱100 or worse, aid from various state agencies.

A Senate hearing on January 30

exposed the collusion of Pirma, the group that paid advertisements promoting chacha, and House Speaker Martin Romualdez and other congressmen, to gather signatures. Ferdinand Marcos Jr inadvertently admitted his direct hand in the signature scheme by stating he wants "other options" to advance chacha.

Despite the suspension, the "bawi-pirma" (withdraw-signature) campaign started by Bayan Muna on January 28 will proceed. Many signatories expressed their desire to withdraw their signatures upon learning it was for charter change. They said, if not supposedly for aid, another reason was cited to entice

them to sign.

Today, democratic groups continue to expand opposition to chacha. This is amid the Marcos regime's attempt to pass the Resolution of Both Houses No. 6 focused on changing the provisions regarding the economy. The groups strongly oppose it as it would allow foreigners full ownership of Filipino businesses, resources and land.

On January 21, national democratic groups protested before Congress to condemn chacha. This was timed on the first day of Congress' session. They also protested before the Senate on February 5, in time with its first hearing on RBH6.

In Davao City, progressive groups denounced the launch of the Duterte family's "grand rally" that masqueraded as anti-chacha. They said Rodrigo Duterte of all people "has no credibility" since he also contrived a similar scheme while he was president. AB

Two UN experts recommend dismantling of NTF-Elcac

Two United Nation (UN) experts now recommend the dissolution of the National Task Force-Elcac for the harm it has caused to the rights of the Filipino people. On January 2, Irene Khan, UN Special Rapporteur on free expression, recommended it after her 10-day investigation in the Philippines.

Before her, Ian Fry, UN Special Rapporteur, also recommended the dismantling of the agency on November 2023 to uphold and defend human rights in the context of climate change. Like Khan, Fry met with various democratic sectors in the country.

For Khan's part, she focused on practices that affect free expression such as Red-tagging, harassment and intimidation using laws. In her statement, she called for the dissolution of the NTF-Elcac, which she said is "outdated" and "the promoter" of Red-tagging. Khan

also recommended "un-blocking" or removing restrictions against progressive websites imposed by the reactionary state.

These recommendations come from Khan's dialogue with various media groups and other democratic sectors, and even with state officials and armed forces. She also visited the imprisoned journalist Frenchie May Cumpio of the independent media Eastern Vista and two others jailed in Tacloban.



Besides Manila, Khan went to the cities of Baguio, Cebu, Tacloban and Davao. Democratic organizations welcomed her there. They launched pickets and discussions regarding Khan's arrival in the Philippines.

AB



Bacolod City farmers demand land reform. The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP)-Negros and National Federation of Sugar Workers Negros (NFSW) led a two-day farmers' activity in Bacolod City on January 23-24 to demand for their right to land.

On January 23, they held a picket-dialog before the Provincial Agrarian Reform Office 1 in the city regarding the 37 haciendas in Negros Island. They marched the next day to the city center to commemorate the 37th anniversary of the Mendiola Massacre and denounce the charter change pushed by the Marcos regime.

125 years of the Filipino-American war, commemorated. At a protest in front of the US embassy, national-democratic groups marked the 125th anniversary of the start of the Philippine-American war that killed hundreds of thousands of Filipinos. The groups stressed the continued US occupation of the country, in the form of its permanent military presence in the Philippines. It also condemned the US for its imperialist wars, and its financing of Israeli genocide in Palestine.

First-day Rage in UP, held. Students of the University of the Philippines (UP) welcomed the first day of class with protests in their various campuses in the country. Their protests highlighted issues related to academic freedom,

suppression of youth, resistance to charter change and other social issues. Students launched the action in UP-Cebu on January 23; in UP-Manila, UP-Visayas and UP-Tacloban on January 29; in UP-Los Banos February 5; and in UP-Diliman February 6.

