

EDITORIAL

# The masses taking action is the answer to crisis and disasters

Floods and landslides following typhoon and southwest monsoon rains ravaged recently the National Capital Region, large parts of Luzon, and as far as Visayas and Mindanao. Water rushed down from denuded mountains causing landslides, overflowing silted rivers, and inundating vast fields in the plains. Cities were flooded as a result of overlapping infrastructure projects and reclamations that blocked waterways, as well as failed flood control system.

Nearly 50 people died and millions suffered. Millions of pesos worth of homes and property, infrastructure, crops and livelihoods were destroyed. The vulnerability of millions of poor families living in shanties, where they have little protection against typhoon winds and rains, was once again exposed.

Marcos' claims during his State of Nation Address, two days before the flooding, that his government is "ready" for any storm to come, was exposed as hollow and pure nonsense. The boasted 5,500 flood control projects, for which his government spent more than ₱255 billion last year, proved futile.

In recent years, disasters have become more frequent and more devastating to people's lives and



livelihoods. This is the result, not only of climate change, which brings extreme heat or extreme rainfall, but more so of the gross failure and neglect of the reactionary state. The Marcos regime has allowed the wanton destruction of forests and the plundering of the environment to continue, causing even greater damage to the lives and livelihoods of the masses.

Party forces and the national-democratic movement acted promptly to assist the masses amid the calamity. Many of them were also among the victims of flooding and the destruction of homes and

property. Their swift response to calamity was a display of solidarity with the people's suffering, a readiness to act to alleviate their suffering, and a consciousness to mobilize and harness the strength of the masses.

In the ravaged areas, the entire Party machinery was mobilized to collect water, food, clothing and other emergency necessities, and work with various agencies and service organizations to immediately deliver them to the victims. At the same time, they raise the masses' understanding of the causes of the disaster and the need to act to-

gether in order to collectively rise from the tragedy and defend their rights.

Strengthening the mass movement and its Party leadership is the key to the masses' effective response to disasters. On the other hand, responding to the disasters strengthen the mass movement and cultivates the initiative and spirit of collective action, solidarity and cooperation of the masses. Thus, it is necessary that where the masses suffer, the Party, the revolutionaries and democratic mass organizations act to raise the masses' consciousness and ability to respond to calamities.

In the face of calamities, it must be taught that solidarity and mutual aid are necessary, but not sufficient. It is necessary to raise the social

awareness and political consciousness of people that their sufferings are the result not of nature's contempt or "God's punishment" but of the actions of foreign and local big capitalists whose greed drives them to plunder nature and the public funds.

The people must focus on holding the US-Marcos regime and the entire reactionary state accountable for the policies and failures that aggravate the scourge of disasters on the masses. They must resist the reactionary government's program that prioritize mining, plantation expansion, land conversion for real estate projects, land reclamations, megadam construction, and others.

Worse, bureaucrats take advantage of disasters to pocket loads of profit and bureaucratic loot. The

absence of a long-term or general flood control plan must be exposed, and the hundreds of billions of pesos of public funds allocated to "flood control" projects must be revealed as a milking cow for bureaucrat capitalists and business cronies.


The masses must hold the reactionary government accountable for the harm devastation to their lives, livelihoods and property by its failure to fulfill its sworn duty to ensure the safety and well-being of the Filipino people. More than aid, social justice is the cry of the people.

In the guerrilla fronts, along with the New People's Army, organs of political power must be built or strengthened to implement policies that protect the environment, ban destructive projects, and impose sanctions on operations that plunder mountains, forests and rivers, and seize the land of the peasant masses and minority people. The masses must be mobilized to prepare for future disasters.

The recent calamity will certainly not be the last to ravage the masses of the Filipino people. Experts say the La Niña phenomenon will begin to form between August and October, which is expected to bring more rains. This is bound to bring more suffering to the Filipino masses especially in the face of the deepening crisis, rising prices of rice, meat, vegetables and other food and basic goods, and the extremely low wages and incomes of the people.

