



EDITORIAL

US imperialism is no friend of the Filipino people

Grand pronouncements of being a "friend, partner and ally" or its "iron-clad commitment" to "defend the Philippines" are all part of US schemes to manipulate the minds of the Filipino people. At various stages during the past history of more than one hundred years, the US has repeatedly claimed to be on the side of the Filipino people in their struggle for independence. Just as it claimed to have ended the 300-year Spanish occupation of the Philippines, or expelled Japan in World War II, US imperialism now also claims it will defend the Philippines against China.

On the occasion of the 126th anniversary of the Philippines' declaration of false independence, it is only fitting that the Filipino people re-examine the entire history of US imperialism's occupation and domination of the Philippines, its deception, oppression of the people and plunder of the country's wealth.

More than ever, these US lies must be exposed in the face of the growing threat to the security of the

Philippines as the US stokes war in the South China Sea against its imperialist rival China. With the Marcos puppet regime, the US is pushing this part of the world to the brink of armed conflict. This can be compared to its actions of fomenting the war in Ukraine against Russia and supporting Israel in its genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza, both of which have resulted in widespread destruction and the loss

of tens of thousands of lives.

Today's tensions in the South China Sea are a direct result of US imperialism's 2011 "pivot to Asia" strategy to confront and challenge China's growing economic and military power. As the US intensifies its economic and trade confrontation with its rival, it is also increasingly challenging China with arms, especially by strengthening its military presence in the islands or countries closest to China's periphery.

The US has been steadily increasing its military presence in the South China Sea. In the past year, three US carrier strike groups (the USS Nimitz, USS Carl Vinson and USS Ronald Reagan), each carrying up to 7,500 troops, have entered the South China Sea and repeatedly cir-

cluded it for 30-35 days. Naval ships of the US often enter the Bashi Channel between the Philippines and Taiwan and circles the South China Sea and the West Philippine Sea.

In addition, there are all kinds of US warships, 11 nuclear-armed submarines, countless aircraft and other equipment, and thousands of American troops in the South China Sea and other seas around China, carrying out various maneuvers, training and reconnaissance missions. In the past year alone, the US has conducted at least 1,000 sorties and bombing raids, including 100 close approaches to Chinese shores which

almost resulted in skirmishes.

The US works with its henchmen in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for operations in the South China Sea. The US built 17 new military bases in 17 locations, including nine within AFP camps under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), to serve as weapons depots, troop rest areas, and possibly missile launching bases. Several ships have already been sold or transferred by the US to the AFP for use by the Philippine Navy alongside US operations.

To ensure its own security, China has increased its presence in the South China Sea. Since 2013, it has built at least seven military facilities in the Spratly Is-

lands, including three that fall within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. China has become so paranoid that it deployed Coast Guard vessels to claim the Scarborough Shoal, which has a long history of serving as common fishing grounds for Filipinos and Chinese. China is trampling on the Philippine rights, particularly those of Filipino small fishermen.

China is also now aggressively pushing Philippine compliance with its pledge (made since the time of Arroyo) not to build a permanent structure at the Ayungin Shoal. This is in response to brazen violations of such pledge when the AFP started to bring construction materials in March 2023 during its "supply missions" to the BRP Sierra Madre. The Philippines' claim to Ayungin, upheld by the International Arbitral Tribunal in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Seas (UNCLOS) should be duly raised by the Philippines in formal dialogue with China. Instead, Marcos and the AFP are now resorting to provocative military actions, at the behest of the US, to which China has responded in an aggressive and hostile manner.

Provocations by the US heighten tension between the Philippines and China, particularly over their maritime territorial boundaries, issues that should be addressed in peaceful negotiations, or even in the legal or diplomatic arena, now being made difficult by US military buildup. Instead of pushing the country's own interests in promoting peaceful co-existence with China and other neighboring countries, Marcos is dutifully following his US imperialist master and allowing the Philippines to be dragged and used as an instrument for stoking war.

