

Special Report:

BLOODY "NEW PHILIPPINES" OF THE US-MARCOS REGIME

Human Rights Report
(December 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)



Introduction

In the past two years of the US-Marcos regime in power, nothing has marked its reign more than the intensified violence against the Filipino people and suppression of human rights. To illustrate these cases and strengthen the campaign for justice, Ang Bayan (AB) releases this report on the state of human rights in the country.

This report is based on information collected and analyzed by AB on cases of human rights violations committed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other armed agents of the US-Marcos regime from December 1, 2023 to June 30 this year. This is the third in a series of human rights reports issued by the AB under the current regime. Illustrated here is the intense brutality and violence suffered by the Filipino people in the past seven months, under the ongoing campaign of repression and counterinsurgency by the US-Marcos regime.

As in the past, many cases in the countryside went unreported due to the difficulty of sending reports by units facing intense military operations. There are also cases in which only the general incident was recorded, without the exact number of victims.

This report does not include cases of killings under the "war on drugs" perpetuated by the Marcos regime. This current report also does not adequately cover the many violations against Moro people's human rights that are not reported to the public.

International standards for estimating the number of victims of evacuation and militarization, and the number of children affected, were used by AB in this report.

"Bagong Pilipinas:" Cover-up for the bloody record

In January, the Marcos regime officially launched its "Bagong Pilipinas" political campaign and slogan. The "Bagong Pilipinas" indoctrination campaign is no different from his dictator father's "New Society" which was used to cover up the abuses during martial law and glorify the image of tyrannical rule. Behind the grand concerts and banquets, Marcos Jr.'s hands are stained in blood.

Marcos' "Bagong Pilipinas" deceives the Filipino people with illusions of a "new" future. In fact, there is nothing fundamentally "new" in the oppressive and exploitative semicolonial and semifeudal system in the Philippines. They continue to wallow in wealth, and rule with instruments of state terrorism.

In May, Marcos also issued Administrative Order No 22, to establish a Special Committee on Human Rights Coordination, to act as a "coordinator" on human rights matters. This is a desperate attempt to dress up the dire human rights situation in the country.

While prettifying itself, the AFP and PNP are openly implementing the dirty all-out war against the Filipino people in the urban and rural areas. Within the framework of the National Security Policy (NSP) 2023-2028, heightened state fascist terrorism, sub-



servience to US imperialism and suppression of patriotic and democratic forces continue.

Despite repeated talk by the US, AFP and Marcos about "pivoting" the country's armed forces from "internal defense" to "external defense" because the New People's Army (NPA) has "weakened" or is "defeated", majority of AFP forces remain in the countryside and guerrilla fronts. It also repeatedly claims that only seven weak guerrilla fronts remain, but thousands of military, police and paramilitary forces are still being mobilized for its counterinsurgency campaign.

The regime places all aspects of society—from the economy to the environment—under the framework of “national security,” further magnifying the role of the military and security agencies in running the reactionary state. Even response to disaster response and the El Niño phenomenon are led by security agencies. Civilian agencies and local governments down to the barangay level are subsumed under the AFP through the National Task Force-Elcac.

Marcos uses the Anti-Terrorism Law and the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act to suppress and silence critics and those who speak against his regime, and even ordinary people.



The regime targets what it calls "CPP-NPA-NDFP legal fronts" to allegedly "stop recruitment, cut off financial support and fight propaganda." This goes hand in hand with maliciously associating activists with the armed movement or Red-tagging to justify violent attacks against them.

In the countryside, communities are subjected to further militarization and occupation in the form of focused military operations (FMO) and the occupation of villages under the Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP). In these operations, civilians and peasants are the main targets of military violence and repression. Then, there is also indiscriminate aerial bombing, strafing and shelling of fields and mountains, that endanger the lives of civilians and wreak environmental destruction.

The regime also continued the NTF-Elcac supposed "localized peace talks" which are nothing more than a campaign of intimidation, forced "surrender" of civilians and embezzlement of public funds. The state also continues to blatantly violate the rules of war, in the form of the extrajudicial and willful killing of wounded combatants, the killing of civilians in "fake encounters" and oppressing entire communities during combat operations.