The coming crisis and calamity pose a great challenge and opportunity for the Party to lead and strengthen the entire revolutionary movement as the people's weapon to defend their well-being. All Party cadres and members should use all their ability and strength to take root and expand among the masses, to arouse, organize and mobilize the people as an even more powerful force to end all the scourges under the oppressive and exploitative system.



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# Marcos Jr's third SONA is far from the truth

Ferdinand Marcos Jr's pronouncements during his third State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 22 are far from reality and the daily suffering of the Filipino people. He only used the SONA to cover up the economic crisis and repeatedly boast of his grand-sounding "victories" and flaunt his "Bagong Pilipinas."

Marcos conjured a false reality. He deliberately downplayed glaring problems such as skyrocketing prices of food, services and utilities, insufficient wages, high unemployment and contractualization, land and livelihood grabbing, and a growing number of victims of extrajudicial killings and repression.

Only big businesses, foreign capitalists, and bureaucrat-capitalists were happy with Marcos' speech. They all benefited from his corruption, his government's all-out import liberalization policy, foreign-funded and government-guaranteed infrastructure projects strongly opposed by the people, cheap labor policy, and conversion of thousands of hectares of land to attract foreign investment.

## The People's SONA

The true state of the nation was clearly heard in the streets outside Congress, as well as in the provinces, and in the cries of migrant workers overseas. Led by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), thousands of Filipinos protested on the day of the third SONA.

Despite the rains, thousands of peasants, workers, youth, women, drivers and jeepney operators, national minorities, urban poor, teachers, health workers, government employees and other democratic sectors marched along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.



Bayan condemned the Marcos regime for wasting ₱20 million for preparation, food and other expenses for the SONA. It also condemned Marcos' deployment of 23,000 policemen in Metro Manila to impede the protests. The bulk of national democratic groups were blocked from marching to Batasan Pambansa near the Diliman Doctors Hospital.

More than 600 people from Southern Tagalog joined the protest. Before the SONA, they held a caravan led by the regional chapter of Bayan. The regional delegation staged a series of protests at various agencies in Metro Manila, including a rally at the US embassy.

Meanwhile, Makabayan Bloc representatives dated to wore 'protest outfits' or clothing with painted slogans and images of the sectors they represent, defying an earlier ban by Congress and threats to bar their entry.

Similar protests and marches were also launched in Baguio City on July 21, and in Albay, Naga City, Cebu City, Bacolod City, Iloilo City, Roxas City in Capiz, Aklan, and

Davao City on July 22. The activities took place despite the militarization of rural villages and police blockades and checkpoints in the city.

Around 200 political prisoners held a one-day protest fast to condemn the Marcos regime and to expose their conditions in overcrowded prisons. More than 100 fasted in the island of Negros. Those in Palawan, Camarines Sur and Metro Manila also expressed solidarity.

Despite being thousands of miles away from the motherland, Filipino migrant groups in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia staged activities led by Bayan and Migrante chapters from July 21 to July 24.

Activities were held in five cities in Canada, in seven areas in the United States where 1,100 Filipinos participated, in Austria, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. There were mass actions in three places in Australia while one was held in New Zealand. In Asia, Filipino migrants held activities in Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

# Corruption and fascism is the face of NTF-Elcac's SBDP in Northern Samar

Congress is again holding national budget hearings. As expected, the National Task Force (NTF)-Elcac is again asking for billions of pesos for its Support to the Barangay Development Program (SBDP). In the National Expenditure Program submitted on July 28, Ferdinand Marcos Jr allocated ₱7.8 billion for the fascist agency. Last year, it received ₱2.16 billion for 864 "cleared" barangays. Contrary to the promise of improving the lives of peasants (supposedly to discourage them from supporting the armed struggle), the masses remain impoverished and even more oppressed because the fascist military used the SBDP as a cover to further torment the people.

