

EDITORIAL

Denounce and resist US imperialist attack on Iran

The Filipino people firmly condemns US imperialism and the Zionist state of Israel for their atrocious bombing of Iran that began on February 28. This is a gross violation of an independent country's sovereignty and a brazen violation of existing international law. This is now the second assault by the US and Israel on the country since July 2025, under the orders of fascist madmen Donald Trump of the US and Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel.

Using precision missiles, they assassinated the Iranian leader and dozens of government officials. They bombed an elementary school in the Minab City killing more than 160 girl students. They targeted nuclear plants, as well as civilian government buildings, hospitals, and

even protected historical sites. The first five days of hourly bombing reportedly killed more than 1,000 Iranians, a grim reflection of Israel's horrific pounding of Gaza and

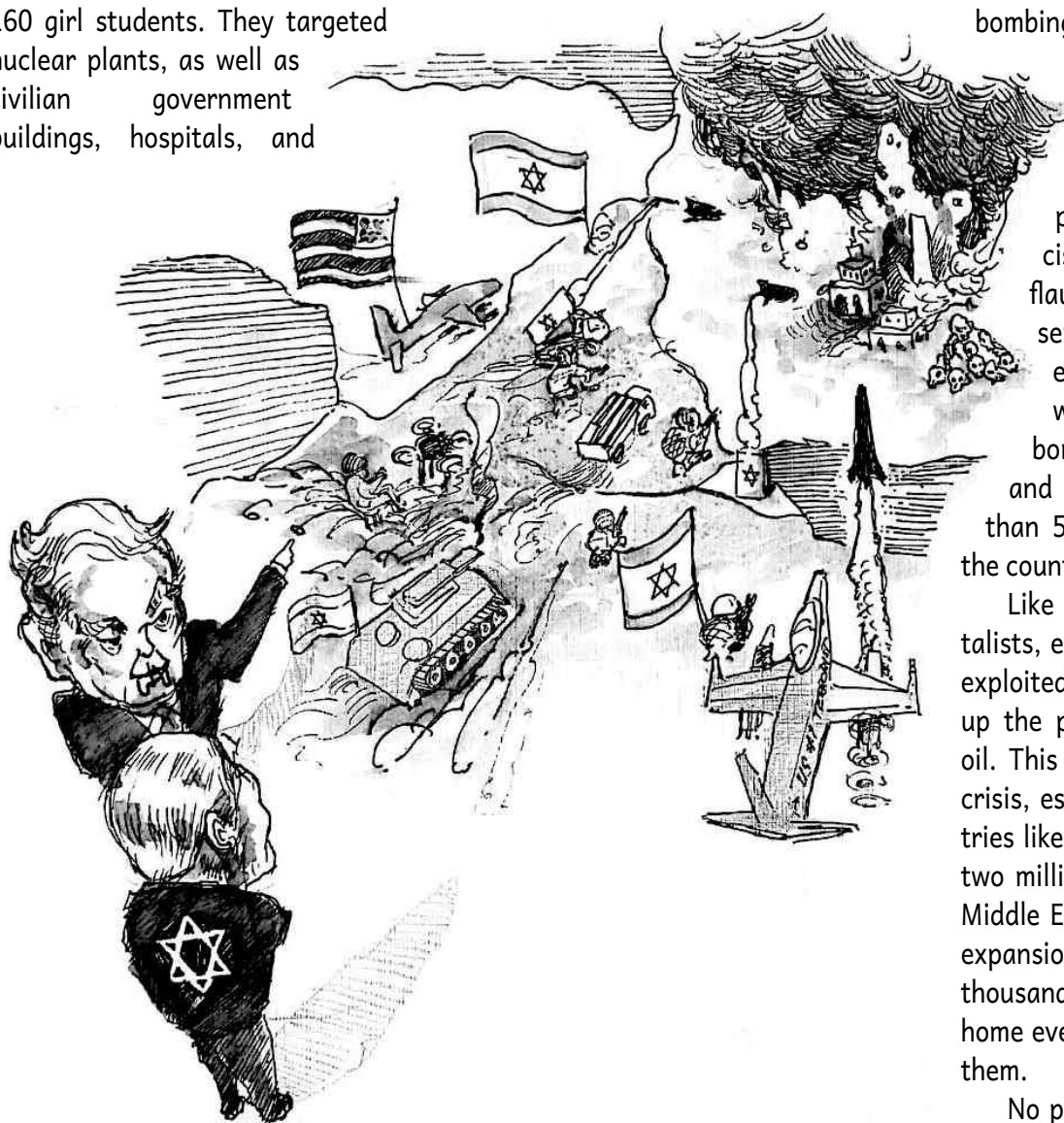
genocide of the Palestinian people.

Iran has every right to defend itself against the US and Israel aggression. It launched its own missiles that struck US military bases in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, and other Middle East countries, and hit various facilities in Israel.

The spread of the armed conflict is a direct consequence of imperialist aggression. The US has now further expanded this by bombing and sinking off the coast of Sri Lanka, over 3,200 kilometers from Iran, of an unarmed Iranian naval vessel that participated in naval exercises hosted by India. Trump flaunts the US' enormous arsenal that he claims is enough for an "endless" war. Israeli troops also bombed and raided Lebanon and drove out people in more than 50 towns in order to seize the country's southern part.

Like vultures, monopoly capitalists, especially big oil companies, exploited the war to arbitrarily jack up the price of crude and refined oil. This will create an even worse crisis, especially in backward countries like the Philippines. More than two million Filipino migrants in the Middle East fear the war's possible expansion and extension. Several thousands have chosen to return home even when no livelihood await them.

No prattle can justify the unre-



strained sowing of rampant terrorism of US and Israel in Iran. The US initiated this with no evidence to back up its accusation of Iran's "nuclear weapons build-up." This is no different from the US' use of the bogus "weapons of mass destruction" to invade Iraq in 2003. This is also no different from Trump's accusation of "narco-terrorism" against the Venezuelan government when the US invaded and bombed it last January 3, and abducted its president Nicolas Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores.