Tuition hike in DLSU opposed. More than 100 students of De La Salle University (DLSU)-Manila protested inside its campus in Taft Avenue, Malate, Manila on January 31 to express their opposition to the looming tuition increase next school year. Students also marched in the DLSU-Laguna campus that day. Both actions were led by their respective student councils. They are calling for a "tuition freeze" amid the threat of 9.21% tuition fee increase.

Roll back oil prices. Jeepney drivers and operators launched a protest in front of the Shell Gasoline Station in Caretta, Cebu City on January 30 to condemn the new increase in oil prices. Oil prices have increased one after the other in the past weeks.

The Philippines is ours, China out! Fisherfolk and progressive groups protested before the Chinese Consulate in Makati City on February 6 to denounce China's continuing encroachment in the West Philippine Sea. The Pam-bansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) spearheaded the action.

Mining and deforestation cause flooding and landslides in Davao

For almost a month now, the Davao and Caraga regions have been suffering from flooding and landslides caused by rains brought by strong winds followed by storm conditions. As of February 2, 772,000 individuals were recorded affected and 409,000 were displaced from their communities. In the last report, 17 people died, including a family buried in a landslide in Barangay Mt. Diwata, Monkayo on January 18.

Millions worth of crops were damaged and many roads and bridges were destroyed. According to data from the National Risk Reduction and Management Council on February 4, damages to crops in Davao and Caraga have reached ₱173.79 million. Most affected were farmers in Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte. Widest hit were rice fields.

Damage to infrastructure meanwhile reached ₱27.05 million in Region IX. Floods and landslides destroyed bridges and farm-to-market roads that are often weak or poorly constructed along parts cut off from mountainsides.

Mindanao-based democratic and environmental groups blame the damage and tragedy on ongoing destructive mining operations, mostly foreign-owned, and deforestation on the island. In 2019, the Mines and Geoscience Bureau issued more than 100 permits for mining in the Davao region alone. It covers more than 32,000 hectares of mountains in Davao Oriental; over 15,000 hectares in Davao del Sur and quarry operations in Davao City.

In addition are state-sanctioned operations to plunder the Pantaron mountains, the largest mountain range in Mindanao.

Among those named by the groups are three mining companies in the protected Mt. Hamigitan in Davao Oriental (Sinophil Mining &



Trading Corporation, Hallmark Mining Corporation, Austral-Asia Link Mining Corporation); the St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd focused on the King-king Copper Gold Project in Pantukan and the adjacent towns of Compostela Valley/Davao de Oro; and three other mining companies in Talaingod, Davao del Norte (One Compostela Valley Minerals, Inc, Phil. Meng Di Mining & Development Corporation, Metalores Consolidated, Inc.)

Among those named, the one with the largest coverage is Metalores Consolidated Inc, having been granted a permit to plunder over 15,000 hectares of forests and mountains in Talaingod. Not as expansive, but as destructive is the open-pit mining of the King-king Project of St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd, owned by the Villar dynasty, one of the country's largest bureaucrat-capitalist families.

Lumad groups and farmers have long been resisting firmly these mining operations and its accompanying deforestation because of the serious damage these cause to their communities, the environment and the people of Mindanao.

Where are the funds?

Davao City itself is not safe from calamity, where 15 relatively low-ly-

ing barangays were submerged in the flood. Water overflowed from six tributary rivers of the Davao-Bukidnon River that flow from Pantaron in the San Fernando, Bukidnon area.

As of January 31, it was reported that 8,000 people were forced to evacuate due to neck-deep floods in some areas.

Because of this, questions arose concerning the use of funds poured by the Department of Public Works and Highways in the past three years to the office of Paolo Duterte, congressman of the city's first district. It was recently exposed that allocations worth ₱51 billion for Duterte's eldest son were inserted into the budgets from 2020 to 2022. Budget insertions are exempt from public scrutiny. The allocations are also far bigger than the usual allocation to a congressman, or even a senator.

Davao City is lorded over by the Duterte dynasty. In addition to Paolo, who is representative of its largest and central district, his youngest brother Sebastian is the mayor of the city, while his wife January Navares is the captain of Barangay Catalunan-Grande and his son Omar is the captain of Barangay Buhangin (where flooding was severe).