## Suffering in Barangay Hitapi-an

Barangay Hitapi-an in Catubig, Northern Samar is one of those included in NTF-Elcac's SBDP in 2021, which received a ₱20-million fund. Two other barangays in Catubig (Osang, Nagooan) were included in the SBDP of NTF-Elcac that year.

Promises of farm-to-market roads (FMR), classrooms, economic programs and financial aid to residents were made left and right in exchange for their "withdrawal of support" to the New People's Army. These include the "pastry" project, and goat and duck farms. But all these failed after three years. In Osang, piles up sewing machines lay idle because the residents did not receive any sewing orders.

The 20th IB and NTF-Elcac blamed these failures on the residents for "having no training," and on the local government for failing in

its supposed role of preparing preliminary studies. Local officials said they were not consulted when these projects were planned and initially implemented.

It took almost four years for NTF-Elcac to finish paving the 400-meter road in Hitapi-an. Evidently without a proper plan, soldiers paved in the middle of the rice field destroying farms. The project cost a staggering ₱14 million, or ₱35,000 per meter of road. This is far more expensive than the agency's similar FMRs in other regions, indicating a major anomaly. Worse, the road only reached the edge of the adjacent barangay and is far from the "market" or commercial center. The trip from the Catubig town center to Hitapi-an is still described as "muddy, far, and cuts across rice fields." The AFP next plans to build an evacuation center, touted to be

the biggest in town, although this is not the barangay's priority.

The 20th IB placed Hitapi-an and the cluster of barangays targeted for SBDP under the Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP). Residents were required to "surrender" before they could avail of the benefits. The area was subjected under strict military control. Ang Bayan recorded at least 26 cases of serious human rights violations throughout Catubig from January 2021 to June 2024. These include extrajudicial killings, abductions, indiscriminate shootings and intimidation. In Hitapi-an and Osang, in particular, AB documented destruction of property, illegal searches and seizures, and threats to civilians.

In 2023, units of the 74th IB were deployed into this cluster to "assist" the 20th IB which was "incompetent" in defeating what then was claimed was a few remaining Red fighters in Northern Samar. The two battalions are in fierce competition in taking credit over civilians "requesting clearance" to claim bounty and funds from the ECLIP program.

Since last year, both military units have repeatedly imposed strict lockdowns on these barangays since. Soldiers are nervous and always on edge at the thought that they are surrounded by people who continue to support the revolutionary movement, fearing that the NPA might attack them at any moment. They closely monitor the residents' every move and limit even their work hours. They also strictly monitor people who come and leave the barangay, requiring everyone to sign the logbook for fear of NPA "infiltration". They restrict the purchase of food, fuel and other consumables in the belief that these will be passed on to Red fighters. AB



## Groups hold Marcos-San Miguel responsible for Manila Bay oil spill

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS ARE holding the San Miguel Corporation and the Marcos regime responsible for the oil spill from the sunken ship MT Terra Nova in Manila Bay. They should be held responsible for the damage caused by the oil spill to the community's livelihood, the ecological system and the people's health.

MT Terra Nova is a tanker contracted by Petron Corporation, a company owned by San Miguel Corporation, to deliver 1.4 million liters of industrial fuel to Panay island. The Philippine Coast Guard allowed it to sail despite rough weather. It sank a few kilometers off the coast of Limay, Bataan on July 25 and began leaking oil two days later.

This is the second major oil spill under the Marcos regime. Last year, the MT Princess Empress sank near Lubang, Oriental Mindoro, spilling its cargo of 800,000 liters of oil contracted by Petron for delivery. Nearly 25,000 fisherfolk today still suffer from the damage it caused along the coasts of Oriental Mindoro and adjacent provinces. Petron was also involved in the Cavite oil spill in 2016 (500,000 liters); and the worst oil spill in Guimaras (2.1 million liters) in 2006.

Oil that usually leaks from ships pose a danger to human health. It contains toxic chemicals such as mercury, arsenic and lead. These cause skin and respiratory irritation and cancer. It also adversely affects the environment and ecosystem in the ocean and coast. In the long term, its chemicals affect fish reproduction which will greatly reduce fisherfolk's catch long after the oil spill.