In the face of the current situation, the Filipino people realize that US imperialism is not their friend, partner or ally, now or in the past. The US acts not in pursuit of Philippine interest or of any other country, but of its own interest to impose hegemony in all parts of the world. **AB**



ANG Bayan

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NPA-Western Samar seizes R4 rifle in ambush

RED FIGHTERS OF the New People's Army (NPA)-Western Samar (Arnulfo Ortiz Command) seized an R4 rifle when it ambushed elements of the 3rd IB in Barangay Gayondato, San Jorge, Western Samar, at 9 a.m. on May 14. The offensive killed Cpl. Reycon Remedio and injured another soldier.

The report said 3rd IB soldiers went out of their camp in Barangay Gayondato to bathe when the Red fighters opened fire.

Prior to the ambush, the NPA also conducted harassment operations against CAFGU detachments. People's army units harassed a CAFGU detachment in Barangay Santo Niño, Motiong and Barangay San Fernando, Jiabong where a soldier and a CAFGU member were killed.

In Oriental Mindoro, the NPA-Mindoro (Lucio de Guzman Command) fired shots at 4th IB soldiers in a military camp in Sitio Sigao, Barangay Lisap, Bongabong on May 20. The soldiers have been encamped in the area imposing martial law on people since 2022.

In Negros Oriental, the NPA-Central Negros (Leonardo Panaligan Command) launched two harassment operations against the 62nd IB. They attacked the 62nd IB bases in Barangay Malangsa, Vallehermoso on May 24 and Barangay Hinakpan, Guihulngan City on May 27.

Red fighters, peasant masses thwart AFP combat operation in Aurora

THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA) and the peasant masses in the towns of Maria Aurora and Dipaculao in Aurora are frustrating relentless focused military operations of the 91st IB and 84th IB since May. At least seven military troopers were killed while two others were injured in three consecutive clashes with the people's army.

The first encounter took place in Barangay Toytoyoyan, Dipaculao on May 20, followed by a battle in Barangay Salay, Dipaculao on May 21 and another on May 28 in Barangay Bazal, Maria Aurora. The people's army fought militantly and maneuvered safely.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has deployed excessive numbers of military forces into the two towns to hunt down a "few remaining" NPA fighters. The AFP uses helicopters, drones and other superior weapons for its combat operations.

On May 20-21, the 91st IB used two helicopters to patrol six barangays in Dipaculao. It then circled three barangays in Maria Aurora dropping bombs in the fields. In addition, the 91st IB indiscriminately fired their weapons reportedly killing a youth as a result.

"Instead of using public funds to provide quality public services, the AFP is squandering millions of pesos of funds on continuous combat operations," NPA-Aurora said.

These AFP operations gravely displace and terrorize the civilian population. They continue to prevent the masses from making a living in the barrios and mountains.

Information from the Department of Social Welfare and Development on May 25 said up to 3,633 families were affected by the AFP's relentless combat operation in the area.

NGO challenges bank account "freeze order" in court

THE CITIZEN'S DISASTER Response Center Foundation (CDRC) and Leyte Center for Development Enterprise, Inc. (LCDE) challenged the "freeze order" imposed by the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) on their bank accounts. The CDRC petitioned the Court of Appeals in Quezon City on June 2 while LCDE on May 17 in the same Cebu City court. They seek to have it removed and challenge the legality of the sanction which they said disregarded correct procedures and violated their rights for freedom of expression and association.

The CDRC and LCDe are just two of the countless progressive associations and development organizations arbitrarily sanctioned with similar "freeze orders" following accusations of "terrorism financing."

This harassment is framed on the Marcos regime's pronounced National Security Plan 2023-2028. It clearly states the policy to "intensify action against the accused legal fronts of the CPP-NPA-NDF to cut off... finance sources." Anyone it designates having links with the revolutionary movement is arbitrarily and baselessly harassed.

Party holds basic course in Surigao del Sur

RED FIGHTERS OF the New People's Army (NPA) and members of the Communist Party of the Philippines graduated from the Basic Party Course (BKP) in the first week of May in the mountains of Surigao del Sur. The course was conducted in a staggered manner to adapt to the military situation and other activities of the people's army in the said province.

BKP study sessions began on April 10 and officially ended on May 3. A graduation ceremony was launched on May 6 with the theme "NPA's Victory, People's Victory."

During the two-hour program, NPA unit officers and graduates delivered messages. Fighters also performed colorful cultural performances.

