

EDITORIAL

Rise up against oppression and hardship under the Marcos regime

The Marcos regime was roundly condemned by various sectors over recent claims made by its economic officials that Filipinos need only ₱64 a day to be not considered food poor. Marcos is brazenly fooling the people to obscure the true number of people suffering and facing hunger in the Philippines.

With Marcos having set a very low standard of decent living, his government now claims that only one in ten Filipinos are poor. Marcos demonstrates outright contempt of the majority of Filipinos who every day toil hard but do not make enough wages or income to meet the needs of their families.

Marcos and his officials are deliberately concealing the true cost of living in the Philippines. He weaves

an illusion that Filipinos are increasingly "middle class", to hide the fact that the majority of Filipinos are mired in poverty.

The impossibly low statistics on hunger and poverty serve Marcos' policy of pegging wages and salaries of workers and ordinary employees to the lowest possible level. For the past two years, Marcos has turned a deaf ear to demands for substantial increases. Public school

teachers and government employees were grossly insulted by his recent boast of a ₱26/day wage that amounted to mere crumbs dropped from the Malacañang banquet tables.

The standard of living of the masses of the Filipino people is rapidly deteriorating. Under Marcos, the prices of food, especially rice, as well as fuel, transportation, electricity and other basic necessities and services, have skyrocketed. Wages remain low, and government-mandated increases are measly. The daily amount to meet the minimum standards for decent living for a family of five is now around ₱1,200.



In the face of the huge gap between wages and salaries, on the one hand, and the basic needs of Filipino families, on the other hand, workers and the masses must fight for the recognition of their basic social and economic rights. They should assert, in particular, their right to a higher standard of living and a better quality of life, and to needed wage increases, jobs and livelihood.

The public should hold the Marcos regime to account for its utter failure to curb the sharp increases in the prices of basic goods, services and other commodities, and for its policy of wage suppression. The Marcos government has failed to do anything to fulfill its claimed responsibility as a state that ensures the welfare of its people.

Marcos' neoliberal economic policies are centered on attracting and relying on foreign investments, import liberalization, unbridled debt, and the imposition of additional taxes. These are the cause of the worsening economic crisis and the deterioration of the condition of the masses. These serve the interests of foreign capitalists, their local big business partners, big landowners and bureaucrat capitalists. They run

away with billions of pesos from government infrastructure projects, plundering the nation's wealth and exploiting cheap labor.

These policies have resulted in a steady decline in local production of food and other basic necessities, an increase in the prices of consumer goods, acute unemployment (especially among the youth), extremely low wages, the dispossession of livelihood and the displacement of fisherfolk and the poor, land grabbing, economic dislocation of peasants, environmental destruction and plundering of the country's national resources.

The policies of the Marcos regime add fuel to the grievances of the broad masses of the people. Their hatred for Marcos is deepened by his efforts to recover the hundreds of billions of pesos of wealth



stolen by their family during his father's dictatorship. Their discontent is further exacerbated by Marcos's squandering of billions of pesos in jetsetting, Malacañang banquets, control over the smuggling of rice, sugar and other commodities, outright bribery in government projects, control of the Maharlika Investment Fund to promote the business of his cronies, and other cases of corruption.

Worse, Marcos uses the armed forces of the state to sow fascist terrorism against the people to oppress the people, destroy their unity and crush their resistance.

In the face of this situation, national democratic forces must work hard to arouse and unite the broadest ranks of the people, especially the masses suffering under Marcos. The consciousness of the masses must be thoroughly raised to help them see how their suffering and hunger are not the product of fate, which cannot be resolved through resilience, nor should be tolerated. They should see that this is a direct result of the policies and programs of the Marcos regime and its foreign imperialist masters.

The broad masses should be enlightened about the need to come together and take action through various forms of resistance to defend their rights and advance their interests. Their ranks should come together in the form of unions and various types of organizations in factories, urban and rural communities, schools, offices, and so forth.