Once the oil spill spreads widely, it will devastate the livelihood of at least 29,000 fisherfolk in Cavite. The cost of damage to the livelihood of 46,000 fisherfolk in Central Luzon, Region 4A and the National Capital Region may reach ₱351 million. The oil spill threatens to damage mangroves, seagrass, coral reefs and fisheries.



### UP-Diliman transport strike.

Drivers and jeepney operators plying within the UP Diliman campus staged a transport strike last August 1 to oppose the entry of an e-jeepney cooperative that will displace traditional jeepneys from their route in the campus. The UP Transport Group led the action and was supported by students, teachers, and university workers and employees. The group also submitted a letter to the leadership of UP-Diliman. It outlined their six demands.

**First day of classes.** Teachers belonging the ACT-Philippines staged a protest in Mendiola in Manila on July 29, coinciding with the opening of classes. They condemned the Marcos regime for its neglect and flawed education policies, and its failure to address the chronic shortage of classrooms, teachers, support personnel in the education sector, teaching equipment and facilities.

**Typhoon Carina victims picket.** Urban poor and environmental groups launched a series of picket-protests on July 29 before the offices of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Metro Manila. They are holding the Marcos regime and its agencies accountable for their neglect of duties to victims of Typhoon Carina victims.

## Party courses, launched in Southern Tagalog

AT LEAST 21 individuals completed the Party's intermediate and advanced courses consecutively conducted in Southern Tagalog in May and June, according to a report in the June issue of Kalatas, revolutionary newspaper in the region. The graduates were from Party branches in the people's army and town centers.



This is part of the consolidation work following the summings up of the Party committees.

The study meetings were held amid an ongoing focused military operations by fascist troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It owes its success to the determination of the committee and units, close coordination and efficient analysis and initiative of the people's army's command unit, and the unwavering support of the people.

## Drivers and operators continue to oppose jeepney phaseout

DRIVERS AND OPERATORS continue to demand the scrapping of the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program (PUVMP), which seeks to phase out and replace jeepneys with expensive and outdated imported mini-buses. This was after the Department of Transportation (DOTr) declared continuing the PUVMP despite the senate's second resolution calling for a suspension of the program.

The senate took notice of the large number of jeepneys that refused to consolidate, as the very expensive mini-buses are beyond the means of drivers and operators.

Whether it gets suspended or not, the PUVMP has already done a lot of damage to the livelihood of drivers and operators. It has tried to prevent large number of jeepneys from plying their routes amid threats of accosting non-consolidated jeepneys, charging drivers and impounding their jeepneys.

This is despite the LTFRB's unpublicized resolution on April 30 that allowed non-consolidated jeepneys to operate on routes with zero or low consolidated franchise. The LTFRB deliberately concealed this from drivers and operators to force a large number of drivers who have refused to consolidate to submit to the PUVMP.

The program is a burden even on those who have consolidated and have been forced to buy expensive easily damaged vehicles with parts that are hard to find. In Iloilo City, the PUVMP resulted in the reduction of many routes of small cooperatives, and the monopolization of major routes within the city by large corporations.

Piston continues the call for the return of their 5-year individual franchise and for drivers forced to join the consolidation, to withdraw their application for consolidation.

## Protests oust fascist Bangladeshi leader

THE PEOPLE OF Bangladesh ousted the country's prime minister Sheik Hasina Wazed yesterday, August 5, amid massive protests against her rule. She was ousted a day after the country's bloodiest protests, in which police opened fire on thousands of protesters, instantly killing more than 90 and injuring hundreds.

The protests began at universities against the quota system for employment in the civil bureaucracy. Resistance quickly grew after Hasina's forces repeatedly attacked demonstrations. Hasina imposed a curfew, blocked internet access, and shut down universities and the media. Protesting citizens demanded Hasina's ouster at the height of police brutality. In total, more than 300 have been killed since protests erupted in June.

