



EDITORIAL:

War and Crisis: The Filipino People Must Resist the Burden of Imperialist Aggression

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War and Crisis: The Filipino People Must Resist the Burden of Imperialist Aggression

The widening war in the Middle East is sending shockwaves far beyond the region. The recent invasion and indiscriminate bombing of Iran by US imperialism, carried out with the support of the Zionist state of Israel, has already triggered a global oil price shock. For countries like the Philippines—economically dependent, import-reliant, and governed by a regime eager to serve foreign interests—the consequences are immediate and devastating.

For the Filipino people, the crisis is not an abstract geopolitical conflict. It is a brutal assault on daily survival.

Fuel prices are surging at a pace that threatens to cripple the economy. Diesel is rapidly approaching 80 per liter, while gasoline prices are nearing 90. The situation may worsen as major suppliers of refined petroleum products—China, Japan, and South Korea—have announced temporary halts in exports of diesel and gasoline. A tightening of oil supply would trigger cascading price hikes across every sector of the economy.

When fuel prices rise, everything rises with them.

Transport fares are already climbing. Shipping fares in the Visayas and Mindanao have jumped by roughly 20 percent, with some companies suspending routes altogether due to losses. Airfare increases are expected soon. Yet while the Marcos government quickly permits large corporations to raise fares, it turns a deaf ear to the demands of jeepney drivers and small transport operators who struggle to survive under the same fuel increases.

Food prices are also accelerating. Even before the war escalated, inflation had reached 2.4 percent in February. Now the price of rice—the staple of Filipino households—threatens to reach 50 to 60 per kilogram. Vegetables, fish, meat, and other basic goods will inevitably follow, driven upward by rising production and transportation costs and further aggravated by profiteering cartels.

Meanwhile, wages remain frozen.

For millions of workers, the crisis deepens an already unbearable situation. Incomes remain far below the level required for a dignified life, while the demand for a living wage continues to be denied. Families are forced to stretch shrinking incomes further each day, while many workers juggle multiple jobs just to survive. The crisis also threatens Filipino migrant workers in the Middle East. Thousands face job loss or displacement as conflict spreads across the region. Many are already returning home—not to safety and opportunity, but to an economy plagued by unemployment and lack of livelihood.

This is the grim reality confronting the Filipino people: rising prices, stagnant wages, shrinking jobs, and a government unwilling to defend the public interest. Instead, the US-Marcos regime continues to collaborate with oil companies and foreign financial institutions in imposing policies that worsen the burden on the masses. Taxes on oil products and the 12 percent value-added tax remain firmly in place, ensuring that every price increase translates into higher government revenue extracted from ordinary consumers.

The regime's response has been limited to token gestures—meager fuel subsidies, staggered oil price increases, occasional “free ride” programs, and a four-day workweek for government offices. These measures are little more than public relations tactics that fail to address the root causes of the crisis.

Even the possible reduction of excise taxes on oil—now being floated in Congress—would only offer partial relief. It will not reverse the price shocks nor restrain the profit-making of oil corporations.

What is needed instead are decisive measures: scrapping the oil deregulation law that allows unchecked price manipulation, forcing oil companies to absorb a significant portion of price increases through reduced profits, and abolishing the value-added tax on essential goods and services that disproportionately punishes ordinary consumers.


But such changes will not come from the goodwill of those in power.

In times of crisis, the reactionary state urges the people to tighten their belts, endure hardship, and rely on individual survival strategies. Yet history shows

that the Filipino people advance their interests not through resignation, but through collective struggle.

Encouragingly, protests have already emerged in recent weeks condemning the US war in Iran and raising urgent economic demands. Mass mobilizations marking the anniversary of the EDSA uprising have likewise demonstrated that the spirit of resistance remains alive. The global war crisis and the domestic economic emergency are inseparable. The same imperialist system that fuels wars abroad also imposes hardship at home.

For Filipino workers, activists, and friends of the Philippines in the international solidarity movement, the lesson is clear: the burden of imperialist wars must not be placed on the backs of the people.

The answer lies in unity, mobilization, and militant struggle—against war, against exploitation, and for a just and dignified life for the Filipino masses. 