The struggle of the Filipino people against the anti-people and anti-national Marcos regime is part of the overall struggle to end the semicolonial and semifeudal system by waging a national democratic struggle, through various forms of resistance, especially, through armed struggle. The rule of exploitative and oppressive classes must be put to an end. As the most concentrated expression of this rotten system, the fascist, puppet, oppressive and oppressive US-Marcos regime is the central target of the people's resistance. AB

ANG Bayan

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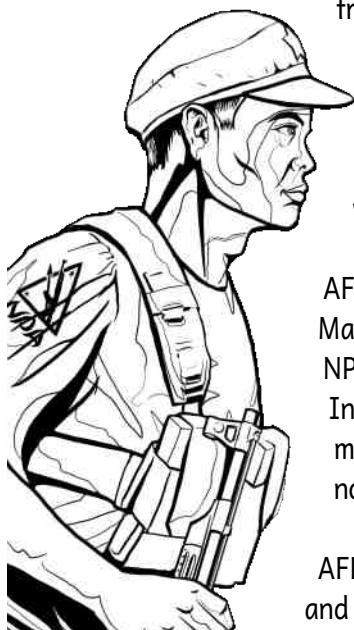
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NPA-Masbate launches consecutive harassment operations

THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA)-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) Red fighters harassed soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in consecutive operations against two military camps in Milagros town, Masbate last August 10. The NPA-Masbate fired on the camp of the 93rd Division Reconnaissance Company in Sitio San Jose, Barangay Hamorawon and the 2nd IB camp in Barangay San Antonio at 9 p.m.

The unit said this was to express their condemnation of the ongoing Pacific Partnership 2024-2 (PP24-2) "humanitarian mission" of American and Filipino troops in Legazpi City, Albay in the Bicol region from August 1 to 14.



In North Central Mindanao, at least six soldiers were killed in an NPA attack and active defensive actions in March and July. Meanwhile, 12 soldiers were injured in these armed actions.

In Bukidnon, the NPA opened fire on AFP troops operating in Barangay Manalog, Malaybalay City on July 5. On March 6, the NPA fired on attacking soldiers in Barangay Indalasa. The NPA defended itself on the morning of March 18 in Barangay Dominorog, Talakag.

In Lanao del Sur, the NPA thwarted an AFP attack on the border towns of Maguing and Bumbaran on March 11.

Protests mark International Day of Indigenous Peoples

INDIGENOUS GROUPS IN different parts of the Philippines commemorated the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on August 9. Led by the Katribu Kalipunan ng Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas, together with national democratic and environmental groups, they expressed their grievances at Camp Aguinaldo and the offices of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

They condemned the AFP for its militarization, bombing and harassment of indigenous communities. They also asserted before the DENR the rights of national minorities to their ancestral land and self-determination amid the continuing sale of natural resources to foreign capitalists and militarizations of their communities. They condemned the agency for colluding with big mining and dam companies that destroy the environment and drive them away their lands.

At the NCIP, they held the agency accountable for its gross neglect of indigenous communities. They accused it of incompetence amid widespread human rights violations against indigenous peoples' defenders, such as Dexter Capuyan and Bazoo de Jesus, and the unjust conviction of the Talaingod 13. They also condemned the agency for changing the FPIC application process without consulting the indigenous people. They also held the agency accountable for its close ties to the NTF-Elcac, the state's instrument responsible for a number human rights violations against national minorities.

Tribute to the August Martyrs of Panay

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of the Philippines, the New People's Army (NPA), the entire revolutionary movement and the masses saluted and gave recognition to the 10 Party cadres and fighters of the people's army who were martyred in a series of encounters during the first and second week of August in Lambunao and Calinog in Iloilo.

The martyred revolutionaries came from different generations of workers, peasants and student youth. The martyrs were identified as Benjamin Cortel (Mamang/Ruby) who died in Barangay Aglonok on August 5, Jose Jerry Takaisan (Miller) who was martyred in Barangay Cabatangan on August 7 and Romulo Ituriaga Gangoso (Pedik/Regan), Armando Rogelio Sabares (Nene/Kulot), Aurelio "Boy" Bosque (Rio/Zarko/Baijan), Jovelyn Silverio (Akay/Purang), and Jielmor Gauranoc (Tango/Doc) who perished in Barangay Aglonok on August 8.