At the heart of the protests by students and citizens of Bangladesh is the severe economic crisis, and the lack of jobs and opportunities in the country. The only decent jobs in the country, especially for college graduates, are government jobs which became limited because of the quota system. The Supreme Court has already reformed this system in the second week of July.

## Nexperia workers to launch strike

THE NEXPERIA PHILIPPINES Inc. Workers' Union (NPIWU)-NAFLU-KMU members numbering 1,246 out of a total of 1,883 voted in favor of launching a strike against the company's mass lay-offs. The union conducted the strike vote on July 29-30 in Cabuyao, Laguna.

The activity went smoothly after blatant management interference on July 17-18 which delayed polling. The union filed a Notice of Strike on June 26.

**Worker in the senate.** On August 2, at the NPIWU-NAFLU-KMU assembly, Jerome Adonis, Kilusang Mayo Uno general secretary, announced running for senator under the Makabayan Coalition in the upcoming 2025 election. Adonis, who has been a KMU organizer for 22 years, is the third candidate under Makabayan.

## US meddling in Venezuelan elections

VENEZUELA SUCCESSFULLY HELD presidential elections on July 28. Incumbent President Nicolas Maduro, one of Latin America's staunchest anti-imperialist leaders, won. He received 51.2% of the votes, against his opponent Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia, who got 44.2%.

The US and its Latin American allies attempted to disrupt the election by hacking the data transmission system which delayed the release of the results. Unsuccessful, it declared the election "fraudulent" and recognized Urrutia as the "winner" despite having no evidence.

Urrutia was a substitute to opposition candidate Maria Corina Machado, who was barred from running because of her support for the US in imposing economic sanctions that have crippled Venezuela, and for calling for foreign military intervention to oust Maduro.

# US intervention in Asia goes "hypermodes"

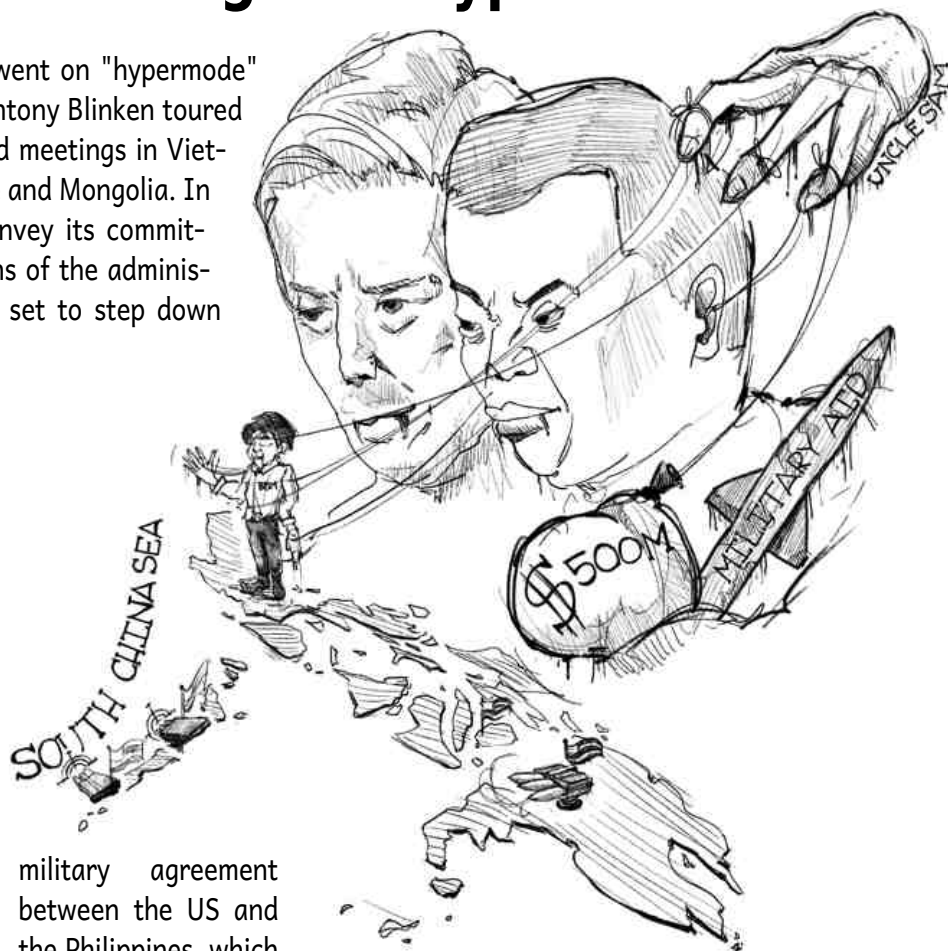
US imperialist intervention in Asia went on "hypermodes" in July. From July 25, State Sec. Antony Blinken toured six countries in Asia in 10 days and held meetings in Vietnam, Laos, Japan, Philippines, Singapore and Mongolia. In a statement, the US said it aims to convey its commitment to the region in the last six months of the administration of Pres. Joseph Biden. Biden is set to step down after the US election in November.