Acting like a thug, US imperialism is ready to attack any country that resists its dictates. It boasts of and brandishes the "world's most powerful military force" to compel everyone to bow to its self-proclaimed supreme authority. It exposes the utter hypocrisy of its long-touted "rules-based order" which it uses to squeeze its rival countries. In truth, US imperialism has not been restrained by any international law or rule that runs counter its economic and geopolitical interests.

The unbridled attacks of US imperialism against Iran clearly aim to seize control of Iran's rich

oil resources, the third largest in the world. Trump wants to crush the Iranian government because it refuses to kneel before the wishes of the US monopoly capitalists. The US wants to impose its power over Iran and the entire Middle East.

The vile US assault on Iran mirrors the sharpening inter-imperialist conflict. It is a move by the US to elbow its rival China, the main buyer of Iranian oil. This is part of the US imperialist push to redivide the world to expand the wealth and resources directly under its control. Amid the unresolved crisis of the

world capitalist system, the US is stoking inter-imperialist rivalries and fanning wars in different parts of the globe.

The Iranian people must be supported in defending their freedom and their right to national self-determination. The workers and peoples of the US and Israel must be called on to resist and overthrow the fascist madmen Trump and Netanyahu. Unity among the people of Palestine, Lebanon, Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea, Nicaragua and other countries under US pressure must be strengthened. The broadest united front against imperialist war must be established.

The US disinformation operations that victimize the Filipino people must be exposed and opposed. Reject the lies promoted by Trump and Netanyahu. The Filipino people must stand against US military intervention in the Philippines and resist the country being used for attacks and war. Amplify the demand to dismantle US military bases and facilities under EDCA, drive US troops out of the country, remove its stockpiled weapons, and end the war-provoking and destructive war exercises.

The Filipino people must fight for genuine freedom from US control and interference. Colluding with the local ruling classes and using the AFP as an instrument of repression, US domination and plunder of the Philippines remain the main obstacle to the country's development and the root of the widespread suffering of the masses.

The Filipino people must advance the national-democratic revolution principally through armed struggle to end the rule of US imperialism and its puppets in the Philippines. With the victory of the protracted people's war, we can establish a government that will uphold national freedom. This is the Filipino people's main contribution to the struggle to end imperialist war and oppression around the world.



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US war of aggression on Iran aggrieve the Filipino people

Even at the outset of the US-Israel war of aggression against Iran, the Department of Energy (DoE) warned that oil companies could raise gasoline prices by up to ₱10 per liter and diesel by ₱20. This would add to the ₱7 to ₱10 per liter increases in petroleum products since January. The increases will take effect immediately despite DoE officials claiming the country has enough oil supplies for 30–60 days consumption.

The Oil Deregulation Law allows oil companies to automatically raise prices without disclosing their computation or any other details. The state has surrendered its right to evaluate the justifiability of such hikes.

Further burdening the people are the 12% VAT and excise taxes on petroleum products that reach ₱10 per liter on gasoline, ₱6 per liter on diesel, and ₱3 per liter on kerosene.

Over 90% of the oil consumed in the Philippines is imported. A large portion consists of refined oil purchased mainly from South Korea, China, and Singapore. (The country also imports crude oil from the Middle East, but in smaller volumes, as

it now only has one operating refinery.) The fluctuating price of crude oil in the global market remains a major, though indirect, concern. It now exceeds \$80 per barrel and could reach \$100 if US attacks on Iran continue.

Lives at stake

The lives of an estimated 2.15 million Filipinos in the Middle East—mostly workers in domestic, service, and construction jobs—are now at risk. Filipino workers have long suffered from Philippine embassies' negligent service amid abuses worsened by the kafala system, wage non-payment, and contract violations. As in past conflicts, the



Philippine government's response to the migrants' grievances has been sluggish and insufficient. Embassy staff do not even respond to their hotline calls.

The group Migrante calls for the immediate provision of safe shelters and open communication lines for migrant workers in the Middle East. It also demands the swift processing of documents and unconditional repatriation. As of the latest count, around 1,000 migrants have expressed their desire to go home. AB

Iranian people respond with fury and vengeance to US-Israel aggression

The people of Iran and the Middle East seethe with fury at the US-Israel bombing of Iran that killed many civilians and destroyed infrastructure. The most infuriating attacks included the deliberate, repeated bombing of a school on February 28 that killed 175, mostly girls aged 7 to 12.

Hundreds of thousands of Iranians joined the procession in Tehran on March 3 to bury the slain schoolgirls. Amid mourning, they condemned the US bombings and grieved the death of their leader, Ali Khamenei. They called for the downfall of US imperialism and Zionist Israel. They vowed to avenge the killings of their leaders and countrymen. Similar actions were held in provinces outside Tehran.

The protest refuted the false narrative spread by US imperialism and its agents in the international media

(and echoed by local media in the Philippines) claiming that Iranians were “celebrating” the attack on their government.

Many people across the region denounce the US and Israel and stand firmly for Iran's sovereignty. They protested in front of or near US embassies in Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Turkey, Oman, and Kuwait. Demonstrations condemning the US bombings also took place in India, Pakistan, Japan, and South Korea. Similar protests were held in the US, Venezuela, and several European

countries.

In Lebanon, the armed group Hezbollah are actively defending against Israel's new series of bombings in the country's southern part and in Beirut.

In the Philippines, progressive groups led by Bayan marched to the US Embassy in Manila on March 3. They denounced the US-Israel war of aggression in Iran and demanded the dismantling of US military bases from the Philippines. A day earlier, national-democratic groups held a solidarity protest for the Iranian people at the Boy Scout Circle in Quezon City. They also went to the Iran Embassy in Makati City on March 5 to express to the ambassador their condolences to the Iranian people. AB

Bureaucrat-capitalists and local and foreign corporations plunder Bicol

The Bicol masses currently face widespread plunder and land grabbing by local bureaucrat-capitalists, big landlords, and foreign corporations for ecotourism, mining, renewable energy, and land conversion. This threatens thousands of farmers and fisherfolk with eviction and loss of livelihood across the entire region.