Successive battles took place in the borders of Janiuay, Lambunao and Calinog in Iloilo, Valderama in Antique and Libacao in Aklan. These areas have long been subjected to focused military operations saturated by hordes of CAFGU, police, and military forces of the 12th IB, 82nd IB, 61st IB and DRC under the 3rd ID.

Meanwhile, the identity of three other martyrs announced by the AFP are still being confirmed, namely Vicente Hinojales (Ka Emil), secretary of the regional committee of the Party in Panay and member of the Central Committee; Concepcion Araneta-Bocala (Ka Concha), consultant in peace talks; and Rewilmar Torrato (Ka Vivian).

Stab wounds and bruises on the body and bound feet of some remains recovered by the families strongly suggest that some of victims were captured and tortured while in military custody.

The soldiers terrorized and even tried to prevent relatives from retrieving the remains of their loved ones. The families are being offered "financial support" in exchange for not filing charges.

Liza Maza and Ronnel Arambulo, 4th and 5th Makabayan candidates for Senate

THE MAKABAYAN COALITION warmly welcomed the announcements of Liza Maza, former representative of the Gabriela Women's Party and the coalition's co-chairperson, and Ronnel Arambulo, Pamalakaya vice president, of their plan to run for the Senate. Maza made her declaration on August 15 in an urban-poor community, while Arambulo announced his plans in a fishing community in Navotas on August 19. Both are known mass leaders who stand firmly for the interests of the masses and against US imperialism. Arambulo, a Laguna de Bay fisherman, has been active in the campaign against Chinese harassment and in asserting the rights of fisherfolk in traditional and territorial fisheries.

Meanwhile, Maza and Makabayan condemned the attempt of the Marcos regime, through the NTF-Elcac, to block Maza's declaration. Its agents harassed community residents in North Caloocan where the mass meeting was to be held, forcing its transfer.

Makabayan calls for support to the candidacies of Maza and Arambulo, as well as its three previously declared candidates, Rep. France Castro of the ACT Teachers Party, Rep. Arlene Brosas of Gabriela Women's Party, and Jerome Adonis of Kilusang Mayo Uno.



3-day transport strike against jeepney phase-out, mounted anew. Jeepney drivers and operators again launched a transport strike in Metro Manila last August 14-16 against the anti-poor and pro-foreign transportation "modernization" program. They condemned Ferdinand Marcos Jr for refusing to heed the Senate resolution suspending the program until the issues raised by the drivers and operators are addressed. All the senators signed the resolution except Risa Hontiveros of Akbayan. Piston and Manibela led the transport strike.

Calls to scrap MATATAG curriculum. Around 100 teachers and education workers under ACT protested before the DepEd in Pasig City on August 15 calling for the immediate scrapping of the MATATAG curriculum. They said it imposes excessive workloads and burdens teachers, aggravated by meager salary increases of the Marcos regime. They criticized the implementation of curriculum without an assessment of the learning crisis, and the lack of genuine and democratic consultation with teachers and education workers. Its excessive workload and shortened hours per subject area are exhausting teachers.

Petitions for writ of amparo and habeas data filed with the Supreme Court. The families and lawyers of the disappeared Dexter Capuyan and Gene Roz Jamil de Jesus (Bazoo) picketed before the Supreme Court in Manila on August 14 after filing a writ of amparo and writ of habeas data in court. They filed this after the Court of Appeals dismissed earlier petition in September 2023.

Repression of student leaders. In Tacloban City, police violently dispersed a protest action of UP student leaders on August 16. They were in the city to attend the annual UP student council gathering. Police dragged and handcuffed a student leader. Police cordoned 100 students and detained them for two hours.

UP-AFP "Declaration of cooperation" violates academic freedom

THE "DECLARATION OF COOPERATION" between the University of the Philippines (UP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) signed on August 8 elicited widespread denunciation. It is a brazen violation of academic freedom, critics said.

The university's entry into this agreement would make UP complicit in widespread human rights violations and political repression perpetrated by the AFP, its opponents said. This legitimizes the current repression of critical voices and progressive initiatives within the university which the AFP calls a threat to "national security."