The study was in line with the Central Committee's call to carry out a rectification movement. "We launched the BKP to arm our forces with Marxist-Leninist-Maoist theory, especially Party recruits who were not immediately given education due to the difficult situation arising from internal weaknesses," the unit said.

Meralco's monopoly on electricity service, a bane to consumers

This June, Meralco announced plans to raise electricity charges by more than ₱0.10 per kilowatt-hour supposedly due to supply shortage. This is the tenth rate increase in the past 12 months. Although some months saw a small decrease, Meralco's average rate per kWh of electricity is estimated to reach ₱11.50. That means, a family consuming an average of 200 kilowatt-hours per month will have monthly bill of around ₱2,300, which is a significant cut in the wages or salaries of ordinary workers and employees.

Meralco boosts its profits through almost monthly unbridled and unregulated electricity rate hikes. This past year, it reported a revenue of ₱38 billion, which is significantly higher than the company's total revenue from 1994 to 2001, which only amounted to ₱28 billion.

Reactionary government officials have downplayed high electricity charges and simply blame increased consumption during summer. But this situation is rooted in more than two decades of deregulation and privatization policies.

Republic Act 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) fully opened the power sector not only to privatization but to monopolization. The law claims opening the power industry to private investment is aimed at lowering electricity costs. But the opposite has happened. In 2017, Meralco was charging around ₱8.03 per kWh. This rose to ₱9.24 in 2022, and to ₱11.50 this year.

Because of the EPIRA, all segments of the power industry—from generation, to transmission of high-voltage electricity from power plants to substations, distribution of electricity to consumers, and supply—are now controlled by a handful of companies and families, including Ramon Ang's San Miguel Corporation, Manny V. Pangilinan's Metro Pacific Investments, and the Sy family's OneTaipan Holdings.

EPIRA also created the "Wholesale Electricity Spot Market" where power producers sell their excess

electricity supply to retail companies (distributors or cooperative). Under the EPIRA, WESM sets electricity prices based on supply and demand at the time of purchase.

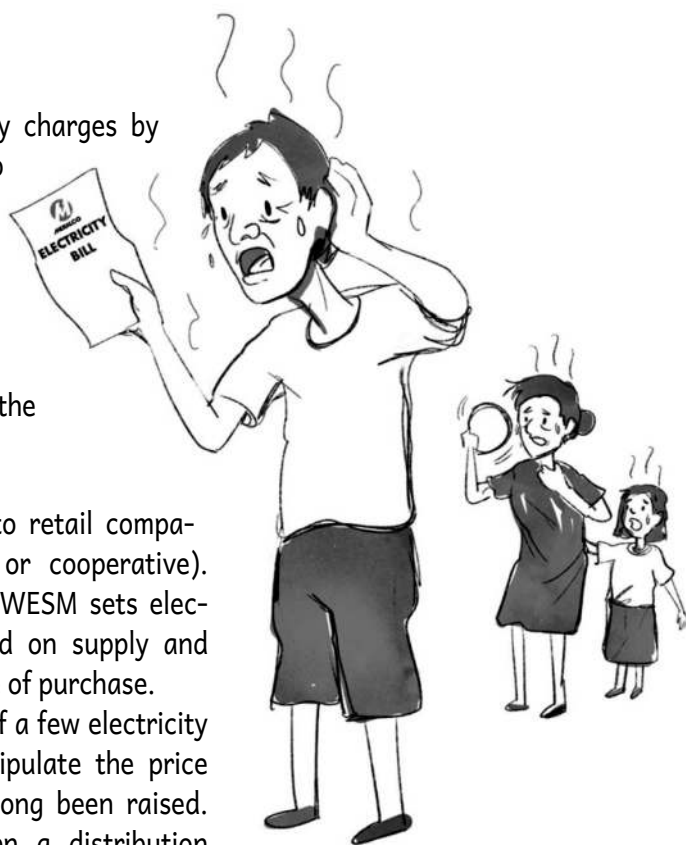
The collusion of a few electricity companies to manipulate the price of electricity has long been raised. This happens when a distribution company (like Meralco) announces an insufficient supply from its regular source of electricity and has to buy from WESM. Meanwhile, WESM is quick to raise prices when supply is supposedly low.