Bicol plundered by Bureaucrat-Capitalists

Thousands of farmers and fisherfolk are faced with eviction and loss of livelihood across the entire Bicol region due to widespread plunder and landgrabbing by local bureaucrat-capitalists, big landlords and foreign corporations for ecotourism, mining, renewable energy and land conversion. These local bureaucrat-capitalists and big landlords are one in the same, the likes of the Escudero, Hamor, Co, Salceda, Villafuerte, Alsua, Mitra, Cua and Kho clans. They have used their positions in local government and public funds to amass land and resources.


There are numerous cases of local residents being evicted from their homes. In Camarines Sur, hundreds of farmers in the municipality of Siruma face eviction by Governor Luis Raymund Villafuerte's Wanderlust Land Development Corp. In Bula, 200 residents face imminent eviction because of a land dispute between Conrado Colarina of Ruby Shelters and Development Corp. and the Tan family. In Masbate, mining operations of Filminera Resources Corp. has put the communities surrounding the mine under military rule to suppress their resistance. Over 21,000 residents also face eviction from Empark Land

Development Inc.'s planned Masbate International Tourism and Economic Zone. In 2023, Governor Antonio Kho evicted 94 farmer families and seized lands for his interests in ranching, ecotourism and mining.

In Albay, the Co family's Sunwest Corp. seized land at the foot of the Mayon volcano. In Sorsogon, hundreds of mud crab gatherers and fisherfolk lost their livelihoods because of the coastal road project and reclamation.

Since 2022, at least 77 renewable energy projects (solar, wind and geothermal) have been planned and are currently under construction across the region. The largest and most

damaging to Bicolnon livelihoods are the two offshore windfarms in San Miguel Bay in Camariner Sur, owned by Copenhagen Infrastructure New Market Fund Corp., ACEN Corp. and Nexif Ratch Energy. Around 5,000 to 6,000 fisherfolk will lose their livelihoods due to this project.

Many more projects in the region belong to various comprador bourgeois families and foreign companies. In the name of ecotourism and renewable energy, Bicol's natural resources are being exploited by these foreigners and bourgeois compradors, while being abetted by government agencies and protected by the military and police. 

Millions of Overseas Filipino Workers suffer under US-Israel's War on Iran

The escalating armed conflict between US-Israel and Iran is directly impacting 2.3 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and other migrant workers working and residing in the Gulf countries (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain). The war directly threatens the physical safety of OFWs in the Gulf countries in addition to the other countries in the region already involved in war, such as Palestine, Israel, Lebanon and Yemen. This is particularly acute for those OFWs situated near the 27 US and Israeli military bases and assets in the Middle East.

According to the latest data, 2025-26, 975,000 OFWs are in the UAE, 813,000 in Saudi Arabia, 250,000 in Qatar, 211,000 in Kuwait, 31,000 in Israel, and 1,400 in Iran. Many are long-term residents, business owners, students, and permanent fixtures in their adopted communities.

OFW remittances from West Asia totaled \$6.48 billion in 2025 alone — roughly 380 billion flowing into Filipino households, buying food, paying school tuition, servicing mortgages, funding small businesses. Overall OFW remittances represented 7.3% of Philippine GDP in 2025.

Modern warfare presents more risk to the OFWs. Besides aircraft bombs, modern missiles and drones target infrastructure, airports, energy facilities and other vital assets. Even though both sides claim they target only military installations, the danger from missile interceptions, debris fallout, and misfires puts civilian facilities and populations at risk particularly in expatriate districts with dense populations.

A case in point: on the night of February 28, Mary Ann Velasquez, a 32-year caregiver in Israel, was killed by a bomb shrapnel while helping her elderly ward reach a bomb shelter.

Migrant workers have limited protection and legal status under labor laws in West Asia. In times of crisis, many employers abandon their workers, withhold wages and confiscate passports and travel documents. In previous conflicts, migrant workers have often been the last to leave and the most vulnerable. It is even worse for the estimated 205,000 undocumented OFWs.