Defend UP. Students of UP Diliman launched the "First Day Fight" on August 20 to codemn the various failures of the university. They also opposed budget cuts on education and the commercialization of university spaces and services. They rejected police and military intervention in its campuses. Similar protests were conducted in other UP campuses in Baguio, Manila, Laguna, Davao, Cebu and Iloilo in the past weeks.



Massive US military presence in the South China Sea

Every week, Philippine news is filled with the presence of Chinese fishing, naval and coast guard vessels in some parts of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and throughout the South China Sea (SCS). On the other hand, the huge presence of US military forces in these waters is rarely reported, except when there are large-scale war games with the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Furthermore, the prolonged presence of American forces in the region and the ongoing resistance of Asian people have not merited news coverage.

Since 1943, the US 7th Fleet has been permanently stationed in Southeast Asia. Its operations cover the Indian Ocean and West Pacific, including the South China Sea. It was stationed at Subic Bay in Zambales from 1945 until the Philippine Senate abrogated the Military Bases Agreement on September 16, 1991. The base of the 7th Fleet was moved to Yokosuka, Japan despite widespread opposition from the Japanese people.

Since the 2010s, the US has gradually shifted 60% of its naval assets to Asia to use against supposed "anti-access/area denial" (A2/AD) operations of its imperialist rival China. Under the guise of the rights and freedoms of all nations to navigation, it pushed the militarist "freedom of navigation operations" (fonops) to assert the uninterrupted entry and exit of its large warships, submarines and

bombers in the EEZs of countries surrounding the SCS. This includes the Taiwan Strait which China considers its maritime territory. The US claims the right of its warships to "innocent passage" through this narrow channel, creating tension with China. The US insists on these broad rights not only in the seas, but also in the airspace.

Starting in 2020, the US deployed three more large ships in Asia for A2/AD operations in the SCS. This year, the US has conducted 15 voyages through the Taiwan Strait, accompanied by Canadian ships.

In 2023, the US carrier strike groups (CSG) USS Ronald Reagan, USS Nimitz and USS Carl Vinson sailed simultaneously in the SCS. (A CSG is composed of an aircraft carrier and 5-6 smaller naval vessels, with a total crew of up to 7,500.) Later last year, the USS Abraham Lincoln sailed here. They all passed

through the Bashi Channel between Batanes and Taiwan six times, deliberately sailing the ocean within the 9-dash line claimed by China.

From northern Luzon, they sailed toward the Balabac Strait in Palawan, to the northern part of the waters forming the boundary of the EEZ of Malaysia and Indonesia before returning to the Bashi Channel. The previous three weeks to one-month deployment at the SCS became two weeks to 48 days. Other US ships sailed through the Taiwan Strait six times.

These ships, accompanied by four surveillance vessels, two amphibious ready groups and three giant oceanographic survey ships, spent a total of 314 days in the SCS. It has also deployed more than 10 nuclear-powered submarines carrying nuclear weapons. One of them, the USS Kentucky armed with nuclear missiles, was met with protests when it docked in South Korea on July 17, 2023.

US bomber and reconnaissance flights also form part of the fonops. By 2023, the US had flown at least 20 B-52Hs from its Guam base. It had also reportedly flown surveillance planes from Japan, South Korea and Clark Airbase in Pampanga 1,000 times. China reported that 100 of these flew at the edge of its territorial airspace.

The US also operates its advanced MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) from its drone base in Okinawa, Japan. Residents of Okinawa strongly opposed the deployment of these drones on their island, citing the high potential of air accidents involving such UAVs. **AB**