AB

RCSP unit of the 77th IB plagues the people of Cagayan

"For us, my child, you are far different from the army (AFP). Its different when you're here because the wrongdoings (of soldiers) stop," said Tatang Rebo, a farmer, while serving coffee to the Red fighters at his hut. Comrades has just arrived and were eagerly greeted by the people. Like in many places, the peasants consider them "children of the people."

"Soldiers have no discipline. They are even instigators of misdeeds," complained Tatang. He narrated his bad experience with the 77th IB troopers behind the Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP) in their village in Baggao, Cagayan. "Imagine, soon after arriving here at my home, they were looking for chicken to eat!"

A brawl between drunken "soldiers" a week after the elections remains talk of the village. "They were craving for alcohol just a few hours into the liquor ban. Even before they could put down their packs, they had gin bought and asked for pulutan (snacks to go with drinks)!" narrated Tatang.

"They could have at least helped pick corn as consolation for us serving them drinks. But nothing! Instead, they only get drunk and cause trouble in the village," said ading (big brother) Makar, who joined in welcoming the comrades. The soldiers slaughtered not only the chickens and ducks of village residents, but even some

pet dogs.

"Their behavior, my child, frighten us. They are drunk even at midday. What if they do worse than a brawl? What if they shoot each other? What can we do, especially with so many children around?" said Nanang Clarita. Residents can't overcome their fear especially since the 77th IB has a long record of killings due to drunkenness. Just like in 2021 when two drunken soldiers shot each other within the battalion headquarters itself in Piggatan, Alcala.

Besides being drunks, the 77th IB is notorious for gambling. They vex residents with their noise when they gamble. They brazenly steal farmers' food. They destroy property and small farm huts of farmers. Without care, they destroy cornfields, rice paddies and other farms in their operations.

They are also notorious with women. The town's school teachers had the experience of soldiers forcibly entering their dormitories in the middle of the night. Their

"courting" of young girls or minors is also widespread. They use girls as "text mates" and force them to regularly report NPA movements in the area.

The 77th IB troopers have been camping in the barangay hall, and sometimes in the school, for over a year under the veil of RCSP. They pay lip service to "increasing access to and delivering government programs" to rural and remote areas. But time passed and they contributed not an iota to the community.

In fact, residents got tired of being summoned by the military to "mini-meetings". There were times when soldiers gather them for a supposed distribution of "relief goods" but residents were surprised that they were attending a "peace rally". Without their consent, they were made to hold up placards, shout and burn flags while being photographed. "I just saw on Facebook, son, that I am now a surrenderee!" Tatang relates his experience.

"That's why its good to give them a lesson, comrade!" Makar angrily stated. "I myself will guide you to where they can be hit. They position themselves high up. They use Facebook there as that's only place where there's signal. We can

commando them there as no civilians will be hit. It's also far from the houses. They are surely targets."

Even Tatang and Nanang agreed with the suggestion.

From Baringkuas, Cagayan Valley's revolutionary mass newspaper.



14.5

million hectares
of public land

will be opened to foreign ownership if the 1987 Constitution is finally amended to give foreigners full freedom to plunder the country's natural resources.

Source: Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas

₱24 million

minimum squandered by the Marcos regime for the January 28 "New Pilipinas kick-off rally" in Luneta.

5.6%

"growth" of GDP recorded for the year 2023

lower than in the previous two years, and shows the economic pattern sliding again after its short-term recovery over the pandemic.

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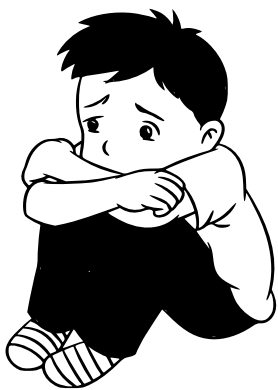
migrant workers, including Filipinos, in ASEAN countries are "low skilled" and are not protected by the much vaunted migration laws that focus on professionals and highly skilled workers.