Local bureaucrat-capitalists, who are also big landlords like the Escudero, Hamor, Co, Salceda, Villafuerte, Alsua, Mitra, Cua, and Kho clans, rapidly amassed land, businesses, and resources using their positions in local government and public funds. They also engage in anomalous infrastructure projects in their areas and other regions through ownership or partnerships with construction companies.

Bureaucrat-capitalists multiplied, expanded and hastened the conversion of agricultural lands to residential, commercial, and industrial uses to make the region appear developing. Resorts owned or funded by local bureaucrats have also multiplied. In the name of ecotourism and renewable energy projects, they peddle Bicol's natural resources to foreigners and bourgeois compradors.

Land grabbing in Bicol is abetted by government agencies like the Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Environ-

ment and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, and local governments, while the military and police protect the operations and projects.

Grabbing land from farmers

At least 11 companies operate mines in Camarines Norte. These include Mt. Labo Exploration and Development Corp. (MLEDC) and Galeo Equipment Corp. MLEDC mines copper and gold on 3,482 hectares in Labo and has a new application for 2,980 hectares in Mt. Labo, covering the province's watershed. The company is owned by SRM Gold Inc (40% subsidiary of RTG Mining Inc, an Australia-based company), and TVI Resources Dev. Phils. Inc. (60% controlled by TVI Pacific Inc, a Canada-based company, and 40% by Prime Resource Holding Inc. of the Villar family).

Hundreds of Camarines Sur farmers face eviction by Governor Luis Raymund Villafuerte's Wanderlust Land Development Corp. which claims ownership of 1,014 hectares

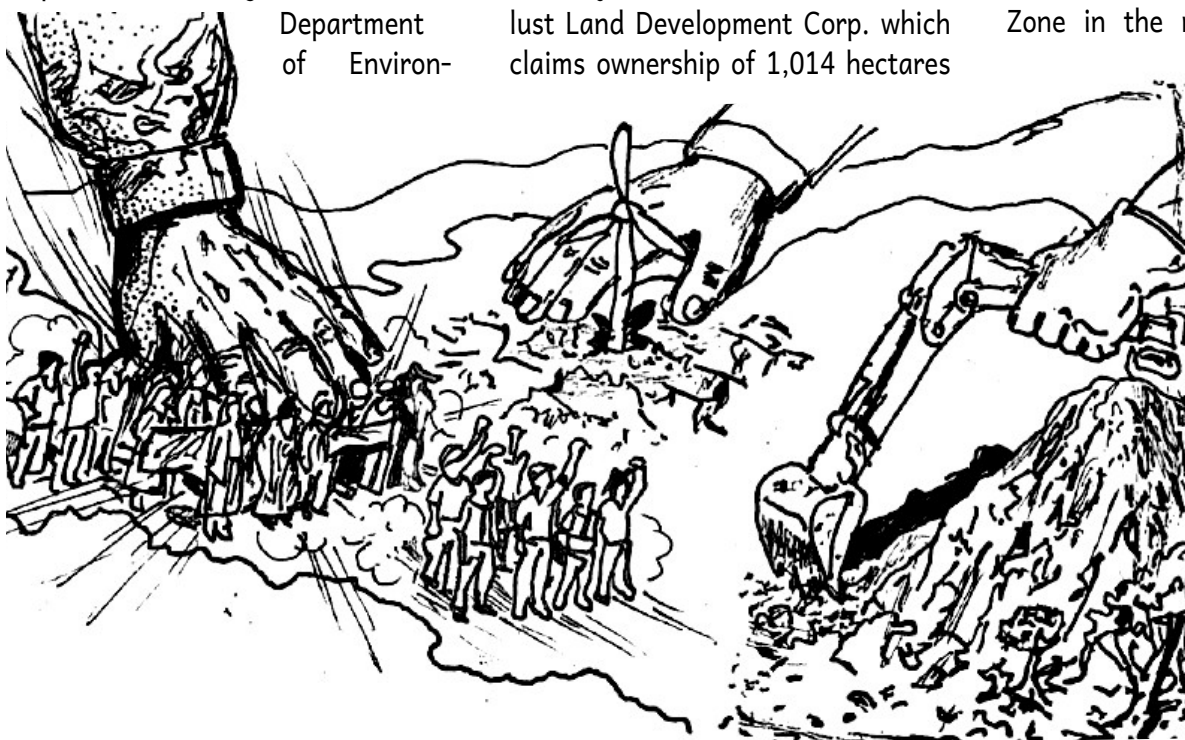
in Barangay San Ramon and Salvacion in the municipality of Siruma. Meanwhile, 200 residents of Barangay Fabrica and Pawili in Bula face imminent eviction because of a land dispute between Conrado Colarina of Ruby Shelters Builders and Development Corporation and the Tan family, both illegitimate residents in the area.

In Masbate, Filminera Resources Corp. (jointly operated by Canada-based B2Gold Corp. and Zoom Mineral Holdings) continues mining operations in Aroroy. It encroaches on 1,755 hectares of mountainous land in the municipalities of Mobo, Milagros, and Uson. Communities around the mine are under military rule to suppress residents' resistance.

In 2023, Governor Antonio Kho evicted 94 farmer families from the barangays of Cabungahan, Calapayan, and Villaluna in the municipality of Cawayan and seized lands in Pio V. Corpuz, Placer, and Cataingan for his interests in ranching, ecotourism, and mining.

Over 21,000 residents also face eviction from Empark Land Development Inc.'s planned Masbate International Tourism and Economic Zone in the municipalities of Dimasalang and Palanas.

