



EDITORIAL:

## **No reason to celebrate 126th anniversary of fake independence**

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## EDITORIAL:

## No reason to celebrate 126th anniversary of fake independence

There is no cause for celebrating the so-called 126th anniversary of Philippine independence. The country has been subservient to the United States since 1898 until today. 300 years of Spanish colonial exploitation and oppression generated hundreds of local uprisings, which eventually galvanized into a nationwide revolution. The Aguinaldo leadership of the revolutionary government readily surrendered to the Spanish forces and was exiled to Hongkong where he was approached by the US.

On June 12, 1898, Aguinaldo made the Kawit proclamation of independence which carried the unfortunate qualification, "under the protection of the Mighty and Humane North American nation." Unwittingly, he declared the so-called First Philippines Republic to be a mere protectorate of U.S. imperialism.


American colonial rule made the Philippines a strategic bastion in its plunder of the southern coast of China. US hegemony over the country was disrupted only by the invasion of Japan of the Philippines in 1942 which lasted until 1945 when the US reoccupied the country.

While the US forces left the country and ordered its remaining forces to surrender to the Japanese, Filipino guerillas continued the fight against the invaders. In most parts of Central Luzon, widespread guerilla resistance was launched by the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (People's Army against Japan) led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Direct colonial rule became more untenable with the rise of strong national liberation movements in the aftermath of WW2. In response, the US transformed the Philippines into a neo-colony, i.e., from directly ruling the country into an indirect rule thru its neo-colonial state. The succeeding neo-colonial setup of the Philippines enabled the US to continue its plunder of the country's natural resources and its control of the economy, politics and military.

After WW2, the US maintained the Clark Air Force Base and the Subic Naval Base as major military bases in Asia to maintain its dominance and as launching bases for its interventionist actions. Amidst the popular anti-bases movement in the 1990s, the Philippine Senate did not renew the US-Philippine military agreement, affirming the constitutional ban against foreign troops permanent basing in the country. In collusion with successive puppet regimes in the Philippines, a series of agreements, like the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), the Military Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA), and the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) were formulated by US imperialism to circumvent this prohibition.

Today, the US is exploiting the territorial conflict between the Philippines and China over the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea to drag the Armed Forces of the Philippines into the frontline of the US war preparation against China. As tension escalates, there is real danger of war exploding between the two great powers.

The Filipino people should expose and oppose the sham independence and continue to struggle for national liberation and democracy. Amid rising inter-imperialist tensions, the NDFP enjoins the Filipino people to fight for genuine Philippine sovereignty and promote non-alignment, peaceful resolution of conflicts, peaceful co-existence and mutual benefit with other countries. 

## NPA Negros calls on forces to help victims of Kanlaon eruption

The New People's Army (NPA)-Negros Island called on all its units and commands and all revolutionary forces to work together to help the people in the island of Negros affected by the Kanlaon volcanic eruption. Heavy rains on 6 June followed the eruption of the Kanlaon Volcano on 3 June and communities in Central Negros suffered extensive lahar flows. "All guerrilla fronts are tasked to lead efforts in gathering support from revolutionary mass organizations, various sectors and allies for immediate aid," Ka Maoche Legislator, NPA spokesperson on the island, said. On 9 June, 8478 families in 24 barangays, or village administrative units, have been affected by the eruption, according to a report of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The damage to the agricultural sector is estimated to reach P10 million.

Ka Maoche said the Kanlaon Volcano eruption doubled the suffering of the people in the area as they have not yet recovered from the devastation brought by the drought during El Niño. "Instead of concrete and legitimate assistance, the Marcos Jr regime has settled with mere performative acts of giving unsustainable aid for politicking and military propaganda," added Ka Maoche.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines' 303rd Infantry Battalion operating in the area declared that it would not relax its combat operations while conducting "disaster response." On several occasions, the military used "assistance and aid distribution" for counterinsurgency campaigns and forced the "surrender" of civilians on the island.

Every time it distributes several kilos of rice and cans, the military takes






image: philippinerevolution.nu

photographs and sometimes attaches captions claiming that Red fighters of the people's army have "surrendered". This military usurpation of civilian functions is implemented through the anti-civilian National Task Force-Elcac.

The people of Negros should collectively demand fair compensation from the reactionary government for the excessive damage they suffered in the successive calamities during El Niño and the Kanlaon Volcano eruption.

"The succeeding calamities have exacerbated landlessness and buried the Negrosanon masses in perennial destitution and hunger," Ka Maoche said. He added that agrarian revolution, a component of revolutionary armed struggle, must be pursued to solve centuries of feudal and semifeudal oppression, exploitation on the island. 

## Fact-finding mission says US military bases a 'plague to communities'

A fact-finding mission (FFM) organized and conducted by progressive groups from the United States said in their report that communities around US military bases or so-called EDCA sites suffer from widespread negligence, disinformation and repression.