In Japan and the Philippines, Blinken paired with Defense Sec. Lloyd Austin in the so-called 2+2 meeting with their ministerial counterparts.

The US pushed Japan to increase its military budget to "historic levels" in order to boost its military capabilities against its common rival China. This includes Japan's development of nuclear weapons under the guise of "nuclear deterrence." The US also strengthened its so-called US Forces Japan in Tokyo, the US military command center that oversees at least 120 active US military bases in the country. More than 55,000 American troops are permanently stationed in Japan.

Blinken arrived in the Philippines on July 29 for diplomatic and security meetings. This is his third visit to the country in the past two years. On July 30, for the first time, the 2+2 meeting was held in the Philippines, which has always been held in the US since it started in 2012. Blinken and Austin met with Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo and Department of National Defense secretary Gilberto Teodoro. Earlier, the two US officials met with Ferdinand Marcos at Malacañang on July 29.

In the meeting, they discussed the plan for the formation of the General Security of Military Information Agreement. This agreement would involve a sham "sharing" of sensitive military information between the two countries. This is likely to be yet another one-sided



military agreement between the US and the Philippines, which will compel only the Philippines for providing "sensitive information". This will only formalize the long-standing US intervention in internal matters related to the national security of the Philippines.

Austin also announced the \$500 million US military aid to the Philippines. This amount is 12 times greater than the \$40 million average annual US military aid to the Philippines. This will be used to "buy" secondhand weapons and military vehicles, which the US wants to dump into the country under the guise of "modernizing" the AFP. It aims to further bind the Philippines to US geopolitical strategy and use the country as a launching pad for its planned war in the region. Apart from this, Austin announced the allocation of \$128 million for construction in at least nine more military bases under the EDCA for the exclusive use of American troops.

Protests greeted Blinken and

Austin's return visit to the Philippines. Various groups went to Camp Aguinaldo on July 30 to condemn the Marcos regime for allowing two war criminals into the country. They said, these two are responsible for provoking war in different parts of the world, and for promoting genocide in Palestine.

They also condemn Marcos for his mendacity and servility to two imperialist agents, for allowing the presence of foreign troops and surrendering the country's sovereignty to the increasing number of "EDCA sites" and war games that devastate the livelihood of the people. On July 31, youth groups held a flash rally in front of the US embassy.

In Japan, there was a similar protest on July 28 in conjunction with the US-Japan 2+2 ministerial meet in Tokyo. Activists both in Japan and the Philippines raised their voices, "Blinken at Austin, not welcome!"

# AFP kills 4 people

Military forces mercilessly killed three *hors de combat* and an old farmer in recent weeks. Eight were arrested and charged with fabricated criminal charges.

In Negros Occidental, the 15th IB and police accosted 69-year-old farmer Ramon Enseniales in Sitio Pasto, Barangay Basak, Cauayan, took him to the forest, and wilfully killed him on July 29.