In Albay, the Co family's Sunwest Corp fenced off and seized land at the foot of Mayon Volcano, while hundreds of mud crab gatherers and fisherfolk lost their livelihoods because of the coastal road project and



Follow in page 5

Rizal and Samar residents oppose wind farm projects

Residents from Rizal and Samar towns together opposed the construction of windmill farms in their provinces. The projects are being pushed by Vena Energy, a Singapore-based company and one of the biggest “renewable energy” corporations in the Asia-Pacific region.

In Rizal, residents of Talim Island—situated in the middle of Laguna de Bay—protested on February 28 to stop the Talim Wind Power Project on the island. They demanded an immediate halt to the

project as its destruction of forests and mountains causes severe flooding and landslides. Behind the windmill project is the Island Wind Energy Corporation (IWEC), a subsidiary of Vena Energy.

Residents said construction on the island’s mountains began in 2025. Trees were already being felled in preparation for construction two years earlier. Led by the group *Kasama sa Panganalaga ng Isla Talim* or *Kapit sa Talim*, residents issued a manifesto opposing the project.

In Samar, Calbayog City residents stopped Vena Energy’s attempt to build windmills inside the Calbayog Protected Landscape (CPHPL), a wa-

tershed that supplies the city’s drinking water.

The company announced on February 24 that it would no longer build any structures such as windmills inside the CPHPL. The announcement came after six months of residents’ sustained pressure against the company and the local government because of the project’s destructive impact on their livelihood and environment. Thousands of city residents signed a petition against it.

However, the local government still allowed the company to build the windmills scattered across villages within the districts of Tinambacan and Oquendo. The company has begun collecting signatures for “certificates of no objection” from barangays that will be affected by the project. In response, local groups called on the people to stay vigilant against Vena Energy’s attempts to destroy trees and crops that serve as the community’s main sources of livelihood. AB



From page 4

reclamation in the municipality of Gubat in Sorsogon.

Destructive renewable energy projects

Since 2022, at least 77 renewable energy projects (solar, wind, and geothermal) have been planned and are currently under construction across the region. Camarines Sur has the most with 27 projects, followed by Camarines Norte with 21. The largest and most damaging to Bicolnon livelihoods include the two offshore wind-farms in San Miguel Bay in Camarines Sur, owned by Copenhagen Infrastructure New Market Fund Corp. (Denmark-based company) and ACEN Corp. of Ayala Group; and Nexif Ratch Energy (Singapore- and Thailand-based company). Around 5,000 to 6,000 fisherfolk will lose their livelihoods because of the project.

Some projects in the region belong to comprador bourgeois like Sy, Villar, Consunji, Aboitiz, Ang, and Lopez, while some companies are based in China, Israel, Singapore, Thailand, Denmark, and Australia. AB

Bikolanos resist plunder

LED BY THE *Samahan ng Maliliit na Mangingisda sa San Miguel Bay (SMB)*, the *Tanggol SMB Network* was officially established on February 27 in Barangay Sabang, Calabanga, Camarines Sur. The alliance aims to oppose the planned SMB offshore wind projects. According to the group, the project will disposses thousands of fisherfolk of their livelihood. The project also directly attacks food security and the people’s right to access marine resources.

In the province’s other towns, peasants continue to fight for their right to land, hundreds of residents in Barangay San Ramon and Salvacion, Siruma protested on February 18 to condemn the Villafuertes’ landgrabbing.

The *Portico Banasi Household Farmers Association* asserted their right to residence during a conference held on February 20 at the Bula municipal hall. According to the group, Philippine Commission on Urban Poor representatives and the RTC Branch 31 sheriff defended the landgrabbers instead of hearing them out. Representatives of the *Colarinas, Tans*, and the *Ruby Shelters Builders and Development Corporation* did not attend the conference. Throughout the meeting, PNP personnel armed with high-powered rifles roamed inside the building.

EDSA@40: Broad unity against corruption and poverty

The Filipino people once again demonstrated the strength of unity against corruption and poverty in protests marking the 40th EDSA Uprising anniversary on February 25. The actions drew widespread participation from workers, peasants, urban poor, youth, women, church people, teachers, employees and other democratic sectors.

The largest gathering of 12,000 Filipinos, mostly youth, took place at the EDSA Shrine at the corner of Ortigas Avenue. Led by Kilusang Bayan Kontra Kurakot (KBKK, or People's Anti-Corruption Movement), Youth Rage Against Corruption, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), Artikulo XI, Bunyog Pagkakaisa, and Sanlakas, they called: "Continue the Fight Against Corruption and Poverty! Hold All Involved Accountable!"

Bishop Gerardo Alminaza, Caritas Philippines president and Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines Episcopal Commission on Social Action chair, Sr. Mary John Mananzan of the Movement Against Tyranny, and lawmakers Rep. Leila de Lima of Mamamayang Liberal and Makabayan Bloc representatives joined and attended the gathering.

Police repeatedly tried but failed to block the march. At the

height of the confrontations, police arrested two activists, detained them for several days and filed multiple criminal charges against them.

At least 150 organizations and 400 individuals expressed support for the day of action. According to the groups, the action which "values people power" must continue in the current times, as systemic corruption, the people's poverty, dynastic rule and massive corruption still prevails. They are particularly deeply dismayed that no "mastermind" behind the exposed corruption in flood control projects and other projects of the Marcos regime, has been imprisoned.

Their calls reverberated demanding to hold accountable and oust Ferdinand Marcos Jr and Sara Duterte for involvement in systemic corruption. Different sectors also asserted their specific economic and political demands.

Refusal to unite

Groups under the Trillion Peso March Movement (TPMM) launched a separate action in one part of EDSA where some well-known figures and artists attended. The TPMM, particularly groups SIKLAB, Tindig Pilipinas and Akbayan Partylist, refused to respond to calls by church leaders and other civic groups to unite.