The bloated budget for war and suppression

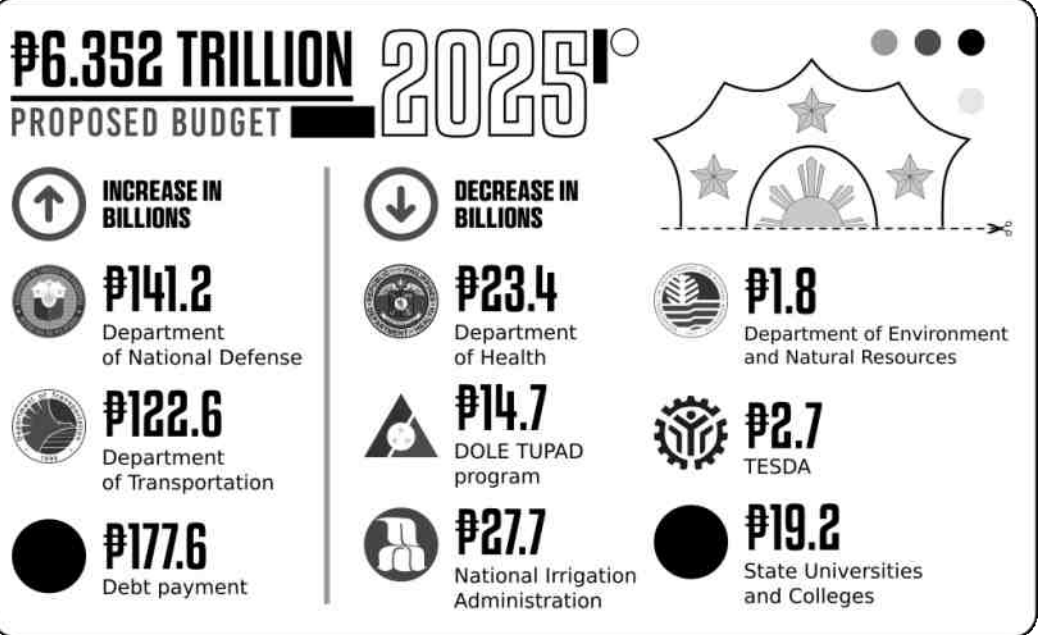
Marcos' budget allocation for his instrument of state terror continues to grow. It is striking how his 2025 budget proposal plan a 51% increase in the defense budget, from ₱278.1 billion in 2024 to ₱419.3 billion in 2025. A large part of this will go to the Armed Forces of the Philippines which will receive ₱242.8 billion.

Almost all branches of the AFP will receive budget increases in 2025, the highest being the Philippine Navy, which will grow from ₱41.4 billion to ₱49 billion. The same goes for the Philippine Army, which will receive an additional ₱1.8 billion, and the Philippine Air Force, which will receive an additional ₱4.6 billion.

Funding for the Revised AFP Modernization Program (RAFPMP) will also be raised significantly by 25% from ₱40 billion to ₱50 billion. Defending the West Philippine Sea is being used as an excuse. The military sources the RAFPMP to procure various weapons for sowing terrorism in the countryside, such as the several batches of Elbit drone systems from Israel, attack helicopters, warships, and radar systems acquired in the past years. Under the 2025 budget, the AFP intends to purchase new FA-50PH light jet fighters from South Korea.

To maintain a war posture in the West Philippine Sea, funds will also pour into the Philippine Coast Guard which will receive ₱31.3 billion, for the planned construction of a hospital (₱386 million), the West and South Navigational Tele Project (₱452 million), and Radar for Cebu Vessel Traffic Management System (₱37 million).

Buried in thousands of pages of the reactionary government's budget is its plan for the annual purchase of 120,000 sets of soldiers'



uniforms and nearly 110,000 sets of combat boots from 2025 to 2029, with a total cost of ₱3.77 billion.

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police (PNP) budget will also leap from ₱198.3 billion to ₱206.2 billion. Plans to recruit 2,000 policemen have been allotted ₱581 million, while ₱450 million is set aside for building 37 new police stations in the country.

Not far behind is the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) with ₱7.8 billion allocated for its Barangay Development Program, which has long been exposed as a pork barrel for generals.

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency also has a ₱4 billion budget next year to continue its bloody drug war.

Money will also be poured into



confidential and intelligence funds (CIF) with a total budget of ₱10.3 billion. Of this, ₱5.9 billion will be for intelligence funds of uniformed agencies, and ₱4.4 billion will be for confidential funds, which are intelligence funds for civilian agencies. Marcos boasts the smaller budget for confidential funds as some agencies such as the Office of the Vice President had their allotments removed.

What is not mentioned, however, is how the reactionary government secretly juggles the CIF. During the deliberations of the 2024 budget, intelligence funds were allotted only ₱5.3 billion, but were increased by ₱2.9 billion to ₱8.3 billion, when it was signed into law.