The conflict has severely affected aviation and travel in the region. Predictably, companies have altered their operations

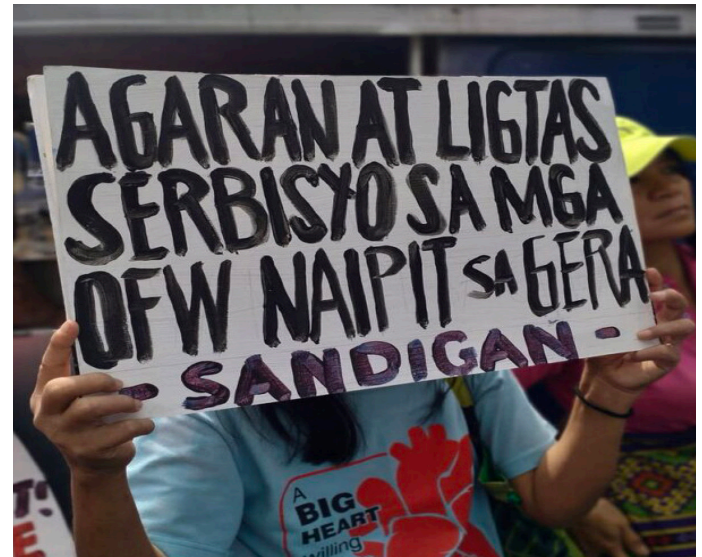


image: philippinerevolution.nu

and rerouted flights due to airspace restrictions and security concerns, complicating the travel of migrant workers.

Evacuating over 2 million OFWs would be an extremely complicated task requiring massive air and sea transport, cooperation from the host governments and secure transit corridors. The current Philippine government, given its ongoing issues with corruption and incompetence, lacks resources, capacity and resolve to undertake these tasks.

Companies affected by the war are laying off workers. Migrant industrial and service workers as well as professionals are most affected. Those laid off are particularly vulnerable to forced labor, human trafficking and other labor violations especially under the kafala system. Undocumented workers, women (particularly pregnant and lactating mothers), young people, and persons with disabilities suffer the most.

As the war intensifies and spreads, the US-Marcos regime downplays the war and the accompanying chaos. It tells the Filipinos to remain calm and lowers the alert level in affected countries, even in Israel, where hundreds of OFWs have expressed a desire to return home. There is no clear, organized, and systematic plan for mass rescue, evacuation, and repatriation based on the number of OFWs wanting to return to the Philippines.


Embassies, consulates, and the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) have been accused of hiding funds that should be allocated to the Action Fund for OFWs. The Filipino people do not see, are not informed, and do not feel the so-called efforts of the Marcos Jr. regime regarding the war. 



image: philippinerevolution.nu

Migrants' Protests' disrupt Marcos Visit to the US

Protest actions in New York disrupted the visit of Ferdinand Marcos Jr, his foreign secretary Theresa Lazaro and his ambassador Jose Romualdez to attend the United Nations' 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

News outfits Ang Bayan and Bulatlat reported on March 11 and 12 that Marcos and his cronies were ambushed with demonstrations upon their arrival in New York City on March 8 by more than 200 Filipinos at the Philippine Consulate General. The rallyists also marched to The Pierre Hotel where Marcos was staying. Marcos has no right to speak on the concerns of women as his corrupt regime traffics and sells out working Filipina women, according to BAYAN USA, a national alliance of 50 progressive Filipino organizations in the US.

"Working Filipina women continue to fight against corruption, fascism, and for a free Philippines. Here in the US, Filipinas wrongfully detained and abused by ICE, such as Alma Bowman, Tita Rebecca, and Ligaya Jensen, fought for their freedom and demanded the Philippine government be held accountable." BAYAN USA said in a Facebook post.

Filipino residents in the US also denounced the hypoc-

risy of Marcos speaking on the status of women while gender based violence and exploitation continue to worsen in the Philippines. The Philippines was the first Southeast Asian country to ratify the international bill of rights for women, but such commitments remain largely symbolic without real systemic changes that address the exploitation and oppression faced by working class women and girls.

April Bautista of Gabriela USA said, "Marcos, how dare you come to New York City to speak on the status of Filipino women. . . The people who are starving, who are struggling, know the truth: you are using women as a selling point and a bargaining chip to secure your seat next to Trump's feet. Marcos is the number one oppressor of women in the Philippines."

The Filipinos, who also held protests in other cities, successfully delayed Marcos's attendance at the United Nations. They also revealed that Marcos squandered thousands of dollars on a luxury hotel costing \$17,000 or 986,000 per room per day. 🚩