Akbayan in particular opposes calls to hold Marcos and his officials accountable, claiming it would benefit Sara Duterte. The calls in their protest are limited only to anti-dynasty proposals and reforms and avoid mentioning or even alluding to Marcos—the king of corruption. Akbayan is known to be against national-democratic groups.

Other actions

Besides EDSA, protests were also held in the provinces. Thousands mobilized strongly in Baguio City, Iloilo City and Bacolod City.

Protests and activities were also held in Dagupan City in Pangasinan, Angeles City in Pampanga, Tuguegarao City in Cagayan, Santiago City, Iligan and Alicia in Isabela, Naga City in Camarines Sur, Legaspi City in Albay, Kalibo in Aklan, Roxas City in Capiz, in Antique, Tacloban City in Leyte, Cebu City, Dumaguete City in Negros Oriental, Cagayan de Oro City, Iligan City and in Davao City. Meanwhile, the Catholic Church reported that nearly 90 dioceses nationwide participated in the commemoration.

In other countries, Filipino migrants held mass actions in Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, The Netherlands, Australia, Canada, US, and Hongkong. Although far from the Philippines, they actively joined the commemoration to keep alive the history and spirit of the EDSA Uprising. AB



Eviction and demolition of peasants and urban poor residents

Land grabbers have successively carried out evictions of peasants and demolitions of urban poor communities in various parts of the country.

In Zambales, demolition and land grabbing in Purok 3, Barangay Balaybay, Castillejos on February 23 drove out at least 22 peasant families. The farmers said they hold Certificates of Land Ownership Award from the Department of Agrarian Reform for the 21 hectares being seized from them. After the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991, the then governor of Zambales also announced that the land would be awarded to them. Their families have cultivated the land since 1934.

In Davao City, 600 families lost their homes when their community in Arroyo Compound, Golden Valley, Matina Crossing

was demolished on February 27. Many residents were forced to tear down their own homes to secure materials and belongings. The demolition was carried out despite the Davao City local government having no decent plan for relocation. The company claiming the land did not offer any compensation for the de-



stroyed homes.

In Taguig City, residents of Panday Creekside, Barangay Palington-Tipas, protested at the city hall on February 23 to oppose the threatened demolition of their community. They called on the local government to respect their right to security of tenure in Panday Creekside.

On March 5, fear gripped the community inside the SPD Compound, Western Bicutan when 150 Philippine Navy troopers, with police and barangay officials, suddenly stormed the area. Residents learned that the AFP planned to build Navy barracks in the compound. About 400 families or 2,500 residents will be evicted, most of whom have lived there for four decades. AB

Women demand scrapping of 12% VAT

The women's alliance Gabriela trooped to and protested at the Department of Finance national office in Pasay City on March 4. They demanded the removal of the 12% value-added tax (VAT) and excise tax amid relentless oil price hikes.

The alliance earlier led a series of anti-VAT protests in recent weeks across Metro Manila and several provinces. They also held assemblies and forums to discuss the VAT. The group launched a signature campaign aiming to gather 12,000 signatures against the VAT.

According to the alliance, the 12% VAT heavily burdens the Filipino people. It sanctions every Filipino, especially mothers struggling to stretch wages that fall far below a living standard.

The demand to scrap VAT gained renewed strength amid widespread public outrage over the Marcos regime's anomalies and corruption. Billions of pesos in people's taxes are being squandered through corruption.

Gabriela's series of activities is part of the campaign "Abolish VAT, Hold the Corrupt Accountable," which serves as the protests' central theme for the upcoming March 8 International Working Women's Day. AB

Rizal dumpsite collapse calls for accountability, justice

Progressive groups and residents of Rodriguez, Rizal demanded justice and accountability for those who died, went missing, and were injured in the collapse of the garbage dumpsite in Barangay San Isidro on February 20.

An estimated 420,000 cubic meters of waste collapsed in Phase 5 of the Rizal Provincial Sanitary Landfill, covering six hectares of land. The dumpsite is operated by Green Leap Solid Waste Management, Inc., a subsidiary of International Solid Waste Integrated Management Specialist Inc.

Residents said the collapse affected at least 100 people, 50 were reported missing, and one was confirmed dead. They condemned the blatant cover-up by the company and the local government, which insisted that only two were missing and one had died. Residents demanded an investigation to determine the cause of the collapse and whom to hold accountable. They also called for just government support for those affected.

On February 22, Kadamay and other progressive groups visited the dumpsite to protest and light candles. The Makabayan Bloc days later filed a House of Representatives resolution to investigate the incident. Meanwhile, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources issued an order to temporarily close the dumpsite starting February 24.

Before the recent collapse, the dumpsite had already suffered six previous cave-ins, a fire in April 2025, and recurring leaks and floods of leachate or toxic liquid from the site. AB



official newspaper of the New People's Army, has resumed publication under the National Operational Command this March. Get your copy at www.philippinerevolution.nu.

3 number of times when residents of **Barangay Bitnong, Dupax del Norte** have erected their barricade against Woggle Corporation, the latest on February 21, to prevent the company from sneaking back after its exploration permit was suspended.

₱36 MILLION cost of 2 school buildings in **Talaingod, Davao del Norte**, which remain unfinished because of anomalies under DepEd officials. During 2019-2023, inclusive of the term of then-secretary Sara Duterte, only **22 of 98** schools targeted for construction in remote areas were completed.



₱30 meager wage increase for **non-agricultural workers**, and **₱20** for agricultural workers in the Davao region. This falls far short of coping with successive increases in the region's electricity and water rates alone.

Booker Ngesa Omole



Communist Party Marxist-Kenya (CPM-K) secretary general, was abducted on February 24, tortured, and illegally detained by forces of the Ruto regime in Kenya.

400% increase of "verification fee" of the Philippine consulate in Hong Kong. The charge for certifying that a migrant worker's employment contract complies with Hong Kong labor laws was raised from **₱595 to ₱2,380** starting March 1.

127 civilians from Las Navas, Northern Samar **were deceived by the 20th IB** to pose as "surrenderers" requesting a "safe conduct pass," exposing the hollowness of the Marcos regime's amnesty program.