Human rights violations

Ang Bayan's records show that there are 48,763 victims of human rights violations by the US-Marcos regime committed from December 2023 to June. AB recorded 652 cases (or three cases per day) of human rights violations throughout the country. Some victims suffered 2-3 cases of violation of their human rights. Most cases were recorded in the month of January (144 cases).

On the average, there are at least four victims of political killings every month. There is one abduction victim per week, and at least one torture victim every two weeks. AB recorded 32 victims of threats, intimidation and intimidation per day. Military occupation in the countryside forced the displacement and dislocation of at least 15,396 victims.



During the Marcos regime's two years in power, 2,107 cases were recorded with at least 424,679 victims. On average, there were 580 victims of human rights violations every day in the last two years.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

(JUNE 30, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2024)

424,679 **2,107**
NUMBER OF VICTIMS NUMBER OF CASES

175 **178** **163** **135** **1,893**
KILLING PHYSICAL ASSAULT ABDUCTION TORTURE COERCION

52 **339** **62,347** **138,639**
FRUSTRATED KILLING ARREST AND DETENTION FORCED EVACUATION AND DISLOCATION THREATS, PRESSURE, INTIMIDATION

Extrajudicial killing, frustrated killing and torture

At least 34 were extrajudicially killed across the country in the past seven months. Almost almost all of the killings are falsely claimed by the AFP as encounters, which were promptly refuted by family and neighbors. These are blatant violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and the rules of war.

To make the killings appear as encounters, the victims' remains are dressed up, with weapons, ammunition and other military equipment, and sprawled in mud. The military continues with its practice of taking photographs of dead bodies and posting these on social media to be feasted upon by their trolls, contrary to IHL norms.

Majority of the cases were recorded when soldiers and police were launching FMOs and RCSPs in the communities. The killings are part of the Marcos regime's plan to "defeat the people's army" in the country. The soldiers spread stories of their "victories" to make it look like they are winning the war against the people's army.

In some cases, it was also reported that the soldiers who carried out the killings were drug-crazed. The AFP makes them use drugs to carry out heinous crimes against the people and intensify their brutality.

Majority of those killed were farmers (26). Among them was a 16-year-old student. Of the victims, six were *hors de combat* (combatants who are no longer in a position to fight due to incapacity or illness). The highest number of people were killed in Negros Occidental (10), followed by Sorogon and Masbate with five victims each. A case of massacre was recorded in Bohol.

Killing of the elderly. Pedro Regala, 78 years old, and wife Florencia Regala, 67 years old, were taken on February 5 from their home by 2nd IB troops and taken to a creek where they were killed. The spouses were residents of Barangay Toboran, Cawayan, Masbate. After being killed, they were dressed with ammo pouches and falsely claimed to have been killed in an encounter. Their remains were positioned in mud and the photo was posted on social media as "terrorists."



Regala couple.

Indiscriminate killing. Arnel Esperitu, 39-year-old, was just walking when 31st IB soldiers shot him dead on June 20, at 4 am. The crime happened near the soldiers' detachment in the center of Barangay Gogon, Donsol, Sorsogon. The victim died instantly.

Massacre in Bohol. Elements of the 47th IB and PNP-Bohol massacred five *hors de combat* Red fighters in Bilar, Bohol. Domingo Compoc, Hannah Cesista, Parlito Historia, Marlon Omosura and Alberto Sancho were captured alive in the house where they were staying in Sitio Matin-ao 2, Barangay Campagao on the morning of February 23.

Witnesses said Cesista was made to crawl in the mud. Meanwhile, Compoc who is over 60 years old and suffering from arthritis was tortured in front of the village residents. He was hacked in the neck and stomach. A photo of Compoc, accosted by a soldier, and apparently handcuffed from behind, circulated among Bohol people and social



Domingo Compoc still alive when captured by 47th IB soldiers.

media. The photo was apparently taken in secret. The military claimed the five "resisted" while being "served" with arrest warrants.