This collusion is not surprising because the companies and families that control Meralco and other distribution companies also own several other segments of the electricity sector. For example, Pangilinan, Ang, and the Aboitiz also own the companies that operate the Ilijan power plant in Batangas, which is one of Meralco's main sources of electricity supply.

This is why many are calling for an investigation into the series of "red" and "yellow" warnings of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP), because the lack of supply might have been artificial to increase charges.

Franchise renewal rush

Meralco's franchise has four more years before it expires under Republic Act No. 9209 signed by Gloria Arroyo in June 2003. This early, however, a bill extending the franchise has already been filed in Congress.



Members of the reactionary congress claim that this will help attract possible investors in the power industry, bringing an improvement in the industry's service.

But the real reason? Guarantee of superprofits for Meralco and the bourgeois comprador families behind it—mainly Pangilinan of Metro Pacific Investments and the Gokongwei family of JG Summit Holdings.

Meralco also wants to accelerate approval of its new franchise to avoid scrutiny, exposure and investigation into the many reported anomalies and manipulations.

Meralco has gained notoriety for similar schemes before. In 2002, the Supreme Court ordered Meralco to return to consumers overcharges amounting to ₱28.15 billion, after being found to have passed to consumers some of its expenses such as taxes.

Meralco's 2003 franchise allowed it to sell electricity to 39 cities and 72 towns in Metro Manila, Bulacan, Cavite, Rizal, and some parts of Batangas, Laguna, Quezon, and Pampanga. Up to 7.8 million households in the said provinces are Meralco customers.

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Filipino fisherfolk defies China's "fishing ban" in the West PH Sea

The Panatag Fisherfolks Association and Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) went on a "collective fishing expedition" in the seas near Masinloc, Zambales on May 30 to 31 to challenge the China-imposed "fishing ban." The May to September 16 ban covers areas of the South China Sea "north of 12 degrees North latitude" including Panatag Shoal (Scarborough), which is 124-nautical miles (224 kilometers) from Zambales.

Besides fisherfolk, leaders of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Pilipinong Nagkaikaisa para sa Soberanya, League of Filipino Students, and Alliance of Concerned Teachers also joined the voyage. Representatives of the Makabayan bloc, Kabataan Rep. Raoul Manuel and ACT Teachers Rep. France Castro also participated.

Aside from defying China's "fishing ban", the expedition also called for the "complete demilitarization" of the West Philippine Sea. The group refers to China's construction of islands and US imperialist military aggression masquerading as "freedom of navigation" operations in the seas.

They also condemned the US for the recent bombing in the Zambales seas during the Balikatan war games. Since then, fish catches and profits have declined everytime they sail.

In its 2016 decision in The Hague, the Permanent Court of Arbitration invalidated China's alleged 9-dash line covering the entire South China Sea. It specified the Philippine maritime territory covering 12-nautical miles (22 kilometers) from its shores, and the 200-nautical miles exclusive economic zone and extended continental shelves. It recognized the Panatag Shoal as a traditional fishing ground for Filipino, Vietnamese and Chinese fishermen and said Chinese acts to prevent Filipino fisherfolk from fishing in the reef was a violation.

US, AFP turn Aurora into industrial-military enclave

IN MARCH, GILBERT Teodoro Jr, defense secretary, visited a naval base in Casiguran, Aurora. The AFP built this base in collaboration with the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority (APECO) to allegedly counter China's presence in the Benham Rise. Earlier, APECO entered into an agreement with the Philippine Aerospace Development Corporation (PADC) to transform the enclave into the country's "defense hub". This merger aims to construct a military-industrial zone within the 12,923-hectare industrial enclave.

Teodoro said the transformation of APECO is in line with the AFP's Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept (CADC), which is framed in the US general strategy in the Asia Pacific. APECO will allegedly be used for the Self-Reliant Defense Posture Program (SRDP) under the AFP modernization. It will be a center for maintenance and repair of military aircraft. It is also touted to become a drone manufacturing center.

Thousands of farmers, fisherfolk and indigenous Aeta people in Casiguran were dispossessed of their land and evicted from their communities when APECO was first constructed. Its transformation into an industrial-military base and enclave will further worsen the oppression and land grabbing of peasant masses and minorities in the province.