16%



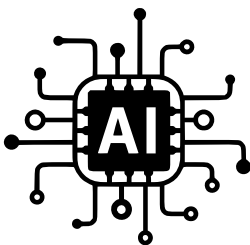
or \$238 billion in unprecedented superprofits amassed by American arms companies in 2023,

fueled by US-instigated imperialist wars and aggression in Europe (Ukraine), the Middle East (Palestine) and Asia (China).



19,000

completely orphaned children in Gaza as a result of the genocide of Zionist Israel that killed more than 27,000 Palestinians.



260,000

technology workers laid off in 2023, after American companies switched to using artificial intelligence (AI).

These companies include Amazon, Microsoft, Meta/Facebook and Alphabet/Google, companies that made billions that same year.

VLADIMIR
LENIN



100TH
DEATH ANNIVERSARY

on January 21 of the great communist Lenin, who led the revolution in Russia and established the first socialist state in 1917.

He died at the age of 53 after suffering a stroke.

AFP “archipelagic defense” framed in US imperialist warfare

The waters of Mindoro in the West Philippine Sea became a virtual war zone on January 4-5 when the US launched a 2-day "maritime cooperative activity" in Cabra Island here, together with its puppet Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). While the activity was underway, two Chinese warships were on alert not far from the area. The activity opens 2024, the first of more than 500 wargames and other military operations which the US plan to launch in the Philippines, in partnership with its puppet Marcos Jr regime. This includes the massive Balikatan slated to be held at Mavulis Island in Batanes, just 140 kilometers off Taiwan's southern coast.

Also in January, the AFP and the regime spoke of the "strategic shift" of the Philippines' security plan from internal defense to external defense. The plan proposed by Gilbert Teodoro, secretary of the Department of National Defense, was called the "Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept", which will allegedly "guarantee Filipino corporations, and foreigners permitted by the Philippines, to peacefully carry out exploration and exploitation in all natural resources within the exclusive economic zone (of the Philippines) and other areas within (its) jurisdiction."

In fact, the “archipelagic defense” concept is neither new nor original. It was directly taken from the US military's operational concept "Archipelagic Defense Strategy" which aims to "prevent Chinese aggression" in the Western Pacific Theater of Operations emphasizing on what it calls the

"First Island Chain." This "chain" of islands includes the Philippines. This places the country at the forefront of the imperialist war and a major target of China's attack. (Refer to map).

The Archipelagic Defense Strategy operationalizes the anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) tactic with the goal of "neutralizing" the capabilities of the "enemy" (China), and "suppress" or "eliminate" its ability to launch "aggression" in the region. For this, the US is laying out a network of open and secret bases and facilities to host a system of radars and missiles and troops, and will serve as storage of weapons (including nuclear), various equipment, fuel and numerous other needs for launching warfare.

Filipino money

Part of the Archipelagic Defense strategy is for the US to require its "partners" in Asia, including Japan,