While the military and police funds are bloated, reactionary government agencies that are supposed to provide direct services are facing big cuts, including planned reductions of ₱23.4 billion in the Department of Health budget, ₱14.4 billion in the Department of Labor and Employment, ₱18.4 billion in the Department of Social Welfare and Development, as well as ₱19.2 billion from the budget of state universities and colleges.

One of the biggest cuts is the fund for indigent patients for their hospital expenses (₱31.2 billion). **AB**

Consunjis land-grabbing in Negros Occidental

Residents in southern Negros Occidental are being threatened with eviction as the Consunji family plan to build an oil palm plantation. Many of the families here have lived and farmed in the area for the past 60 to 70 years.

Hacienda Asia Plantations Incorporated (HAPI), and its partners Sirawai Plywood and Lumber Corporation of the Consunji family and Alfred Joseph Araneta, are seizing 6,652.32 hectares of land. It covers several barangays in Candoni and Hinobaan for the ₱2 billion plantation project.

The land is classified as forest land, with 4,000 hectares considered ancestral land of the indigenous Ati. In collusion with the Candoni local government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Consunjis bulldozed the planned plantation on public land.

Local officials themselves are promoting the supposed "benefits" of the plantation to their town and people. They deliberately downplay the serious impact it poses on the lives and livelihoods of farmers and indigenous people.

The Consunjis acquired the land through an Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA) with the DENR in 2009. The IFMA is the DENR's mechanism to grant private companies the exclusive right to "develop, manage, protect and use" a designated forested area and its resources for a period of 25 years, extendable by another 25 years.

In November 2022, the Consunjis themselves announced their plan to venture into new investments in agriculture, including oil palm plantations. They aim to cover the Visayas and Mindanao and plan to be a major investor in this field.

Disruption to farmers

While the oil palm plantation



will generate huge profits for the Consunjis, it will bring nothing but hardship to the peasant masses. The violent eviction of residents from the target barangays began in the last week of July.

A group of farmers in Barangay Gatsulao in Candoni said at least 1,000 farmers and their families, including indigenous people, could be evicted because of the plantation. The company, in fact, has already cleared 100 hectares of land in the area and planted it with oil palm.

The peasants are strongly opposing this and plan to file a Writ of Kalikasan, a legal remedy, to stop the plantation. They are determined to stay on the land and defend their rights.

According to the company's report, 870,000 oil palm seedlings have been prepared in its nursery in Barangay Gatuslao. These will be planted in the confiscated land after 10 to 12 months. The Consunjis will also build an oil palm processing plant in 2026.

As seen in other provinces, such as in Palawan, communities converted into oil palm plantations face a dire fate. Peasants have complained how these plantations consume huge volumes of water, harming neighboring farms. There are also cases of poisoning from pesticides used for oil palm, making the soil unusable for other crops.

These plantations will also cause widespread deforestation, soil erosion, possible disease among local residents and other adverse effects.

In similar plantations in Mindanao and Palawan, oil palm companies pay very low wages. Workers have no benefits and their jobs are constantly under threat. Wages of farmworkers are pegged very low. In Palawan, wages only range between ₱120 and ₱150 a day in 2005, ₱130-180/day in 2009 and ₱215/day in 2014 for oil palm plantation workers. A 2012 study estimated that 27% of workers on these plantations were children, ages 5-17.

AB

₱64/day

per person is the extremely low standard for Filipinos to be food poor set by NEDA in order to project a low poverty rate in the country.

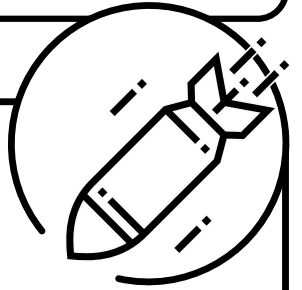
₱242.53/day

price of a balanced and nutritious diet set by the National Nutrition Council.



