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Editorial

Confront Aquino's remaining years with mass struggles and armed resistance

Hearing how Aquino has been describing his first two years in power, one would think that life in the Philippines has grown so grand. Poverty, he says, now belongs to a bygone era, with prosperity and a life of comfort both within reach. But that would be the case only if one were to turn a deaf ear to the cries and grievances of a people in the depths of hunger and poverty.

The "path of righteousness" slogan Aquino keeps on mouthing is nothing but a figment of his imagination. It can be likened to a lullaby that Aquino likes to sing over and over to lull the people's minds and usher them into a world of make-believe. But even innocent babies bawl when their bellies ache with hunger and they are deprived of care. The fantasy world Aquino likes to con-

jure will eventually vanish in the face of the overwhelming reality of poverty, oppression and exploitation.

However the people's experiences under Aquino are summed-up in the past two years, one thing is undeniable—that there has been no improvement in the daily lives of the toiling masses. Whatever bits of hope they have left grow

tinier in the face of their inability to find jobs, whether inside the country or overseas. They are mired in ever deeper poverty. Hunger and disease are widespread. Allocations in the national budget for health care, education and other social services continue to dwindle.

Despite the promised "change," there is nothing new with Aquino's basic economic policies. He has chosen to perpetuate liberalization, deregulation, privatization and denationalization—policies that have brought nothing good to the Philippine economy. Aquino persists in obstructing national



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industrialization and genuine land reform.

Since taking his seat in Malacañang, Aquino has been obsessed with imposing more taxes and fees on the people in order to increase his government's revenues. He immediately busied himself with hiking expressway toll fees and train fares and dismissed the widespread demand for a reduction in the taxes being levied on petroleum products despite the tremendous burden on the people. He has pulled all stops in raising fees in public schools and hospitals and legislating higher taxes on cigarettes and alcoholic beverages.

Like all previous regimes, Aquino's priority is to attract investments from foreign big capitalists and credit from foreign banks. For this, workers' wages remain pegged at extremely low levels. Demolitions of urban poor communities are rampant to give way to foreign capitalist projects. In accordance with the wishes of foreign big capitalists, Aquino is currently focusing on liberalizing policies to facilitate the plunder of Philippine miner-

al resources.

Aquino claims that through his cash doleouts in the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino program, he is solving the people's poverty, even without addressing the basic demands for land, jobs, higher wages and affordable prices of commodities and social services. The project, which is funded by a huge debt from the World Bank payable in 2015, is in reality being used by local politicians to enhance their influence and is part and parcel of counterrevolutionary programs aimed at veering the people away from the path of struggle.

The Aquino regime is increasingly resorting to fascist violence against the people under the Oplan Bayanihan war of suppression which mainly targets those who are actively engaged in mass struggles, especially those who assiduously support land reform, resist foreign mining and protect the environment. The AFP is using the dirty tactics of deception, terror and repression. Armed soldiers maintain their presence


in communities to create a climate of fear and impose martial law-like policies. Shootings, beatings, the forcible use of the masses' houses and schools as camps, theft, the seduction of women, rape and other sexual abuses, assaulting and terrorizing children are commonplace.

The Aquino regime has the audacity to go allout in its war of suppression against the people because it enjoys the full support of US imperialism. The US has raised its military assistance to the Aquino regime in exchange for its puppet regime's more obsequious acquiescence to all its wishes and commands.

A growing number of American warships and submarines have been docking in Philippine ports, in accordance with the US strategy of strengthening its military presence in the Asia-Pacific. US military planes and drones will be given full freedom to use the country's air space to go on surveillance missions. The permanent presence of US troops based in Zamboanga is being strengthened. These troops are directly engaged in combat operations in various parts of the Philippines.

The more the Aquino regime becomes dependent on US imperialism, the more it loses support from the Filipino people. The more Aquino kowtows to the desires of the US and big foreign capitalists and banks, the more anti-democratic, antipeople and anti-national its policies become. After a mere two years in power, Aquino has gone to the hilt in trampling on human rights, surrendering the nation's freedom and heaping one burden after another on the people's shoulders.