Ang Bayan recorded eight cases of frustrated killings in Kalinga, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Albay, Sorsogon, Negros Occidental and Samar. These cases involved operating military units, who, for fear of being outmaneuvered, shoot indiscriminately at anyone they chance upon in the forest or on the road. Among the victims was a 4-month pregnant woman.

As many as 19 were tortured by soldiers. Nine of the torture victims were eventually killed by the military butchers. Among the victims were two pregnant Red fighters who were tortured and tormented during their arrest. Other victims of torture were farmers who bore the brunt of soldiers' ire during operations.

Peasant hanged upside down. Among the victims was a peasant who was captured by the 46th IB, tied and hung upside down in a barangay in Jiabong, Samar on an unspecified date this year. Soldiers forced him to confess to having links with the people's army. The peasant was then brought to the military camp in Calbiga town. The soldiers have not been held accountable for their crimes.

Arrest, abduction, and threats, harassment, and intimidation

The AB recorded 33 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention affecting at least 62, mostly farmers. They are among at least 755 political prisoners in the country according to the rights group Karapatan. Of the political prisoners, 103 were arrested and imprisoned under the Marcos regime. Of the political prisoners, 102 are elderly, 90 are sick, while 15 are members and staff of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. Among them are 147 women and four minors.

In the past seven months, those illegally arrested have been charged with various trumped-up charges to prolong their detention. Some of them suffered from deliberate delays in the processing of their cases by courts to prevent their immediate release. Some others, especially those in the provinces, were simply detained in military camps without legal grounds.

Arrest of the elderly. The police and military arrested Ademar Anciero Etol, 64 years old, in Barangay Balingasan in Siay, Zamboanga Sibugay on January 25 after raiding his house. Etol was charged with murder and illegal possession of firearms. Etol, a native of San Isidro, Davao del Norte, was accused by the military of being an NPA Red fighter.

Mayo Uno 6. Six youth activists were violently arrested by the police on May 1 during a protest at the US embassy. Known as the Mayo Uno 6, their detention was unnecessarily prolonged by the court's deliberate delay in processing their bail and case. They were released one week after their arrest.



Several police officers arresting one rallyist of the Mayo Uno 6.

Convicted of rebellion. The Taguig Regional Trial Court convicted Maria Salome Crisostomo-Ujano, 67, guilty of rebellion in May. The court sentenced Ujano to 10-17 years and four months imprisonment. Ujano was implicated in a November 2005 encounter between NPA and government soldiers in Quezon. She vehemently denied the charges, stressing that she was a defender of children's rights.

Detention of Filipino migrants. Two cases of detention of Filipino migrants who returned home to the Philippines were recorded in recent months. On December 7, 2023, Filipina-Swiss activist Edna Becher was detained for more than two hours at the Ninoy Aquino

International Airport in Metro Manila when she arrived in the country to visit her relatives. She was deported to Switzerland for being "blacklisted" for her alleged "anti-government activities." Marikit Saturday from The Netherlands experienced the same ordeal when she visited the Philippines on March 7.

AB recorded 30 abductions in the last seven months. Abductions are characterized by the clear intention of the state to deliberately disappear and deny custody of the victims. Some of the victims will later be surfaced dead by the state after a period of disappearance, or else imprisoned on trumped-up charges or released as "surrendered" members of the people's army.

Eco and Jak surfaced. State forces abducted environmental activists Axielle "Jak" Tiong and Francisco "Eco" Dangla III in Barangay Polo, San Carlos City, Pangasinan on March 24 at 8 p.m. Witnesses said the two were abducted after a vehicle (SUV) blocked the tricycle they were riding. Two to three people from the SUV and another on a motorcycle mauled and forced them into the vehicle. A swift public clamor prompted state forces to surface the two on March 27.



Abducted and forced to "surrender." CCTV footage clearly captured the abduction in Santo Tomas, Batangas, of Jose Marie Estiller, the brother of a Sorsogon peasant leader, by armed military and police agents, last February 20. In the video, Estiller was seen walking back to his house when he was suddenly surrounded by five men and dragged away. On February 23, the 903rd IBde presented Estiller as a high-ranking NPA official who "surrendered" to them.

