



EDITORIAL:

Real sincerity in peace talks is measured in commitment to address roots of civil war

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EDITORIAL:

Real sincerity in peace talks is measured in commitment to address roots of civil war

The persistent war rhetoric, anti-peace and aggressive posturing by certain factions within the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) serve not the interests of the Filipino people, and only exposes their evil intentions according to the latest statement of Christians for National Liberation (CNL).

CNL, the organization of revolutionary Christians allied with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), released the statement in response to National Security Adviser Jonathan Malaya's recent remarks touting the revolutionary movement to give up its armed struggle to show its sincerity to the peace talks.

CNL highlights a critical truth: Malaya and his ilk misrepresent peace initiatives as capitulation, framing any dialogue as a means to force the revolutionary movement to surrender.

It is therefore essential to challenge this narrative that equates peace with surrender. Such rhetoric not only mischaracterizes the intentions of the NDFP who seek a principled resolution to the armed conflict, but also disregards the voices of millions of the Filipino masses who yearn for just and lasting peace.


The NDFP has consistently underscored the importance of socioeconomic reforms that address the issue of landlessness, poverty, low wages and the lack of national industries in resolving the roots of the civil war.

In negotiations with the GRP, the NDFP has repeatedly championed the need for genuine agrarian reform as the cornerstone of peace. This commitment stems from the fact that a major aspect that fuels the armed struggle stems from the persisting dire conditions of the Filipino peasant class who see no other recourse but to take up arms and join the revolutionary movement.

Another root cause of the conflict is the systematic exploitation of the working class. Majority of Filipino workers continue to endure poverty wages, the lack of job security, and dismal working conditions. The lack of domestic industries prevents the creation of lasting job opportunities and force more and more Filipino workers to leave their homeland for greener pastures abroad.

The sincerity of the GRP in peace talks therefore can only be proven by its readiness to tackle these difficult, yet necessary reforms. Until these fundamental issues are addressed, the root causes of the armed conflict will persist.

The road to just and lasting peace is not easy, but it is clear that addressing the root causes of the armed conflict is the only way to achieve success in the negotiations. The NDFP's focus on resolving issues of landlessness and wage poverty clearly demonstrates its commitment to the people's aspirations.

If the GRP is truly sincere in its desire for peace, it must commit to addressing these same issues. This requires the political will to challenge the entrenched interests of the landed class and big comprador bourgeoisie. Additionally, the GRP must engage in peace talks with transparency, openness, and respect for the aspirations of the toiling Filipino masses. 

No let-up in Marcos' shameless historical revisionism & brazen extravagance

Among other reasons, the fascist Marcos family cheated their way back to power to launder their bloody and rotten reputation as human rights violators, plunderers and thieves.

Recently, human rights groups and victims of martial law strongly scored the Marcos Jr. regime for its latest attempt to distort the toxic record of the Marcos Sr. fascist dictatorship.

To celebrate Marcos Sr.'s 107th birthday anniversary last Sept 11, a state university in the dictator's home province conducted a lecture series harping on the myth of a so-called golden age under martial rule, and claims that Marcos Sr. was a visionary [sic] whose views have had a "lasting influence on [the course] of national progress", quoting the invitation. The series of lectures glorify the late dictator and martial law and targeted the youth and students who are more vulnerable to historical lies. Marcos Jr. also declared his dictator's father birthday a holiday.

However, during this period too, the Philippine Supreme Court issued a ruling declaring a 57-hectare property in Paoay, Ilocos Norte long held by the Marcoses as ill-gotten. This ruling is significant as it affirms the plunder and thievery of the Marcos family and trashes the attempts to whitewash between what experts estimate to be 5 to 10 billion US dollars they stole from the Filipino people. In a July 2003 ruling of the Supreme Court, \$683 million worth of Marcos assets in various Swiss banks were declared as ill-gotten.

Human rights and academic groups have strongly stressed that the fascist Marcos family's continued attempt to distort history will not rehabilitate



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their image nor erase the fact that 3,240 were killed by the military and police during martial law, more than 70,000 were arrested arbitrarily without warrants of arrest, while 34,000 were tortured.

Continuing his fascist father's reign of terror, Marcos Jr.'s human rights record is horrific, with 105 extrajudicial killings, more than 163 cases of abductions by state forces, 44,065 incidents of bombings of communities, and 755 political prisoners, which are just initial figures. More than 2M Filipinos are unemployed, over 10 percent of the population have migrated abroad because of the absence of jobs in the country. Citing figures from human rights and economist groups, "Filipino families experiencing involuntary hunger increased to 14.2% in March 2024 from 12.6% in December 2023, as 46% of Filipino families rated themselves as poor and 30% borderline poor in March 2024."

And while "Rome burns", so to speak, the dictator's son and family continue to splurge in extravagance squandering the people's money. The Campaign Against the Return of the Marcoses and Martial Law – a coalition of martial law victims, has decried the recent lavish celebration of Marcos Jr.'s 67th birthday in a five-star hotel with a 1980s British rock band, Duran Duran, performing live, and reportedly paid between 30M Php and 50M Php (about 900,000 US dollars). This callous birthday celebration was held when Filipinos were still recovering from the recent devastation caused by a typhoon.

The group is asking if Marcos Jr.'s confidential funds were used to pay for this lavish party. The fascist's son has 4.56B Php (around 80M USD) in confidential and intelligence funds which has not been subject to the scrutiny of Philippine Congress.