Two years into its term and the Aquino regime's illusions of

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"change" and "hope" which it has used to deceive the people have been torn to shreds. Only two years have passed, but it has become painfully clear that the rest of Aquino's term will be marked by nothing but intensified oppression and exploitation, more grinding poverty and greater suffering for the Filipino people.

The Filipino people must confront Aquino in the remaining years of his term with stepped-up mass struggles and revolutionary armed resistance. They must shake the Aquino regime to its very foundations to prevent it from engaging further in acts of utter puppetry to US imperialism, resorting to fascist violence and ceding the nation's resources and patrimony to foreign interests. They must hold the regime accountable for its national treachery and its serious crimes against the people.

Protest actions in the streets, in factories, schools and communities in the cities and country-

side must continuously be strengthened. The Filipino people face on a daily basis various issues that bring to the fore their wretched and oppressive conditions, stoke their widespread anger and drive them to rise up and fight. The people must be united and mobilized in growing numbers in demonstrations and other forms of collective action.

Along with advancing mass struggles, the revolutionary forces must give their all in advancing guerrilla warfare nationwide. The New People's Army must launch bigger and more frequent tactical offensives, annihilate fascist units of the AFP and punish those who have committed grave crimes against the people. The longer Aquino stays in power and the more his illusory solutions are exposed for what they are, the more the people tread the path of armed revolution. Aquino himself is creating the conditions for the New People's Army to gain more adherents and grow in strength. **AB**

Aquino's planned executive order aims to give destructive mining a new push

Even before its formal issuance, the Aquino regime's planned Executive Order (EO) on mining has met with stiff opposition. Plans to issue it on June 22 were postponed anew purportedly to iron out its kinks and make it "acceptable" to the public. In fact, Malacañang has been busy browbeating oppositionists to the EO, especially local politicians who will be aggrieved by it.

The Aquino regime desperately wants to issue this anti-people and environmentally detrimental executive order whose aim is to impose more liberal policies in favor of big foreign mining companies and their local counterparts.

In the past few years, mining-related disasters have grown worse nationwide. The main victims have been impoverished communities, especially those of peasants and national minorities. These have spurred them to launch broad and militant anti-mining struggles to defend their

economic rights and resist the foreign plunder of the country's resources and environment. A striking example is the armed resistance being waged by the B'laan minorities in Davao del Sur.

The ranks of antimining sections of the Filipino people are growing, ranging from progressive

and environmentalist groups to the Catholic church and other religious groups.

Up to 40 local government units nationwide have passed resolutions against destructive mining. Many of them implement ordinances closing down mining sites or imposing strict regulations on existing ones. Due to moratoriums in a number of areas, several applications for the expansion of mining operations have been pending nationwide since 2010.



Progressive lawmakers in Congress have also filed House Bill 4315 which calls for a reorientation of the country's mining industry. The bill opposes an export-oriented mining industry that benefits foreign companies. It calls for mining to support national industrialization, a principle that is diametrically opposed to the direction the Aquino regime is taking.

In territories covered by the People's Democratic Government, the New People's Army (NPA) enforces a ban on destructive mining. The Filipino people and peoples the world over applauded the big raid conducted by the NPA in October 2011 that put a stop to the operations in Claver, Surigao del Sur of the Japanese-owned Sumitomo Metal Corporation, Ltd.

The Aquino regime has responded with violence to the people's widespread opposition. Militarization is intense in areas where mining companies operate or in places that are being targeted for operation. There are serious violations of human rights, including killings and harassment of national minorities and environmental activists. Communities that the police and military wish to control are dotted with checkpoints. Thousands are displaced due to militarization. No less than the Aquino regime has been encouraging mining companies to finance their own Special Civilian Armed Auxiliaries that are trained and armed by the AFP.

Aquino's order: Full speed ahead with mining

In the face of the Philippine economy's continued deterioration, the regime is looking to the mining industry as a major

source of funds. Thus, the US-Aquino regime has been worried no end about the people's growing opposition to mining, which has hindered the influx of investments by big mining companies.

The Aquino regime and big capitalists are targeting \$2.27 billion in investments from mining companies that have been drooling over an estimated \$1 trillion worth of untapped mineral resources, mostly gold, copper and nickel.

Aquino has also been worried about the halted operations of a number of mining companies due to moratoriums imposed by local governments on the approval of applications. For Aquino, the Mining Act of 1995 is no longer sufficient. It needs a new way of jumpstarting investments in mining.