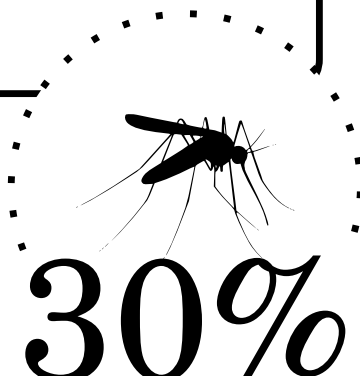
6.5 million

housing shortage in 2022, which is estimated to rise to 22 million by 2040 due to the incompetence of the reactionary state to provide suitable and affordable housing.



Three 2,000 pound

US-made bombs dropped by Israel on a school serving as a shelter in Gaza on August 10 killing more than 100 refugees, including children and women, gathered for prayers.



30%

increase in dengue cases at the onset of the rainy season. From January to June, hospitals recorded 90,119 cases, with 233 deaths.



89%

of the "new jobs" in July were low-quality, short-term and in the lowest-paying sectors.

12% VAT

tax imposed on foreign digital services such as Netflix and Amazon, which will increase charges on these services.



₱100/kilo

planned tax on plastic bags most used in stores and markets, higher than the actual price of raw materials used in these products.

It will double the price of such products, such as "sando bag" from ₱0.51 to ₱0.91 per piece.

1898

AUGUST 13

when the Mock Battle of Manila was held to formalize Spain's "surrender" of the Philippines to the US, and prevent Filipino guerrillas from entering Manila. By December, the Paris Agreement was signed under which the Philippines was sold by Spain to the US for \$20 million, turning the Philippines into a colony and foothold for the newly emerging US imperialist to impose global hegemony.

Relentless military violence in Northern Samar

The 74th IB has been imposing relentless military rule in many towns of Northern Samar. Widespread cases of human rights violations have been recorded here in recent weeks.

In Palapag, the 74th IB abducted and killed Ryan Arnesto in Sitio Canonghan, Barangay Osmeña in his koproasan (coco silo) on July 8. When found, Arnesto's body was bruised and almost unrecognizable due to swelling and knife cuts on his face, arms and legs. He also had bullet wounds in the neck, under his chest and in his side.

Witnesses said soldiers tied Arnesto to a coconut tree, tied and repeatedly jerked his head, before riddling his body with bullets. They dragged his body like an animal to the adjacent village of Bagacay.

Marco Turbanada, a young peasant, was abducted by the 74th IB soldiers in the same place and time. They subjected him to severe physical and mental torture. They arbitrarily detained and forced him to guide in military combat operations.

In other areas nationwide, the following violations were recorded:

Arrest. State forces arbitrarily arrested the former secretary general of Karapatan-Southern Mindanao, Jayvee "Jay" Apiag, on August 13. He was served with an arrest warrant on a trumped-up charge of frustrated murder.

Harassment. The NTF-Elcac intimidated and threatened a new student leader and Cavite human rights defender Paolo Tarra. Its agents repeatedly visited his family's home on August 4 and threatened to press charges of "terrorism." They also threatened to abduct him unless he stops his progressive activities.

Demolition. In Tarlac City, personnel of the so-called "Luisita warlord trio" demolished six houses of peasants in Barangay Central, within Hacienda Luisita, on August 12. This "trio" is composed of the Lorenzo, Cojuangco and Ayala families. Approximately 989 families were evicted from the said barangay to make way for the ₱18 billion project of Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) that will cover 290 hectares of land.

In Bataan, at least 26 fisherfolk families were evicted in the demolition of homes in Sitio Kimil Ilog, Barangay Capunitan, Orion on August 12. The community, which faces Manila Bay, is still reeling from the effects of the oil spill and recent typhoon Carina and monsoon rains. They are being evicted for the planned construction of business structures in the area.

In Masbate, 2nd IB soldiers conducted illegal logging in the farming community of Hacienda Mortuegue-Larrazabal on August 4. The hacienda covers the barangays of Tubog in Pio V. Corpuz and Tawad in the town of Esperanza. The 2nd IB and landlords employed this tactic to drive away and evict the peasants from the hacienda. **AB**

Filipino-American activist injured in West Bank

WHILE FILMING A protest action last August 9 in Beita, in Palestine's occupied West Bank, Filipino-American activist Amado Sison was injured as Zionist Israel's military forces indiscriminately open fire. He said they scampered when the protest was violently dispersed during which he was shot in the thigh. Israeli forces also allegedly used tear gas.