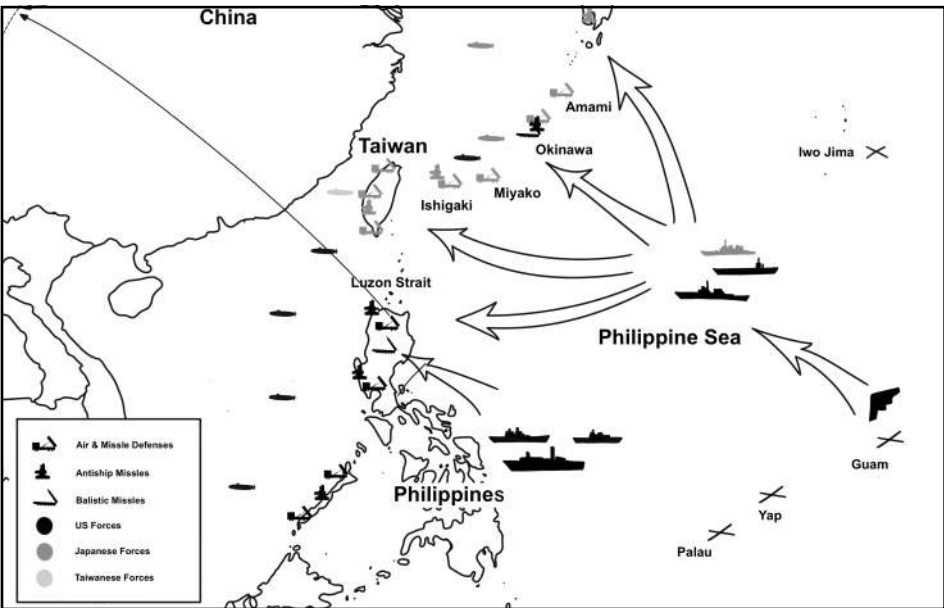
Korea and the Philippines to finance the cost of provoking war. Teodoro even boasted that the reactionary state's ₱2 trillion budget will finance the purchase of weapons, vehicles and other military equipment—all made by the US and its allies—to shape the "archipelagic defense" of Philippines.

Among those lined up to be purchased by the Philippines are the old but still very expensive US F-16 jet fighters, large ships to participate in "joint patrols" in the South China Sea and many other "big tickets" or large weapons which AFP generals have long been drooling over. These are included in the "Rehorizoned Capability Enhancement and Modernization Program" or ReHorizoned 3 of the AFP.

The pouring of funds not only serves the purpose of the US against China, but also to satiate the AFP which is now plagued by infighting and factionalism. In cooperation with the US, the Marcos regime uses the fund to secure the loyalty of generals. For this, Marcos assured that the state will allocate the fund for the next 10 years.

In December 2023, Marcos approved an increase in the AFP budget to \$285 billion by 2024. Some analysts believe up to ₱110 billion to ₱115 billion will be allocated for the purchase of new weapons and servicing of old equipment overused or damaged by the AFP. This is four times larger than the annual ₱25 to ₱30 billion previously allocated by the Duterte regime for the program.

While the AFP and the Marcos regime play along in war provocations against China, it has yet to withdraw counterinsurgency troops which carry out a fascist rampage in the countryside.



Military summarily kills senior citizen couple in Masbate

The 2nd IB personnel mercilessly murdered senior citizen spouses Pedro Regala, 78 years old, and Florencia Regala, 67 years old in Barangay Toboran, Cawayan, Masbate on February 5, 2024. The victims were picked up from their home, taken to a remote part of the creek, shot mercilessly, before their bodies were dressed with ammo pouches and falsely claimed to have been killed in an encounter.

The dead bodies of the elderly were dumped on muddy ground and displayed on social media as "terrorists" to cover up their heinous crimes. The 2nd IB unit and a paramilitary group led by Adriel Besana were involved in the murder. Barangay Tuboran is infested by Alsa Masa paramilitary used by the military to sow terrorism in Masbate. It was reported that the killers of the couple were high on drugs.

Arrest. Thirteen civilians were arrested by state forces in various cases in Cebu, Negros, Quezon and Masbate in the past two weeks.

State forces arrested farmer-leader Allan Flores on January 21 at his farm in Sibagay 2, Barangay Cantabaco, Minglanilla, Cebu. He was charged with murder and attempted murder in Bohol. He is detained in Toledo City.

On the same day, three peas-

ant-members of the Kauswagan sang mga Mangunguma sa Buenavista (KMB) were arrested by the 94th IB in Sityo Cantupa-Pisok, Barangay Buenavista, Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental. The farmers were identified as Deloy de Leon, Vincies de Leon and Remy Villacanao. On January 22, the military surfaced Vincies de Leon and charged him with attempted murder. The other two have not yet been surfaced.