The 15th IB also killed two *hors de combat* fighters of the NPA-Southwest Negros in Barangay Camindangan, Sipalay City in same province. On July 29, the 15th IB captured 23-year-old Red fighter Reggie Fundador (Ka Tata) in Sitio Badyang. His body, with clear signs of torture, was found the next day on the road at Crossing Magtanday, Barangay Camindangan. On August 1, the 15th IB killed *hors de combat* Alvin Lumagsao Sinsano (Ka Zian) in Sitio Cambuguiot in the same barangay.

In Rizal, the 80th IB arrested and then deliberately killed Wally Agudes (Ka KM) on July 18 in Barangay Burgos, Rodriguez. Ka KM was staying in the community because of his severe flu.

**Arrest.** State forces illegally arrested and tortured four peasant or-

ganizers, namely, Maria Theresa Buscayno, Desiree Jaranilla Patuñ-og, Andres Ely, and Oliver Millo on the evening of July 29. They were picked up while traveling along Jose Abad Santos Avenue in Mexico, Pampanga.

They were charged with illegal possession of firearms and explosives. Police claim weapons and grenades were confiscated from them. They are now detained in San Fernando, Pampanga.

On July 11, the 203rd IBde arrested the leader of Sitio Lukban, Barangay Panaytayan, Mansalay in Oriental Mindoro, G. Itaw Ramunyan. He is being implicated in a battle between a unit of the 203rd IBde and the NPA at that sitio in the morning of that day.

A few days later, soldiers arrested and detained two more Mangyan-Hanunuo indigenous people along with their two passengers while traveling to Sitio Tambangan, San Roque, Bulalacao.



In Rizal, Laila Ramos, an organizer of the national minority Dumagat-Remontado, was also arrested in July.

**Demolition.** Megaland Prime Estate Corporation personnel violently demolished the Donald Compound at FB Harrison St in Pasay City on August 1, destroying 40 houses and affecting 500 residents.

The police on August 3 picked up activist Benedict Macabenta who was in the area to support the residents. The police stomped on him and repeatedly punched him in the face.

In Quezon City, at least three women residents of King Christian St, Barangay Bagbag, Novaliches were injured on July 28 while protesting the illegal fencing and demolition of their community. Some 30 workers and thugs of land grabber Roberto Collantes were ordered to demolish the houses in the area.

**Harassment.** Three media workers media and a local government information officer in Masbate were charged with murder and accused of being members of the NPA last July. This followed their filing of 11 cases of plunder against Gov. Antonio Kho of Masbate and his staff on March 25 over corruption in local projects in the province.

In Quezon City, labor organizer Grace Villota had a gun pointed at her by assailants who threatened her at the University of the Philippines-Diliman on the night of July 22. AB

## NCIP's "free wifi" in Rizal, for surveillance

RESIDENTS OF BARANGAY San Rafael, Rodriguez, Rizal expressed alarm after the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) installed "free wifi" in their barangay last May, aware that it would be used by the National Task Force-Elcac to monitor them.

The report said the NCIP itself revealed the purpose of the "free service." In a May 24 meeting, its staff instructed residents to use the free wifi to "contact the NTF-Elcac and report things to maintain peace in the barangay."

Users of the service must provide their name, age and gender, which means the NCIP and NTF-Elcac will collate users' personal information. The "free service" was built in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program and the Broadband ng Masa program.



**30%**

only of the "master plan" for flood control in the NCR was completed in the last decade. None have been resumed in Marcos' 2 years in office.



**1,002**

schools failed to open last July 29 following typhoon Carina and the southwest monsoon.

This is due to the incompetence and lack of preparations by the DepEd and the Marcos regime.



**₱848 BILLION**

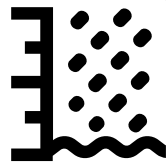
was automatically allocated for the interest payments on the national debt in the 2025 budget proposal, 25.6% higher than last year.

**₱89.9 BILLION**

"unspent" funds of Philhealth was "returned" to the national treasury, despite the large number of patients who did not receive benefits.