The attack on the protest action follows a relentless attack by Zionist Israel, with the support of US imperialism, on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and occupied West Bank territory.

Since August 15, 15,000 protested in Chicago at the opening of the Democrat party's national meeting to challenge its candidate Kamala Harris to stand against genocide. Huge pro-Palestine rallies also continued this August in France, United Kingdom, Sweden and Spain.

At last count on August 18, Israel had killed over 40,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. Almost 100,000 have been recorded injured in its attacks and hundreds of thousands have been driven from their land.

South Koreans oppose US war games in ROK

THOUSANDS TOOK PART in rallies in South Korea capital city of Seoul last August 10 to oppose the Ulchi Freedom Shield (UFS) 2024, scheduled to be held in the country from August 19 to August 29. These war games are annually launched by the US in the ROK, but this year's exercise will include for the first time ROK's response in the event of a nuclear attack.

They also called for the scrapping of the military alliance between the US, Japan and South Korea and the resignation of US puppet President Yoon Seok Yeol.

West Papuans hold Indonesia accountable for violence and environmental destruction

Thousands of Papuans protested on August 15 in West Papuan cities to denounce Indonesia's continued violence, occupation and plunder of their territory. The action coincided with the commemoration of the 62nd anniversary of Indonesia's illegal seizure and occupation of West Papua.

As on many occasions in the past, state forces violently dispersed the rallies. The protesters were shot with rubber bullets and teargas. In Nabire, the provincial capital of Central Papua, a rallyist was injured while 95 people were illegally arrested. Actions in five other towns were also violently attacked.

Violence by Indonesian forces against Papuans fighting for national liberation and secession is common. By 2023, military violence have forced at least 76,000 Papuans to flee.

In the first half of 2024, the groups recorded more than 266 victims in 39 cases of human rights violations. These incidents usually follow the entry of private companies into Papuan ancestral lands.

During this period, Indonesian armed forces killed nine members of the West Papua National Liberation Army. Twelve were tortured and 98 were arbitrarily detained. Tens of thousands have been intimidated and threatened.

Dispersal of protest actions in West Papua and even rallies in In-

donesia supporting the Papuan people's struggle are widespread. Even the simple waving or possession of the West Papua flag is prohibited.

Permanent People's Tribunal

On June 27-29, the first Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) on West Papua was held in London, United Kingdom. It held Indonesia accountable for widespread human rights violations and environmental destruction in West Papua.

Led by Climate Crime and Climate Justice, together with the Indigenous Peoples Movement for Self-Determination and Liberation and 13 other local and international organizations, Papuan organizations filed four complaints against the Indonesian state at the PPT. They filed charges of plunder of ancestral lands, violent repression to ram the entry of industries, systematic environmental destruction and collusion with foreign governments and corporations to carry out the crimes mentioned.

The tribunal ruled that the Indonesian state forcibly seized the land of indigenous Papuans through

racial discrimination, resulting in the destruction of their cultural heritage and violent repression, including illegal detention, extrajudicial killings, evictions and environmental degradation.

History of West Papua

West Papua (formerly Netherlands New Guinea) is located south-east of the Philippines. It was part of the then Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) colony of The Netherlands from 1880. When the Dutch recognized Indonesia's independence in 1949, it claimed West Papua to secure its economic interests in the region.

On August 15, 1962, The Netherlands and Indonesia schemed to sign the New York Agreement which established a United Nations interim authority to govern West Papua. It also stipulated a possible transfer of authority to Indonesia followed by a referendum for Papuan self-determination.

Indonesia launched a bogus referendum asking Papuans whether they wanted to submit to the Indonesian republic. Indonesian soldiers selected 1,024 Papuans, less than 1% of the entire population, as participants in the referendum and forced them to vote for integration.

In the face of this, the movement for liberation and the right to self-determination emerged in West Papua. In December 1963, Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM or Organization for Free Papua), a broad movement of groups for the liberation of Papua, was formed. The West Papua National Liberation Army stands as its armed force. **AB**