The AB also recorded at least 6,889 victims of threats, harassment and intimidation. In recent months, the regime has increasingly used "terrorism financing" cases to pressure activists, human rights defenders and even development workers.

The number of victims is even higher if we include the thousands who were paraded and forcibly "surrendered" by the military as members or supporters of the NPA in urban and rural areas.

In cases of forced "surrender," the military often used aid distribution to photograph residents and present them as those who "surrendered."

Case of "terrorism financing." In the latest documentation of Karapatan, at least 112 have been charged by the Department of Justice with "terrorism financing," including 59 development workers. At least 21 non-governmental organizations have been similarly charged. Of those charged, 32 are currently in prison.

In this pattern of cases, the regime targets organizations it accuses of funding the revolutionary movement. This is framed in the National Security Plan 2023-2028 and National Anti-Money Laundering, Counter-Terrorism Financing and Counter-Proliferation Financing Strategy (NACS) 2023-2027. The NACS was formed in accordance with Marcos' executive order (EO 33) issued on July 4, 2023. The NSP itself stated the plan to "intensify action against the legal fronts of the CPP-NPA-NDF to... cut off the source of finance." In the NACS, a special committee was formed to file cases of "terrorism financing" in the regime's attempt to be removed from the "grey list" of countries where money laundering is rampant. NICA headed the special group for filing the cases. NICA is the acting secretariat of the Anti-Terrorism Council and also sits on the Anti-Money Laundering Council which arbitrarily closes bank accounts of targeted individuals and organizations.

Two of those charged with "terrorism financing" are youth human rights defenders in Quezon, Paul Tagle and Fritz Labiano last April. They were charged for helping political prisoners Rowena Dasig and

Miguela Piniero in July 2023. The 85th IB accused the two of "terrorism financing" after they gave ₱500 and food to political prisoners.

Harassment of relatives of martyrs. Relatives of martyred Red fighters also face unprecedented pressure while retrieving the remains of their loved ones. An example of this is the 59th IB's harassment on the families of the martyrs in Tuy, Batangas last June. The families failed to immediately receive the remains of the two martyrs because of the deliberate delay, interrogation and intimidation of the families by the PNP-Tuy and 59th IB. With so much fear and pressure, the family of another martyr could not even bring his remains home.

In some similar cases, police prevented the investigation and autopsy of the bodies of the martyrs. There have been many occasions when soldiers disrupted the vigil and funeral.



Humanitarian Mission of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog in Tuy, Batangas.

Military terror in communities

In the name of the insidious aim of completely "crushing" the revolutionary movement in the countryside or "sustain" their victory in provinces declared "insurgency-free," AFP and PNP combat operations occupy many communities in the countryside. Military and police battalions continue to be deployed in many rural and national minority communities.

AB recorded at least 15,396 victims of forced displacement and dislocation in the past seven months. The AFP soldiers' illegal use of civilian structures in populated centers affected 2,267 people including 616 children.

In total, AB recorded 63 cases of aerial bombing, strafing and artillery shelling in Abra, Kalinga, Ilocos Sur, Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya, Aurora, Nueva Ecija, Quezon, Camarines Sur, Northern Samar, Samar, Capiz, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, and Bukidnon. More than 13,000 people were victimized.

Violation of the rights of women and children

The AFP and PNP spare no one in their dirty counterinsurgency war against the revolutionary movement. In different parts of the country, many children and women are victims of military operations and are openly targeted by the armed agents of the state.

Violations of children's and women's rights are much more severe. According to the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict by the United Nations General Assembly on December 14, 1974, one considers war crimes "all forms of repression and cruel and inhumane treatment of women and children, including detention, torture, shootings, mass arrests, collective punishment, destruction of homes and forced displacement, carried out during military operations by belligerent forces (Count 5)."

According to AB records, one minor was killed by soldiers while hundreds of others were forced to evacuate and be displaced due to indiscriminate firing, shelling and bombing near their communities.