CARMMA said: "This is not the first time Ferdinand Marcos Jr. callously embarked on activities for personal leisure in the face of the people's widespread suffering. In October 2022, he and members of his family spent a weekend in Singapore to watch the Formula One Grand Prix racing event and stayed at a luxury hotel. This, right after Typhoon Karding had slammed the country, leaving a wide swath of destruction. In January 2024, he and his family used the presidential helicopter just to watch Coldplay, another British rock band, perform at the Philippine Arena in Bulacan." The group said "disgusting memories of the opulent parties held in Malacañang before the Marcoses' ouster from power keep coming back with every display of Marcos Jr.'s profligacy." They added that the Marcoses have continued to refuse to pay their PhP203 billion estate tax, even as the Supreme Court in 1997 denied a plea by Marcos, Jr. to drop the levies as it ruled that the tax assessments had become final and can not be appealed. ▲

Enforced disappearances, abductions of activists continue to grow under Marcos Jr.

New cases of enforced disappearances continue to mount under the current Marcos Jr. regime, human rights groups said on Friday, August 30, marking the commemoration of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances.

Since Marcos assumed office in 2022, at least 14 persons have gone missing after reportedly being abducted, making enforced disappearance a "fast-growing phenomenon," human rights group Karapatan said.

Most abductions took place in "heavily militarized regions," including places covered by the controversial Memorandum Order No. 32 issued under former President Rodrigo Duterte, according to Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura, a group advocating for farmers' and agricultural workers' rights.

Those who have been reported forcibly disappeared in recent months




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are the following:

- James Jazmines, brother of National Democratic Front of the Philippines consultant Alan Jazmines, who was last seen in Albay on August 23
- Rowena Dasig, environmental advocate, who was last seen after being released from detention outside the Lucena City District Jail on August 21
- William Lariosa, trade union organizer, who was last seen in Quezon before being arrested on April 21
- More recently, two youth activists Andy Magno and Vladimir Maro were abducted by suspected state forces in San Pablo, Isabela in the Cagayan Valley Region on September 11, 2024.

Magno and Maro are both youth activists turned peasant organizers. Magno is a graduate of the Development Studies program in the University of the Philippines – Manila, a former chairperson of the youth environment organization, Minggan University of the Philippines Manila, and the former coordinator for Kabataan Partylist – Cagayan Valley. Maro is an advocate for migrant workers' rights.

Condemning the government's refusal to cooperate in resurfacing those missing, Karapatan also stressed that enforced disappearances have "long been employed by tyrannical regimes as a strategy to spread terror within a society." "The families, support systems and communities of the victims often experience harassment and other hardships in the course of their search for their loved ones," the group said. 

Anti-fascist congress convenes in Venezuela to confront US imperialism and its allies



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The Global Congress against Fascism, Neo-fascism and Similar Expressions hosted by the Venezuelan Bolivarian Republic was held in Caracas on September 10-11, 2024. The highlight on September 11 was chosen in commemoration of the death anniversary of Chilean President Salvador Allende, who was ousted by the US puppet and fascist General Pinochet in 1973. Allende together with other martyrs like Fidel Castro, Che Guevarra, and Julio Chavez serve as inspiration to freedom fighters in Latin America, the Caribbean and the whole world in their continuing struggle against imperialism, local reaction and fascism.

The Congress was participated by 1,200 delegates coming from 95 countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, Middle East, Europe, United States, and Canada. Diplomatic representatives of Cuba, Nicaragua, Bolivia, People's Republic of China and the Federal Russian Republic were present at the Congress. A representative of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) was also present in the conference.

The International League of People's Struggles (ILPS) was among the Congress' international delegates. Filipino participants observed that contrary to the fake news and narratives of Western press and social-media, Venezuela is peaceful, orderly, and people go around freely. In fact, compared to the Philippines, police and military troops are scarcely seen in public.

In Caracas, shops are open with sufficient food and other necessities available despite the severe crisis resulting

from imperialist sanctions. Congress delegates visited "Communas" collectively engaged in agricultural production, handicrafts, and even production of electronic gadgets like tablets. Venezuela was compelled to increase local production of consumer goods amidst the crippling sanctions imposed by the US and the EU.

At the Congress, delegates exchanged views and debated on their understanding of fascism and neo-fascism, and resolved to strengthen their unity to frustrate US imperialist intervention and struggle for a freedom and democracy.

Newly reelected Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro made the closing remarks of the Congress. He declared that hosting the Congress in Caracas was fitting because Venezuela is currently at the epicenter of US imperialist laboratory in its intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean. Building a strong global anti-imperialist unity is crucial in defeating US imperialism in its Ukraine proxy war against Russia, in its genocidal proxy war using Israel against the Palestinian people, and the brewing conflict against China in Asia.

President Maduro exposed that in the 2024 elections US imperialism used a new approach in its attempted ouster of the legitimate government. Unlike before where the US employed mercenaries to stage a coup de etat, now it used its puppet opposition led by Maria Machado and defeated Edmundo Gonzalez to foment unrest with mercenary saboteurs and widespread use of the Western controlled media and social media by spreading lies, fake news and narratives. They portrayed that the economic and humanitarian crisis generated by the imperialist crippling sanctions, as caused by "human rights violations of the dictatorial government and corruption". They obfuscate the fact that prior to the imperialist sanctions, Venezuela was a progressive and fast developing economy because of the nationalist and socialist policies of the Chavez, and consequently the Maduro government.

In addition, they used imperialist funded NGOs and cyber attacks to derail the legitimate electoral process.

President Maduro was wildly applauded and joined by Congress delegates in his challenge to strengthen global unity against imperialism and fascism, shouting: "Hasta la victoria siempre!" 