**461.4 millimeters**

of rain fell on July 25 during the rampage of Typhoon Carina and southwest monsoon, more than the 455 mm volume of rain during Typhoon Ondoy in 2009.



**\$152 trillion**

amount of resources plundered by rich countries from underdeveloped and semicolonial countries from 1960 to 2018. This includes billions of tons of raw materials and billions of hours of cheap labor from these countries.

*Source: Plunder in the Post-Colonial Era: Quantifying Drain from the Global South Through Unequal Exchange, 1960-2018*

**359**

cases of drug-related extrajudicial killings were recorded in Marcos' second year in power, contrary to his pronouncement that the "war on drugs" has been "bloodless."

*Source: DahasPh*

**48%**

of married Filipinas were physically abused by their husbands.

# Dam projects in Kalinga, to bring devastation and flooding

With the onset of rains, the people of Northern and Central Luzon are again gripped by mounting fears over the devastation and flooding that will come with the Marcos regime's planned dam construction in the Cordillera. More than 100 hydropower dam business projects are to be built in the region, with at least 20 on major Kalinga rivers.

Rivers and creeks in Kalinga serve as sources of drinking water and irrigation. Major products here are rice, corn, coffee, bananas and various types of beans.

The main river in the province is the Chico River which originates in the Mountain Province and runs for 175 kilometers before joining the Cagayan River. Instead of protecting these water resources, and developing them to increase production and the needs of the people, the Marcos regime is auctioning them off to foreign and local capitalists. On the pretext of promoting "renewable energy," the Marcos regime is pushing hydropower dams as a source of electricity.

The Cordillera is considered to have the greatest potential for hydropower. Marcos and his cronies drool over the funds that imperialist countries will pour into the construction of dams in the name of "mitigating the climate crisis." He awarded full privileges to companies, including tax exemptions and other incentives.

Included in efforts to attract foreigners, approval of applications are being expedited and facilitated. Government agencies are being used to deceive, divide and coerce national minority groups to support these projects. The AFP is also assigned to protect the projects and suppress opposition against them.

The largest of the projects is the Chico River Hydropower Project which is expected to have a total capacity of 150 megawatts. It is led

by San Lorenzo Ruiz Piat Energy and Water, Inc.

## Extensive damage

These projects bring nothing but widespread destruction to the indigenous people of Kalinga and Cordillera, and people of adjacent regions. Many trees will be uprooted for the construction of the dams, and the land will be polluted and destroyed. Companies will appropriate minerals extracted from the land.

Some communities will be flooded, while others will be deprived of access to water. Communities downstream of the dam will experience flash flood. This is the experience in Cagayan Valley when typhoon Ulysses struck in November 2020. Sixty towns and cities were submerged after the Magat Dam had to be opened due to overflowing rivers, affecting more than 300,000 citizens.

Meanwhile, communities upstream will experience siltation or shallowing of the river, caused by the accumulation of soil and changes in the flow of water.

Regardless of the design, the dam will reduce people's access to free water for irrigation and household use. The companies assure people that only "small dams" will be constructed, but if built in a series in the same river, the effect will be the same as a single big dam, according to the Cordillera



People's Democratic Front (CPDF)-Kalinga.

The flow and depth of the water will also affect the flora and fauna that thrive in and around the water system. They can be washed away by rising waters or by the river's heavy flow of water into the tunnels. Wildlife along the side of the river may also die if the water rises and the silt increases.

Amid all these, the CPDF-Kalinga calls for the broadest unity among the people in the Cordillera to collectively defend their land and resources. Forms of unity that should be used include progressive and revolutionary *bodongs* (tribal peace pacts), the establishment of the Cordillera People's Revolutionary Autonomous Government (CPRAG) and CPDF chapters.

They also call for unity with the people in other regions of the Philippines and in other countries who resist the seizure of their land and resources by capitalist companies.

*Adopted from the CPDF-Kalinga primer, May 2024.*

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