Killing of 16-year-old. The 7th IB killed 16-year-old student Eusibio Cranzo, also known as Kuni Cuba, on June 9 in Sityo Kiluding, Barangay Kiadsam, Sen. Ninoy Aquino, Sultan Kudarat. The report said Cranzo was returning home with his brother and two friends when they chanced upon the operating unit of the 7th IB. Cranzo was immediately hit by the soldiers' gunfire, while his three companions scampered to the adjacent cornfield.

Arrest of an infant. On an unspecified date in May, state forces arrested Baby Arnejo and her infant in Barangay Madao, Uson, Masbate. She is

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS VIOLATIONS
(DECEMBER 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024)

2,137
THREATS, PRESSURE,
INTIMIDATION

17,701
NUMBER OF VICTIMS

5,255
AERIAL BOMBING, STRAFING
AND ARTILLERY SHELLING

1
KILLING

5,802
FORCED EVACUATION
AND DISLOCATION

5
ARREST AND
DETENTION

accused of being an NPA member, although local residents' insist that Arnejo is a civilian and a long-time resident of the village. Police tried to take Arnejo's baby but the people fought. Due to the efforts of the residents, the baby was placed in proper custody while his mother was detained.

AB recorded four cases of rape and sexual abuse against women. These cases were recorded in Batangas, Northern Samar and Metro Manila. Meanwhile, a pregnant woman was fired upon by the AFP in Aurora.

Abuse against wives of political prisoners. At the National Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City, the police conducted a body and strip search on the wives of political detainees. During these strip and cavity searches, the women were made to strip and forced to squat several times. Under the pretext of searching for illegal drugs, they were made to squat as their private parts were inspected. After complaints filed in May, this practice was placed under investigation.

Shooting of a pregnant woman. AFP soldiers opened fire on the hut where 4-month pregnant Manilyn dela Cruz and her relatives were staying in Sityo Pinamapayan, Barangay Umiray, Dingalan, Aurora on April 21. Dela Cruz was wounded in the shooting while attempting to avoid getting shot. The military falsely claims the incident was an encounter with the NPA. Dela Cruz is a Dumagat-Remontado native of Tanay, Rizal. After the staged encounter, soldiers arrested de la Cruz on multiple charges including arson, attempted murder, direct assault with multiple murder, and attempted murder.



Manilyn dela Cruz being transported by soldiers after having been injured by the butchers' indiscriminate firing.

Mass struggle for human rights

Justice for all the victims of human rights violations by the US-Marcos regime is the Filipino people's united clamor. As part of their defense of human rights, different sectors have launched various types of mass struggle in recent months.

From legal to extra-legal initiatives, to the armed actions of the New People's Army, the people continuously fight to defend their rights and obtain justice. They expose, condemn and indict Marcos for the state's policies of repression and terrorism. Below are some of the prominent struggles in defense of human rights:

International People's Tribunal 2024

The International People's Tribunal 2024 was launched in Brussels, Belgium on May 17-18, 2024. This tribunal aims to address allegations of war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law in the Philippines. The accused are President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr., former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, President Joseph R. Biden, and the Government of the United States.

The tribunal en banc found the accused guilty of all charges of war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law as stipulated in the indictment. These include cases of extrajudicial killings and massacre of civilians, abduction, torture, and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment, attacks against civilians and civilian property, and others.

The tribunal will issue a full decision containing detailed findings and will continue to monitor the situation in the Philippines. Copies of the judgment will be sent to the accused and published for various international institutions and interested parties.



IPT 2024 in Belgium.



Legal victories in the reactionary court

Although only a very small fraction of the many trumped-up cases filed against activists, the dismissal of some were welcomed by progressives and critics, democratic organizations and sectors. In the past seven months, at least 11 cases were dismissed by the courts due to their lack of evidence.

These include the dismissal of the case of illegal possession of firearms and explosives against Cagayan Valley farmer-leader Isabelo Adviento last April. Adviento was unjustly detained for two years. On June 20, Datu Benito Bay-ao was released after the case of human trafficking filed against him in 2021 was dismissed. In Southern Tagalog, the court dismissed terrorism financing charges against two activists and a union organizer.