The AFP terrorizes the people when it employs its modern equipment used in bombing, shelling and indiscriminate firing against peasant communities. Recently, it bombarded communities in Dipaculao and Maria Aurora. Using drones, it intensified the surveillance of the activity of the toiling masses and the entire civilian population.



Scrap VFA. Democratic organizations protested in Cebu City on May 27 to reiterate their demand to scrap the the Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and the imperialist US. This coincided with the 25th anniversary since the Senate under the Estrada regime ratified the agreement on May 27, 1999. Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Central Visayas led the action.

Drivers launch transport strike in Iloilo. Jeepney drivers launched a transport strike in Iloilo City's "first towns" on June 3 to oppose the city's Local Public Transport Route Plan (LPTRP) which limits the number of jeepneys allowed entry. This scheme will adversely affect drivers and commuters from the towns of Leganes, Pavia, Oton and San Miguel. The LPTRP is part of the pro-foreign PUVMP or jeepney phaseout. They were able to push the Iloilo governor to dialogue that day.

Camp-out against UP-Diliman commercialization. Students of the University of the Philippines (UP)-Diliman students camped-out on May 30-31 to oppose the worsening commercialization of the university and the scheduled opening of a new mall in its Quezon City campus. The camp-out included campus vendors who will be adversely affected by the entry of large private businesses into the campus. They greeted the UP Board of Regents meeting with a protest on May 31.

Fight mandatory ROTC! Filipino youth protested in front of the Senate in Pasay City on May 22 to express opposition to the railroading of the Mandatory Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) bill in the upper house. In April, several senators announced their plans to push the repressive measure before the end of the Senate session.

Israel bombs Gaza's "safe zone"

Zionist Israel carried out a series of bombings and ground attacks against its own designated "safe zone" of Rafah, in the southern part of Gaza, since the last week of May. This defied a recent ruling by the International Court of Justice, the United Nations' top court, on May 24 ordering an "immediate halt to the military offensive, and any other action in Rafah."

On May 26, an Israeli airstrike on a tent camp in Al-Sultan in Rafah killed at least 49 people and injured 250. Two days later, Israeli forces bombed the tent camp in Al-Masawi in Rafah killing 21 Palestinians and injuring 64 people. Half of the victims are children, women and the elderly. The temporary camp, in which Rafah refugees lived under tents, was burnt to ashes.

Rafah is currently sheltering more than 1.5 million Palestinians since Israel attacked Gaza last year. They built shacks and stayed under tents,

where there is lack of food and medicine, and conditions were deplorable.

As of June 2, the Zionist Israeli genocide has killed 36,439, including 15,000 children, and injured 82,627. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been driven from their homes.

Filipinos for Palestine

Filipinos continue to support the Palestinians in the face of relentless attacks by Zionist Israel.

On May 30, various mass organi-

zations gathered at the University of the Philippines (UP)-Los Baños to support the struggle of the Palestinian people. A march and gathering was also held in UP Diliman on May 19.

Meanwhile, the PUP for Palestine called on Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, and the Negrenses for Palestine on Negros Occidental Governor Eugenio Lacon, to cut ties with Israel officials. This follows meetings of Belmonte and Lacson with Israel officials.

In Canada, Filipino groups joined the May 29 protest in Ottawa to call for an investigation into the Canadian government's arms sales to the Israel Zionist regime. They also called for the closure of CANSEC, the annual arms expo of the Canadian Association of Defense and Security Industries, which opened in Ottawa that day.

Correspondence

Bogus land distribution in Palawan

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) recently boasted that 2,046 Palawan residents were awarded CLOAs (Certificate of Land Ownership Award) and farm machineries. The distribution ceremony was held at the PGP Convention Center, Palawan on April 11. The department secretary himself and other high provincial officials even attended.

The CLOA distribution, in fact, is just a deceptive spectacle. An attendee said that the event was a mere "photo ops". The CLOAs are not even named to those who received them. The land they are currently tilling is not the land indicated in the distributed CLOAs. Worse, the distribution was just recycled because the invited farmers have long been CLOA holders.

"I didn't attend, I didn't take the CLOA that wasn't in my name, nor did I go participate in the photo session," said a mother who was invited to the bogus distribution. She doesn't want to be used in the DAR's scam.