In Mulanay, Quezon, the police arbitrarily arrested film director and professor Jade Castro and his three friends on February 2. They were implicated in the burning of an e-jeep in Cata-nauan on January



31. Castro was making a progressive film and has joined the fight against the jeepney phaseout.

In January, state forces arrested five Masbate civilians accused of being Red fighters who clashed with the 2nd IB in Barangay Balantay, Dimasalang on June 16, 2023. The five are Jamara Tuman-gan, Rowel Hagnaya, Alden Tuman-gan, Rico Cuyos and Senen Dollete. In fact, the five were victims of soldiers' shooting, which killed a minor.

Militarization. On January 30, the 96th IB opened fire on residents who dared to extract copra from the coconut plantation seized by the military in Sityo Malapinggan bordering Barangay San Jose, Uson and Barangay Sawmill, Mobo town, Masbate. On January 29, cases of theft and forced entry into houses and illegal searches by CAFGU troops and the military were recorded in Hacienda Mortuegue in the towns of Pio V. Corpuz and Esperanza. **AB**

US extends and expands war in the Middle East

Contrary to its lip service of "avoiding" large-scale armed conflict in the Middle East, the US is expanding its imperialist war in the region. Since January 12, it has bombed Houthi forces in North Yemen almost every day, together with the United Kingdom.

The US says it is retaliating against Houthi attacks on Israeli and American ships passing near its territory in the Red Sea. The action of the Houthis is in support of the Palestinian people's struggle against the genocide of Zionist Israel in Gaza. The Houthis are waging their own armed struggle against the reactionary Yemeni state supported by both Saudi Arabia and the US.

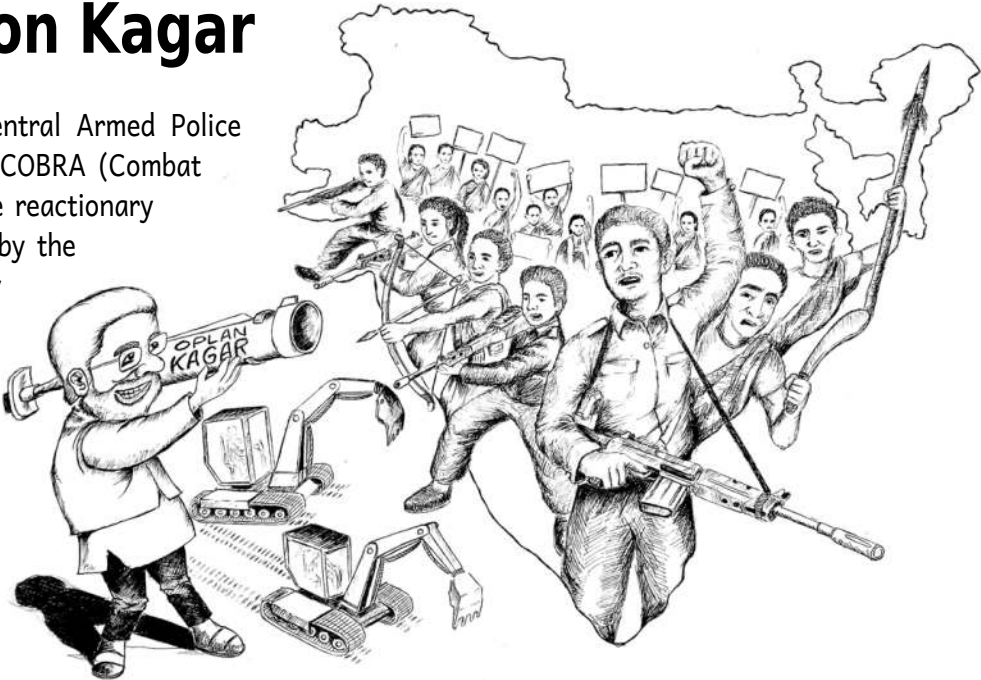
On February 2, the US dropped bombs on 85 locations in Iraq and

Syria, in response to the attack on Tower 22, a secret military base in Jordan near the border with Syria, at the end of January. Three American soldiers were killed and 34 wounded in the attack. As in Yemen, attacks on US military facilities were carried out in support of the Palestinian armed resistance in Gaza. More than 27,000 people have been killed in Gaza, 11,500 of whom were children, and 66,630 injured, in the bombings of Zionist Israel since October 7, 2023.

