



EDITORIAL:

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EDITORIAL:

Marcos Jr., Duterte, Biden are guilty of war crimes vs the Filipino people!

The recent guilty verdict of the International People's Tribunal against the United States government, Marcos Jr. and Duterte affirms the genuine sentiment of the fighting Filipino masses. The verdict underscores the systematic breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL) that continue unabated under the so-called 'counterinsurgency' operations in the Philippines.

Marcos Jr's administration, much like Duterte's, has perpetuated a culture of impunity, employing brutal tactics that target not just armed combatants of the New People's Army (NPA) but also civilians, activists as well as unarmed consultants and peace negotiators of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). This systematic violence is a clear violation of IHL, which mandates the protection of civilians in times of war and prohibits indiscriminate violence against communities.


The tribunal's findings also highlight a disturbing and worsening pattern of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, and enforced disappearances, which have become the hallmark of the current Marcos Jr. administration. State-sponsored terrorism in the Philippines has morphed into a broader war on dissent, leading to thousands of deaths and widespread human rights abuses.

The role of the U.S. Government is inherent in these violations. Marcos Jr. has in fact inherited and, in many ways, expanded this legacy from Duterte with tacit support from the Biden government to deploy military and police forces in aggressive operations and bombing campaigns that often result in civilian casualties.

A critical aspect of this ongoing repression of the Filipino people's resistance is the recently concluded Balikatan war games which served as a tool for the U.S. to project its military might in the Asia Pacific region, particularly in the context of rising tensions with China. Using the framework of 'counterinsurgency', these war games have facilitated and reinforced numerous atrocities and human rights violations. Through the Balikatan exercises, the U.S. has provided the Armed Forces of the Philippines with advanced military training and equipment, which are subsequently used in operations that violate IHL.

As if the Balikatan war games weren't enough, the US-Marcos Jr. regime is planning anew an aerial war games between the Philippine Air Force (PAF) and the US Air Force which is scheduled to happen from June 17 to 28 in Pampanga and Pasay City.

The US's involvement in the Philippines extends beyond military cooperation. It includes substantial financial aid and political support, which have enabled the successive US puppet regimes to sustain its oppressive policies against the Filipino people. This support, despite being framed as assistance for 'counterterrorism' efforts and national security, has facilitated the ongoing IHL violations. The International People's Tribunal's verdict is a critical condemnation of this complicity.

The tribunal's verdict is a step towards justice, but it is only the beginning. Ending the cycle of violence in the Philippines requires dismantling the political, economic and social structures that enable these abuses. 

Marcos Jr. warns China against 'acts of war'

If any Filipino died as a result of China's willful actions, Marcos Jr. said on May 31, the Philippines would consider it as close to "an act of war" and respond accordingly.

Marcos Jr. was speaking at a security forum in Singapore attended by defence chiefs from around the world. His speech focused on the "rules based order" and ASEAN centrality", which means non-alignment to global powers in order to "maintain peace" in the region conducive to development. Marcos Jr's bold statement is very dangerous. This posture depends mainly on the Philippines and U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty whose Terms are filled with strategic ambiguity. Moreover, recent events smacks of stoking confrontation against China. The recently concluded Balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder) military exercises 2024 was the most expansive joint military exercises involving 16,000 members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and U.S. military. For the first time, the U.S. deployed its most advanced Typhon weapons system capable of launching intermediate-range missiles like Tomahawk and SM6 missiles, which can hit targets in China.

The drills included contingents from Australia and the French Navy. A multilateral maritime exercise including the Philippine Navy, U.S. Navy and French Navy in the Philippine exclusive economic zone (EEZ) was conducted. The exercises took place in Luzon and Palawan facing Taiwan and the South China Sea.


In a related development, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) through its information officer Marco Balbuena declared that: "(Filipinos) should stand in promoting



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amicable relations and peaceful co-existence with China, condemn the Marcos government in adopting war as instrument of national policy and its failure to advance a peaceful resolution to conflicts with China.”

The CPP calls on the Filipino people to intensify struggles against U.S. domination of the Philippines, military intervention and warmongering.

The Party calls on all sectors to support the armed struggle of the New People’s Army against the fascist tentacles of U.S. imperialism, used by the U.S. in its warmongering. The advance of armed struggle against the U.S. puppet troops is an important contribution in the struggle of preventing the conflagration of an inter-imperialist war. The CPP also declared that, “China should likewise make a clear-cut declaration that it has no intention of using armed force against the Philippines.” 