Students' voice and stand against tuition and other fees increases

Student councils from private universities across the country are actively expressing opposition to the proposed tuition and other fees increases (TOFI) for academic year 2026-2027. They launched surveys, research, petitions, dialogues, protests, and collective actions together with students inside the campuses.

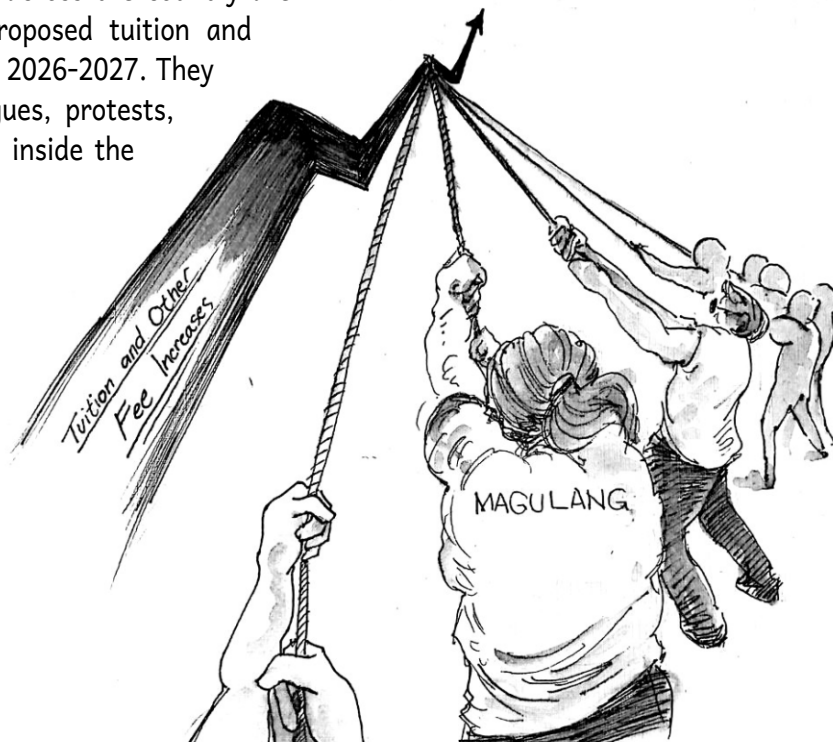
The National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) led a nationwide anti-TOFI campaign. The group laid out the 5-point demand in January: 0% TOFI, implementation of a moratorium on TOFI, junking of other fees, transparency or opening of university finances, and higher budget for public education.

The NUSP denounced the universities' repeated justifications for TOFI, including rising education costs, facility improvements, and higher salaries for teachers and staff. According to the group, students have not enjoyed better campus services, and teachers' and staff's salaries have not increased either in the history of successive tuition hikes.

Students and student councils in Cordillera stood up against the proposed TOFI at Saint Louis University (SLU), University of Baguio (UB), and University of the Cordilleras. Students of SLU protested on February 27 forcing the administration to lower the initial proposed 6.5% increase in other fees to 5.5% increase without a proposal for tuition. Their manifesto also gathered signatures and support from 46 organizations and over 1,200 students.

Students of UB took action on the same day against the administration's proposed 10% TOFI. They gathered support for the anti-TOFI petition from 11 organizations and 273 students in the university. Student councils from SLU and UB also dialogued with CHED-Cordillera Administrative Region on February 26.

In Metro Manila, students of De



La Salle University (DLSU) and University of the East won the anti-TOFI struggle. Both universities announced they will not implement TOFI. This victory came from the relentless campaign and actions of students, student councils, and progressive groups since 2025.

In Cavite, DLSU-Dasmariñas students pushed the administration not to propose a tuition increase, pending a new consultation for possible increase in the university's other fees.

In Cebu, students of University of San Carlos and Cebu Institute of Technology-University (CIT-U) opposed the planned TOFI. The USC community launched a march on February 25 inside the Talamban campus against the 6.7% TOFI. Instead of listening and holding a dialogue, the administration harassed and tried to stop the protest. Meanwhile at CIT-U, students who led and signed the anti-TOFI manifesto were summoned and threatened with suspension.

Every February, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) receives proposals for TOFI. This

"right" to increase fees aligns with CHED Memorandum Order No. 03 Series of 2012. The "consultation" component of the fees hike process officially concluded on February 28. The CHED now has the applications and the decision whether to allow TOFI—which it has blindly approved in the past.

Many universities do not comply with the "legal requirements" for "consultation." In connection with this, NUSP calls on councils and students to expose the consultation process—fraud, bullying, restricted attendance, or outright disregard of it. The group also urges them to send petitions to CHED to appeal against TOFI as part of the next phase of the process.

Amid further rising prices of basic goods, students and their parents are fully justified in fighting the additional tuition and other fees. Sending a student to college currently requires an average of ₱130,000 annually. Finishing a 4-year college course in major universities in the country requires some to spend up to ₱2 million. AB

ICC proceeds with hearing to confirm charges against Duterte

Filipinos recall the brutal killings in the war on drugs during the hearing for confirmation of charges against Rodrigo Duterte at the International Criminal Court (ICC). The court held the hearings in The Hague, The Netherlands, on February 23-24 and February 26-27.

During the four days, prosecutors' lawyers, including victims' lawyers on one side, clashed with Duterte's defense lawyers on the other side before the judges of the ICC Pre-trial Chamber 1. They presented arguments and counter-arguments on why the former president's cases must proceed to trial.

Prosecutors clarified that grounds are more than sufficient to advance the trial. Their lawyers systematically laid out preliminary evidence proving Duterte's "central role" in the widespread and systematic attack on civilians in urban poor communities from November 2011 to March 2019.