An official of a palm oil cooperative fell victim to the fraud and received a CLOA that did not contain his name. "The government is squandering money just to make false claims of distributing land," he said. "Our CLOAs were distributed way back in Ramos' time."

DAR bussed in people for the show. The department covered the cost of the entire show, including the two-way fare of "beneficiaries" who came from distant municipalities. Food and snacks also abound. It even distributed t-shirts adorned with "Sariling Lupa para sa Bagong Bukas na Masagana" and the face of Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

"Obviously, Marcos Jr merely want to score brownie-points," the farmers said.

State forces kill four farmers

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) killed four farmers in Masbate and Negros Occidental last May. They all were falsely claimed as New People's Army members killed in an "encounter." The arrest of three civilians, including an infant, was also recorded last month.

Killing. In Masbate, the 96th IB killed 31-year-old farmer Erlindo Natural on May 7 in Barangay Holjogon, Mobo. Natural is the 29th victim of political killings in the province under the Marcos regime.

In Negros Occidental, at least 24 troops of the 62nd IB stormed the home of the dela Peña family in Sitio Inangaw, Barangay Quintin Remo, Moises Padilla on May 21 in the morning. Soldiers indiscriminately fired at the house, illegally arrested Richard dela Peña, took him away from his house and killed him willfully.

On May 22, soldiers of the 79th IB deliberately murdered farmer Jeje Redobles in Sitio Manaysay, Barangay Camabayobo, Calatrava. Redobles is an ordinary tuber and banana farmer.

Farmer Jigger Barotolo was killed with four shots on May 30 in Sitio Sangay, Barangay Hilubang, Calatrava. The 79th IB agents summoned Barotolo while he was tending to his carabao prior to killing him.

Arrest. In Masbate, state forces arrested

"State forces..." continue on page 7

La Niña and the catastrophe brought by environmental destruction

As the Philippines enters the rainy season this June, the climate is transitioning from El Niño to La Niña. In May, Pagasa placed the probability that La Niña will hit in July-September at 69%. La Niña is characterized by more frequent and heavier rains, which is bound to result in more severe flooding, landslides and typhoons.

El Niño and La Niña are two phases of the climate phenomenon called El Niño Southern Oscillation or ENSO. ENSO is characterized by irregular changes in wind and temperature in the Pacific Ocean. This results from global warming driven by fossil fuel use for energy, transportation and industrial production.

The Philippines has experienced at least five La Niña cycles since the 1980s. Intervals between each cycle are shorter, while bringing greater damage to the country. During the 1988-1989 La Niña, damage to crops reached ₱900 million. The country experienced two consecutive La Niñas 10 years apart—1998-2001 and 2010-2011. La Niña persisted slightly until early 2012 intensifying the typhoons that hit the country, especially in Mindanao.

More than 1,000 were reported dead, 900 went missing and hundreds of thousands were left homeless when Typhoon Pablo (international name: Bopha) hit the Davao region in December 2012. More than 1,200 were killed, and as many went missing in Region 10, particularly in Cagayan de Oro when Typhoon Sendong (Washi) hit in December 2011. Less than five years

later, La Niña (2016-2017) occurred again. This La Niña intensified Typhoon Niña (Nock-Ten, 2016) that hit the Bicol region.

The Philippines was last hit by La Niña in 2020-2022. In 2020 alone, 23 typhoons hit the Philippines, higher than the usual 20 typhoons per year. Typhoons Rolly (Goni, 2020) and Ulysses (Vamco, 2020) hit the Visayas and Northern Luzon. These two typhoons caused damages estimated at over ₱40 billion (or ₱20 billion each). La Niña ended without almost no gap before another ENSO cycle re-entered in July 2023.

Environmental destruction and ENSO

In typhoons Pablo and Sendong, deforestation was a clear factor in the deadly floods, when water surged from the mountains to the lower coastal areas. But more than that, Philippine deforestation has caused a greater impact on the Pacific ENSO cycle.