EDCA, short for Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), is an agreement between the government of the US and the Philippines signed in 2014 that allows the US to build bases or facilities within an "agreed location" inside Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) camps. The US has at least nine facilities under the EDCA and at least eight other bases or military facilities in various parts of the Philippines.

The FFM bared their findings on June 12 after conducting a three-week investigation in communities around such US military bases in Cagayan Valley, at former US military bases in Central Luzon, in Ilocos Norte, where the most recent Balikatan exercise took place, and in Marawi City, where a military camp is being built at "ground zero" using EDCA funds. The delegation's findings include:

1. Violations of EDCA provisions such as in Cagayan Valley, wherein residents near the military base were ordered to store supplies outside of the designated "EDCA site," in violation of the agreement which prohibits it. The residents were also not informed of the purpose of the storage. They suspect weapons are being stored, contrary to US and AFP claims that the items are only for "humanitarian aid."
2. US military exploitation of communities and their resources: In Cagayan Valley, American troops hired fisherfolk's boats for the war games. In Ilocos Norte, residents were prohibited from sailing and were deprived of their livelihood. The indemnification given to them were grossly insufficient.
3. Close partnership with private economic interests and the military: In Cagayan Valley, the delegation learned of the US's plan to build "EDCA sites" near special economic zones. Two of the existing bases are adjacent to the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA).



image: philippinerevolution.nu

4. No communication whatsoever to communities affected by the military exercises. In Santa Ana, Cagayan, for instance, residents were given no explanation regarding the US-PH military exercises, before and after they happened. They were kept in the dark, and their voices and welfare were not considered. Since November 2023, two low-flying US helicopters caused panic among indigenous communities on the island of Palau. They worried about the possibility of war breaking out and their children's safety.
  5. Disinformation and discrepancies in government reports: In Marawi City, community leaders are aware of the construction of a military base using EDCA funds at "ground zero," which the government has not disclosed. They also reported the plan to build a special economic zone in the said area. In Ilocos Norte, the government did not inform communities that would be affected by the Balikatan exercises. Residents also reported being startled from loud explosions that shook their houses.
  6. State repression and red-tagging: Red-tagging by Philippine state forces was widespread against residents who reported militarization, especially those who expressed the need for economic development in the communities.
  7. Government negligence: In Marawi City, residents affected by the 2017 AFP attack remain in evacuation centers. Basic utilities such as electricity, water, and sanitation are absent or damaged in these areas. Many of them have not received compensation or assistance nor any assurance of being able to return to their lands.
- "We demand answers and accountability from the Philippine and US governments on the impacts of militarism on the most marginalized. We demand answers on the real extent of US base and facility building in the country, as what is being publicized in the news doesn't match experiences on the ground", a FFM representative declared. The progressive groups led by BAYAN-USA also said they plan to continue campaigning against increasing U.S. militarism in the Philippines, at the Cancel Rim of the Pacific Games (RIMPAC) people's summit and mobilization in San Diego, California (June 29-30), at the Resist NATO summit and mobilization in Washington DC (July 6-7), and launching protest actions at the Republican and Democratic National Conventions this summer, within the halls of Congress against the Philippines Enhanced Resilience Act (PERA) and in favor of the Philippine Human Rights Act, and at Marcos Jr.'s state of the nation address (SONA) in July. 

## PH remains one of the worst countries for workers for 8th year



image: philippinerevolution.nu

The Philippines remains one of the the worst countries for workers in 2024. For the eight straight year, the country has been included in the top 10 nations with the worst treatment of workers.

Based on the report of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights Index 2024, the Philippines scored "5" which is the worst possible score in the index. A rating of 5 means there is "no guarantee of rights" for workers. Despite laws that cover labor rights, "workers have effectively no access to these rights and are therefore exposed to autocratic regimes and unfair labor practices," the report noted.

"The government fostered a climate of fear and persecution, silencing the collective voice of workers. Workers across many sectors still faced significant obstacles when attempting to form trade unions," the ITUC said.

The ITUC report highlighted the killings of Alex Dolorosa, organizer of the BPO Industry Employee Network (BIEN) on April 24, 2023; and Jude Fernandez, veteran organizer of Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) killed on September 29, 2023.

All over the world, the situation of workers continue to deteriorate, both in terms of wages, working conditions and their benefits and rights. In the ITUC report, teh right to expression and free assembly is restricted in 43% (65) of the countries covered by the study which increased from 42% in 2023.

With the Philippines in the list of top 10 worst countries are Bangladesh, Belarus, Ecuador, Egypt, Eswatini, Guatemala, Myanmar, Tunisia, and Turkiye. The Philippines is included in the ITUC's list of 10 worst countries for workers since 2017. 