Int’l institutions protest against harassment of Philippine NGOs

The Marcos regime has continued the practice of his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte of harassing non-governmental organizations (NGO) engaged in disaster response and defense of human rights. The regime’s minions have been red-tagging the workers of these NGO’s, accusing them of links to the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army, illegally arresting them and freezing their bank accounts. These suppressive actions come into the attention of foreign institutions which have been supporting the work of these NGO’s in bringing relief and assistance to the poor sections of the Filipino population.

Since three years ago, the military has been red-tagging and threatening the Leyte Center for Development (LCDe). Recently, the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) ordered the banks to freeze the accounts of its director Jazmin Aguisanda Jerusalem, her relatives, workers of the LCDe and even businesses which sold relief goods.

The German Embassy in Manila has been supporting poor Samar farmers through small-scale development projects including a rice mill in Western Samar built in cooperation with the LCDe. Ambassador Andreas Pfaffernoschke visited the mill, met with the farmer beneficiaries as well as local government officials and was pleased to learn about the rice mill’s positive impact.

The embassy said via the media that “The recent freezing of the accounts of the LCDe by the AMLC including the private accounts of the founder of the NGO, Ms. Jazmin Jerusalem and her family, are detrimental to our efforts to improve the living conditions of the beneficiaries in poor and marginalized regions of Samar and Leyte. We expect the quick review of the freezing in order to allow the NGO to continue their work.”

In another instance, in May 2024, the regime’s judiciary launched a salvo of serious and baseless charges against organizations defending human rights of peasant communities. Five activists of the Paghida-et sa



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Kauswagan (NCO) and an employee of the Belgian NGO Quinoa asbl are accused of financing terrorism. The widow of the assassinated president of PDG, lawyer Ben Ramos, Clarissa Ramos, is now a refugee in Belgium and employed by the Belgian NGO Quinoa asbl. She is accused of financing terrorism by the Philippine government. According to H el ene Debaisieux, coordinator of Quinoa asbl: “The accusations against our colleague are unfounded. This attack on Clarissa and the other members of PDG is clearly not an isolated event. It is part of an ongoing campaign to silence and target human rights defenders, development workers, media workers and other critical voices in the Philippines.”

On May 27 NGO representatives staged a rally and delivered a letter to the Philippine ambassador in Brussels. They are calling for an end to the unfounded prosecution of human rights defenders. [▲](#)

Inquiry into criminal character of POGOs turns to wrong direction



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Instead of digging deeper into the real nature, origins and criminal operations of the so-called POGOs (Philippine Online Gambling Operations), the inquiry initiated by the Philippine Senate has turned into the wrong direction.

The inquiry began when a mayor (local executive) of Bamban town in the province of Tarlac, in central Philippines, Alice Guo, was made to explain her involvement in the criminal activities of a POGO operating right behind the municipal hall building.

Gambling in China has been outlawed since 1949. On the other hand, POGOs were allowed by the reactionary

Philippine government supposedly to generate funds, but were instead found to have been engaged in illegal and criminal activities including human trafficking, hacking, prostitution, and scams such as, among others, “fake shipping, fake online charity, fake shopping websites, fake online sellers, fake free trials, fake Christmas gift cards, fake tech support, fake crypto investment, fake relative/friend, dating, foreign exchange investment, and loans”.

The Senate-initiated hearings on the case of Bamban mayor Guo has failed to dig deeper into the criminal nature and operations of POGOs, and their symbiotic relationship with corrupt local and national politicians and the police who have benefited from their criminal operations, and have not moved forward to banning them from the Philippines.

These hearings have in fact been denounced by many Filipino citizens, particularly the Filipino-Chinese community, who have described the inquiry into the nationality of and other personal matters on the Bamban mayor as nothing but a spectacle to fan “Sinophobia” or racism against the Chinese people and culture.

The stoking of anti-China sentiments is also happening amidst the tensions developing in the West Philippine Seas instigated by the US in its warmongering tactics against China. Netizens pointed to the hearings as stoking fear of so-called Chinese spies, while totally hypocritical of the fact that the Marcos regime allowed the presence of US and other foreign troops and entities in the Philippines.

“We are afraid of Chinese surveillance, yet pay no mind to the US Embassy, a ‘listening post’ of the US National Security Agency (NSA) equipped to intercept and collect private information from phone calls and text messages,” stressed the League of Filipino Students (LFS), a militant national student organization. [▲](#)