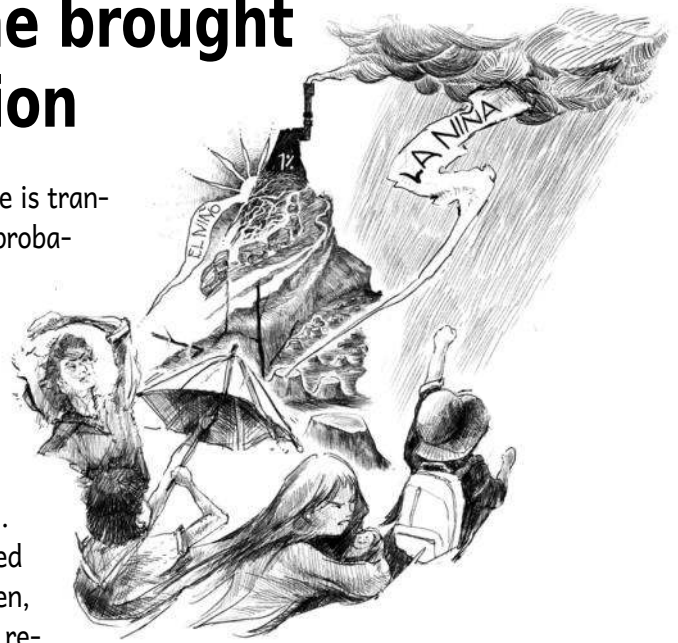
In a 2023 study, scientists confirmed the large role of deforestation in the so-called Maritime Continent (MC) in the frequency and intensity

of ENSO in recent decades. The MC consists of Indonesia, New Guinea, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines and their surrounding ocean. They said deforestation in these countries increased the probability of the formation of more complex and unpredictable El Niños by 11.7%; and La Niña by 14.6%.

These deforestations are driven primarily by land-use conversion, commercial logging, timber plantations, and large-scale and destructive mining.

Suffering the most from La Niña are national minorities and farmers who lose their homes and livelihoods when typhoons and floods strike. They rightfully demand indemnification from mining and plantation companies for the plunder and environmental destruction that consequently brought devastation to their communities.

An example of this is the demand of the residents of Masara, Davao de Oro (formerly Compostela Valley) that Apex Mining Corporation repair the town roads and bridges damaged after typhoon Pablo. In Cagayan Valley, farmers demand debt payment postponements, or even total debt relief, of their production loans for them to have a chance to recover their losses in the next crop cycle. At the same time, they demand the reactionary state to allocate compensation funds for the homes and livelihoods that were damaged.



"State forces..." from page 6

Tinay Ontog in Barangay Maglambong, Monreal town on May 18.

On an unspecified date, state forces also arrested Baby Arnejo and her infant child in Barangay Madao, Uson. At their insistence, villagers retained the baby and placed him in proper care while his mother was detained.

Abduction. Joy Delica, 32, has been missing for more than two months now since he was abducted by at least 30 soldiers of the 4th ID from a home in Barangay New Compostella, Damulog, Bukidnon on March 18. His hands and feet were bound when he was boarded into the soldiers' vehicle.

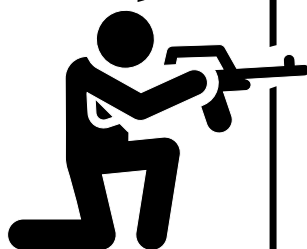
The soldiers barred residents who insisted on accompanying Delica to ensure his safety. His whereabouts remain unknown to date.

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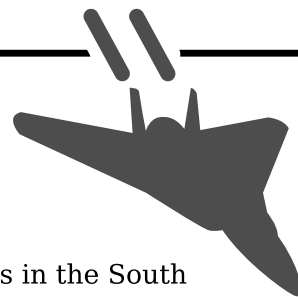
107 large-scale
US war games

in and around the South China Sea in 2023; 80 with Japan, and 11 on Philippine land and seas.



1,000

US warplane flights in the South China Sea, from Okinawa (Japan), Osan (South Korea) and Clark Air Base (Philippines) in 2023.

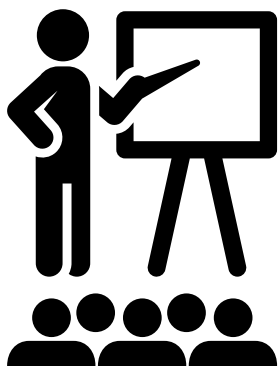


Source: An Incomplete Report on US Military Activities in the South China Sea in 2023, the South China Sea Strategic Situation Probing Initiative, March 2024



₱10,000 now!

new law raising teachers' annual allowance for school supplies, enacted 13 years since demanded by teachers and the ACT Teachers Partylist.