As an "indirect co-perpetrator," Duterte bears significant responsibility for organizing and extending the campaign of brutal killings, appointing enforcers in high positions, offering bounty, creating a culture of impunity, and ordering police and military to kill. They presented documents and witness testimonies. They also played Duterte's speeches where he directly ordered killing "suspects" and disguising them as "arrest resisters." Prosecutors stated Duterte and his cohorts had a full plan to kill defenseless civilians.

Victims' lawyers, meanwhile, exposed the damage the killings in-

flicted on victims and their communities. They emphasized that children were among the systematically killed, contrary to the defense claim that the only minor killed in the war on drugs was Kian de los Santos. They urged judges to hear victims and grant them a chance to try the case in court.

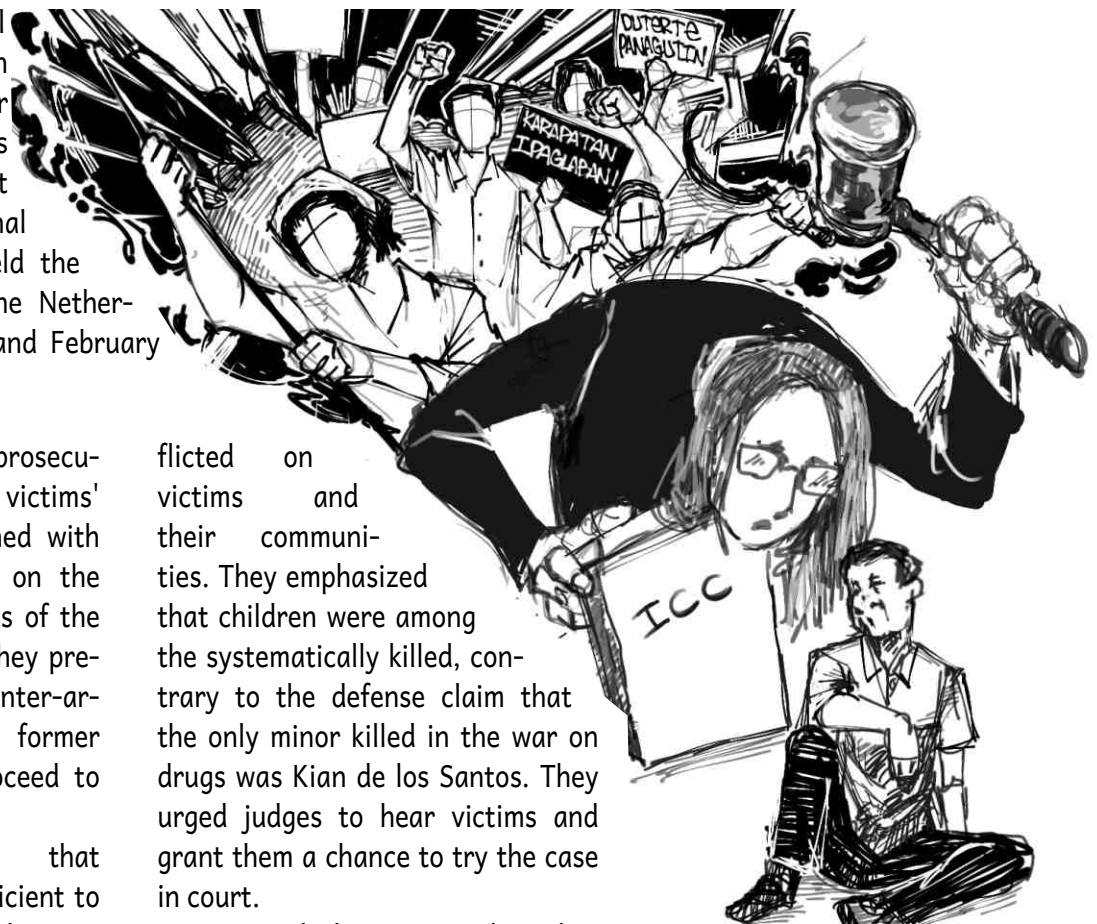
Duterte's lawyer, on the other side, again questioned the basis of the charges and the ICC's authority over them, even after the court already ruled on the matter. Duterte's defense insisted the cases against him lack basis because no widespread and systematic killing supposedly occurred. He challenged processes, evidence, and even witness testimonies. He repeated the argument that victims died in "legitimate police operations," and that those killed were "only a few" compared to those arrested. He described Duterte's verbal orders for killings as mere hyperbole. He also insisted the ICC case is merely the current Marcos regime's harassment, despite having investigations pushed back in 2018.

Prosecutors replied that the defense's very questioning of evidence interpretations and witness testimonies provides a major reason to

hold the trial. Victims shout for justice. They demand Duterte face trial and accountability for his crimes.

The Filipino people have long awaited the hearing for confirmation of charges. At the hearing's opening, hundreds of Filipinos marched in The Hague to demand the ICC try Duterte and fittingly convict him for his crimes. Victims' families and their lawyers joined them.

Families and supporters in the Philippines held actions and watched the hearing on livestream. Cebu saw similar collective viewing. Based on prosecutors' strong case presentation and defense's weak counter-arguments, families feel confident the case will proceed to trial. Pre-Trial Chamber 1 will issue its decision 60 days after the hearing, around late April.



Conflicts among ruling cliques exposes AFP's rottenness

Successive exposures of anomalies and its personnel's involvement in massive corruption in recent months highlighted the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) utter rottenness. These events reveal the AFP serving as henchmen of corrupt bureaucrat-capitalists and accomplices of various ruling factions.

The Duterte faction's latest move paraded 18 men claiming to be "former Marines" who said they transported billions in kickbacks for Ferdinand Marcos Jr and his allies House Speaker Martin Romualdez and Rep. Zaldy Co.