Supreme Court emphasizes the dangers of Red-tagging

In a decision written as early as July 4, 2023, made public last May 8, the Supreme Court declared that Red-tagging or the malicious linking of civilians to the armed movement, is a threat to the life, liberty and security of the target victims. The decision is linked to the dismissed petition for writ of amparo by Siegfred Deduro, former representative of the Bayan Muna Party-list. The decision is the first time a court has given a legal definition to the concept of Red-tagging in the Philippines. It based such recognition on the reports of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court in February found former NTF-Elcac spokesperson Lorraine Badoy-Partosa "guilty" of "indirect contempt" for Red-tagging a judge in 2022. The sentence is related to Badoy's threat against Judge Marlo Magdoza-Malagar of the Manila Regional Trial Court, who dismissed the case filed by the Department of Justice to declare the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army as terrorists.

Fact-finding mission and investigation

Human rights groups in Central Luzon launched a fact-finding mission in June to investigate the widespread damage inflicted on civilian farmers, farm workers, and even children by the AFP's extensive and successive operations in provinces of Aurora, Nueva Vizcaya, and Nueva Ecija in May and June.

Despite threats and harassment, the groups insisted on meeting residents and finding out about their situation. The mission was launched following the encounters of the NPA and the 72nd Division Reconnaissance Company on May 20 and 21 in remote parts of Dipaculao in Aurora, and May 29 in Maria Aurora, leading to the bloody killing of 10 Red fighters in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija on June 26. Bullets and bombs rained down on Alfonso Castañeda in Nueva Vizcaya last June 20.

Release of the oldest political prisoner

After continuous persistence and demand by human rights groups, the oldest political prisoner in the country, Gerardo Dela Peña, was released on June 30. He is 85 years old, the oldest among the 755 political prisoners in the country. Dela Peña was arrested on March 21, 2013. He was convicted and sentenced to *reclusion perpetua* on charges of murder, despite a clear lack of evidence.



Gerardo dela Peña with son and Fides Lim of Kapatid.

Anti-demolition barricade

The residents of Sityo Balubad, Barangay Anunas, Angeles City stood firm up for their right to housing against demolition of their homes by police and thugs of the Clark Hills Properties Corporation. From October 2023 to March they were able to thwart threats of demolition and seizure of the 73-hectare land in Sityo Balubad.

On March 12, 500 households or approximately 2,000 residents were victims of land grabbing. Police and Clark Hills used hundreds of personnel to carry out the demolition.

Hacienda Tinang: Land fought for and won

The reactionary government officially recognized 90 farmers belonging to the Independent Farmers' Association of Tinang (Makisama-Tinang) as rightful owners of 68 hectares of land in Hacienda Tinang in Concepcion, Tarlac. The recognition was done in a ceremony on May 8. This is the result of three decades of struggle for the land and resuming their land recovery campaign in the form of bungkalan (collective tilling) in June 2022.

Revolutionary justice

In Negros Occidental, the NPA-Northern Negros launched simultaneous armed actions against the mercenary Sarona Group on January 2 in the town of Purok Kawayan, Barangay Bug-ang, Toboso, Negros Occidental. The Sarona Group was involved in the massacre of the Sagay 9 (or the nine sugarcane farmers) on October 20, 2018 in Barangay Bulanon, Sagay City. The group is funded and supported by the AFP and big comprador-landlords and asenderos (hacienda owners) on the island.

The NPA ambushed and killed the leader of the group, Juvie Saron. The tractor owned by his father was also paralyzed and burned. An M2 carbine, a .45 Colt, a .357 revolver, a shotgun, various magazines and ammunition were confiscated from the Saronas' house. Their gadget containing important information was also confiscated.

Military get out!

Residents of Sitio San Pedro, Barangay 3, San Jose de Buan, Samar gathered in an assembly last week of June to express their opposition to the encampment of soldiers in their sitio. The 87th IB began to cordon off the site in the first week of June for the planned construction of a detachment in the area.

To suppress the unity of the residents, the soldiers threatened the barangay captain, the sitio leader and councilor. They were threatened with charges and imprisonment if the NPA-Western Samar (Arnulfo Ortiz Command) attacked them again.