835

landlords and big bourgeois compradors controlling 70% of the total agricultural land in Southern Tagalog.

Source: Kalatas, March 2024

19 of 20

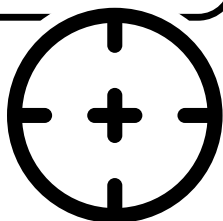
victims of sexual violence in areas of armed conflict are women and young girls.

Source: UN Secretary-General on Conflict-related Sexual Violence, January 2023-December 2023

159

incidents of Red-tagging of journalists documented by NUJP from 2016 to the present; 96 perpetrated by the reactionary state and its personnel.

Source: No Tag: Press Freedom for Pluralism, 2024



₱389 MILLION

damages caused by a few days of **Typhoon Aghon**, the first to hit the Philippines this year.



\$315 trillion

global debt by 2024, almost triple (257%) the global GDP (gross domestic product). The US and Japan account for two-thirds.

Source: Global Debt Monitor, Institute of International Finance

Operation Kagaar: Brutal war against the Indian people

India's reactionary state has blood-stained hands for its intensified war of suppression against its people. Since January, it has been implementing Operation Kagaar (Final Mission), part of the expanded implementation of the counterinsurgency campaign Operation SAMADHAN-Prahar. This dirty and brutal operation has killed at least 130 civilians and revolutionaries in the last five months.

In direct translation, the word *kagaar* means "the edge." The Indian state said the operation aims to completely end the Indian people's armed revolutionary movement, led by the Communist Party of India (Maoist), which it claims is now on the "brink" of defeat.

The operation is mainly carried out in Abujhmad (or Maad), a mountainous and forested region in the south of Chhattisgarh state. It aims to "liberate Maad" which is said to be the primary stronghold of the Maoists. This is currently being implemented in a larger part of the Dandakaranya region covering Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh states in Central India.

Dubbed a "military offensive" against the Maoists, the operation in reality targeted all parties, organizations and individuals expressing opposition to the state.

Violation of international humanitarian law

Operation Kagaar brazenly violates international humanitarian law, the rules of war and special protections of vulnerable sectors during armed conflict. The biggest victims of Brahmanic Hindutva fascism (Indian state fascism against religious minorities and lower social castes) are the Adivasi or indigenous people.

Within two weeks in May, military forces killed 22 Adivasis, including two chil-

dren, in Chhattisgarh.

The paramilitary massacred 12 Adivasis in Bijapur on May 11. The victims were gathering *tendu* leaves when abducted and killed. The state even detained 30 activists, victims' widows, and families collecting the remains of the massacre victims.

The next day, unexploded artillery left by paramilitaries in Odspara, Bijapur went off, killing two children and injuring many. The mortar was among the many that

failed to explode when military forces shelled the area's forest. About 20 Adivasi were also collecting *tendu* leaves when the explosion occurred.

On May 24, Indian military forces arrested and shot dead eight Adivasi farmers in Rekavaya, on the border of Bijapur and Narayanpur. Another farmer was injured.

Meanwhile on April 16 in the Aapatola-Kalpar forest, Kanker district of Chhattisgarh, Indian military forces tortured and extrajudicially killed 11 unarmed revolutionaries and injured six others in the first wave of attacks. The first attack martyred 12 People's Liberation Guerilla Army fighters.

Cheemala Narasayya (Comrade Joganna, 66), a CPI (Maoist) regional committee member, was also extrajudicially killed after being arrested in Kakur-Tekametta on the border of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra states on April 30.

On that day, four Adivasis were killed in the area.

Indian military forces routinely claim that their victims are casualties in its "encounters" with

Maoists. In addition, military camps are being built one after another in communities in the Maad area.

Operation Kagaar and accompanying militarization form part of corporatization and encroachment by large companies into India's rich forests. Masquerading as anti-Maoist war, these operations serve the intensifying plunder of the nations' resources by big foreign corporations.