The Dutertes and their ally ex-President Gloria Arroyo's camp exploited them to time their "exposure" on the second day of the hearing for confirming charges against Rodrigo Duterte at the International Criminal Court (ICC). They accused ICC investigators of



taking bribes to destroy their probe's credibility. They named senators and congressmen in the Marcos faction who took bribes. They implicated whistleblowers on the Duterte family's crimes and corruption, like Makabayan congressmen and Leila de Lima, one of the first to push investigations into the Davao killings. Those named firmly denied the accusations against them.

Expectedly, Vice President Sara

Duterte fully praised the "Marines." This is one of her faction's bid to exploit discord inside the AFP and urge it to "withdraw support" from the Marcos regime.

The AFP leadership swiftly silences those voicing "disloyalty" or lack of fidelity to the president, like one active colonel who called for Marcos to resign. Authorities arrested another retired general who declared opposition to Marcos on sedition charges.

Six days before the ex-soldiers surfaced, Sara Duterte announced her presidential run in 2028. The Dutertes use this as a threat against congressmen and senators to block impeachment complaints against her. Despite this, Congress declared on March 2 that two impeachment complaints are sufficient in content. This will resurface the vice president's cases of corruption in confidential and intelligence funds and other anomalies.

Mercenary force

Amid the fierce conflict, the Marcos regime pours bribes and fa-

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Uniformed criminals

OVER AND ABOVE high salaries and allowances, many in the Philippine National Police engage in criminal activities for bribes and cash. Using fascist power, the police extort, steal from, and abuse ordinary citizens.

The PNP's own records show that more than 2,500 police officers were dismissed from service in 2025 for involvement in the illegal drug trade. In February, seven police officers were exposed for extorting money from a Manila resident in exchange for withdrawing a fabricated drug case filed against him. In Angono, Rizal, ten police officers planted evidence, mauled, robbed, and extorted money from a student they accused of involvement in drug dealing. He was illegally detained for two months even after his family paid them money. Meanwhile, six police officers in Makati were exposed for a series of extortion and robbery incidents in the city.

These cases are only a few of the visible proofs of the inherently fascist and abusive character of the police force. The culture of impunity continues to thrive within it.

3rd IB kills peasant in Samar

Soldiers of the 3rd IB killed peasant Jaime Pabillar, 44 years old, in a murderous burst of gunfire in Barangay Cagtoto-og, San Jorge, Samar on February 2. Pabillar was inside his house with his wife, child, and grandchild when the soldiers riddled it with bullets.

The New People's Army (NPA)-Western Samar (Arnulfo Ortiz Command) denied the 3rd IB's claim that Pabillar was a Red fighter. The people's army clarified that Pabillar was a civilian inside a house its unit temporarily used. The unit had gone to the village to investigate the situation of residents suffering from heavy rains and militarization.

When the 3rd IB opened fire toward the house, the Red fighters did not return fire and swiftly withdrew. The unit aimed to protect the masses who had sheltered them.

In Barangay Bay-ang, the 52nd IB opened fire at three farmers on February 20. They were then beaten, their belongings searched, and were interrogated. The soldiers threatened them not to report the incident. This followed artillery shelling and a separate strafing incident in nearby villages on February 16. AB

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vors on the AFP to buy loyalty from its officers and personnel. Marcos raised soldiers' food allowance from ₱150 to ₱350 in 2025. He slipped this in the 2024 budget during bicameral committee meeting after AFP chief Romeo Brawner complained soldiers' allowance was "insufficient." Then-House Speaker Martin Romualdez and then-budget committee chair Zaldy Co personally called Brawner to tell him they inserted funds for his personnel into the budget. No such raise were granted to other government workers despite similar complaints.

Marcos issued in December 2025 another executive order raising basic pay for soldiers and other uniformed personnel by 15% for 2026-2028. He made the announcement after exposés revealed calls inside the AFP for a coup to oust him amid raging public fury over corruption issues.

In the 2026 budget, Marcos allocated ₱50 billion for "modernization" of the AFP drawn from unprogrammed appropriations funds—his own pork barrel. This augments the "modernization" funds he begged from the US in exchange for basing American troops here, trampling on national sovereignty. AB

Group marks Ka Joma's 87th birth anniversary

THE JOSE MARIA Sison Legacy Foundation (JMSLF) launched a series of activities in February to celebrate what would have been Comrade Jose Maria Sison's 87th birthday on February 8. The group also marked the first anniversary of the foundation's establishment. These events carried the theme "Rejoice, Rectify, Remember: Commemorating the Life and Legacy of Jose Maria Sison."

On February 8, the foundation screened the film *The Guerilla is a Poet* followed by a gathering and meal to honor Ka Joma's birthday. It held a discussion on February 21 on the legacy of the First Quarter Storm, with Julie de Lima, Siegfred Deduro, Boni Ilagan, and Judy Taguiwalo serving as speakers. A special tour of the JMS Museum in the Netherlands was conducted on February 28.

Friends, comrades, activists from various local organizations, and community members supporting the foundation attended the events and gatherings. "The different generations of activists who came together for these activities reflect the steady influence of Ka Joma's leadership," the JMSLF said.

Cuba stands firm against US aggression

Cuban forces intercepted a speedboat carrying ten US paramilitary personnel within the country's maritime territory on February 26. The US group opened fire, forcing the Cubans to retaliate, killing four and wounding six. Cuba condemned the attempted incursion as a paramilitary operation aimed at sowing terrorism on the island and stirring unrest among its people.

The attack came as the US imposed another round of brutal sanctions against Cuba. US President Donald Trump effectively enforced an "oil embargo" in January prohibiting all countries from supplying oil to Cuba.

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel denounced the oil blockade as "criminal, brazen, and inhumane." The embargo severely affected transportation, hospitals and medical facilities, schools, tourism, and food production across the country. In February, the US coast guard twice illegally blocked shipments of oil from Mexico and Venezuela bound for Cuba.

International solidarity poured in amid all this. Mexico sent tons of material aid, despite US threats to impose higher tariffs if it continued to supply oil to Cuba. Chile, Russia, China, Vietnam, and Spain also sent material support, financial assistance, and food. AB