The US bombings, along with its relentless threats to the people of the Middle East, are proof of the Biden regime's addiction to war to defend and consolidate its hegemony in different parts of the world. Along with facilitating conflicts in the Middle East, it extends Israel's genocidal campaign in Palestine by opposing calls for a ceasefire and continuously pouring aid and arms to the Zionist regime. In addition, the US is prolonging its 2-year proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, to the detriment of the Ukrainian people. These wars serve American arms manufacturers to amass millions in superprofits. **AB**

Central India revolutionaries thwart Operation Kagar

At least 35 elements of the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) and special unit COBRA (Combat Battalion for Resolute Action) of the reactionary state of India were killed in a raid by the People's Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA) on the Darmavaram camp on January 16. Darmavaram is a community in Pamed, Bijapur in the Chhattisgarh region. Apart from this, 40 other policemen were seriously injured in the attack. The PLGA launched the raid to strike the fascist Operation Kagar in Central India.



Reports say the raid started at 7:05 pm. The PLGA used more than 600 grenades and other improvised explosive devices in the three-hour raid. Before the actual attack on the camp, Red guerrillas had already taken control of the surrounding areas. They barricaded key roads with large logs and mobilized the militia to blow up responding police units. Three fighters were martyred during the raid.

Subsequently, on February 1, the PLGA attacked the construction of a bridge at Abujhmaad, in Narayanpur district, Chhattisgarh. The guerrillas paralyzed a tractor, a tanker and a concrete mixer. The bridge's construction, like other "development projects" in Abujhmaad, allows the entry of large corporations to plunder the area's natural resources.

The Communist Party of India (CPI)-Maoist says this offensive is part of their defense of the Adivasi (indigenous) people. It says this renders justice for police repression of the revolutionary people.

Terrorism of Operation Kagar

Operation Kagar began implementation in January in Abujhmaad, a mountainous and forested region in the south of Chhattisgarh

state. This is part of the expanded implementation of the counterinsurgency campaign Operation SAMADHAN-Prahar (OSP) by the reactionary Indian state led by Narendra Modi.

The 10,000 paramilitary forces stationed in the area are mobilized under the operation. Three thousand of these are from other Indian states who have been poured into Abujhmaad to focus on eradicating the armed resistance led by the CPI-Maoist. State forces are stationed in six paramilitary camps in the area. In effect, there are three paramilitary troops for every seven local residents.

One of the heinous crimes committed by the police here was the killing of a 6-month-old baby on January 1 in Bijapur. In addition, on January 19, three Adivasis were abducted and extrajudicially killed in Nendra, Bijapur. The victims, Madkam Soni, Punem Nangi, and Karam Kosa were on their way to a protest action when they were abducted by police in the mountainous part of their community. Meanwhile on January 30, police shot and killed Ramesh Poyam, a resident of Bodga, Bastar, while going to the river to bathe.

To cover up their crimes, the

state forces made it appear that the victims were killed in an encounter with the PLGA or were casualties in the clash between it and the PLGA. The CPI (Maoist) belies all this.

Human rights groups in India also recorded several cases of aerial bombings using drones south of Chhattisgarh on January 13. These communities have been victims of repeated bombings since 2022. These bring Adivasis extreme fear which prevent them from properly earning a living.

Militarization in Central India accompanies corporatization and the entry of large companies into India's rich forests. Under the guise of fighting the Maoists, these operations serve to intensify the plunder of the country's natural resources by large foreign corporations.

The reactionary state and its corporate accomplices and imperialist countries drool over Abujhmaad as it is considered to be one of the last places in India that has not been plundered and the forest remains protected.

The PLGA and CPI (Maoist) are the only partners of the Adivasis in Abujhmaad in their life and death struggle for the environment, their land and livelihood.

AB