Through the new executive order, Malacañang wants the decisions of the national government to have primacy over any ordinance or resolution issued by local governments. Its objective is to further centralize the power to approve and regulate mining operations.

Malacañang will also have more room for maneuver to push through with mining projects despite strong opposition from local community and church leaders. Thus, the central government gets to have its hands on both the tax revenues and the kickbacks from big mining companies. Small-scale mining, which used to be under the jurisdiction of local governments, will be eliminated under the new EO, in favor of a new category—medium-scale mining—which pertains to local counterparts of foreign companies.

Malacañang wants to have a share bigger than the usual 2%

from mining through "joint ventures" and agreements with private companies for "co-production sharing." These arrangements will also cover oil and gas production.

The added tax revenues and other income from "joint ventures" with foreign companies will only benefit big bureaucrat capitalists. A provision to have community and environmental destruction covered by insurance is useless. Decades of experience have proven that neither the government nor the mining companies have provided any real rehabilitation from the permanent destruction wrought by large-scale mining. On the other hand, the EO's provision for the regime to take actions that adhere to international standards of good governance merely means that the Aquino government's policies and programs (including those on security issues) will be geared towards the interests of mining monopoly capitalists.

The people must resist this planned EO. The struggle includes the defense of the national patrimony against the foreign plunder of the country's resources and environment. The people must fight for genuine national industrialization. As long as it does not exist, mining will always be export-oriented and benefit foreign capitalists and will never be able to contribute any significant good to the country. The program for national industrialization is a development program for the majority of the people and not for the ruling classes. It encompasses the protection of the environment, the rights and welfare of workers in the industry and the national minorities and local communities. AB

Giant mining company's operations halted in Davao del Sur

Xstrata-Sagittarius Mining Inc. (SMI) has temporarily stopped its operations in Kiblawan, Davao del Sur after a series of ambushes on June 20 and 26 by B'laan tribal warriors ("Pulang Pangayaw") on abusive police and soldiers guarding the mining firm. Xstrata-SMI is a giant mining company that extracts gold and copper from more than 10,000 hectares of land straddling four provinces of Mindanao.

Ret. P/Supt. Villamindo Hectin, SMI senior security consultant and another policeman were killed in the first ambush on June 20 in Barangay Kimlawis. Two other elements of the Davao del Sur Police Public Safety Command were wounded. They were ambushed while transporting big machinery and mining equipment for Xstrata-SMI along Kiblawan Road.

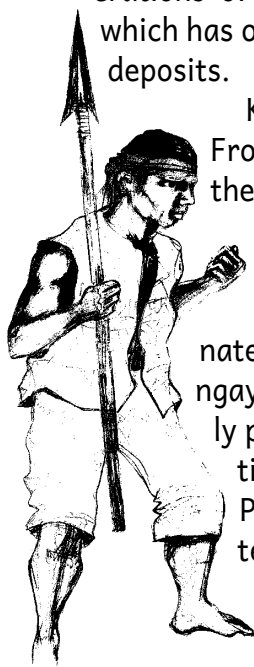
A soldier from the 1002nd Brigade and two CAFGU elements were wounded in another ambush that day in Sitio Maklak of the same village.

The third ambush took place on June 26 on a convoy of Xstrata-SMI vehicles in Barangay Bongmal, where a policeman was wounded.

No civilian was killed or wounded in these ambushes, contrary to claims made by 27th IB chief Lt. Col. Alexis Bravo before the media.

On orders of Xstrata-SMI, the military and police have long been ravaging B'laan communities opposed to large-scale mining in their ancestral lands in Davao del Sur, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani. Many ordinary civilians, environmental activists and mass leaders opposed to the company's destructive large-scale mining have already been killed.

SMI is mainly funded by the Swiss-owned Xstrata Copper, one of the world's biggest monopoly capitalists in the mining industry. It is setting up the infrastructure to prepare for the large-scale operations of the Tampakan Copper-Gold Project in the area, which has one of the world's largest untapped copper and gold deposits.



Ka Efren, spokesperson of the National-Democratic Front-Far South Mindanao Region (NDF-FSMR) hailed the courage of the B'laan Lumad who use their traditional *pangayaw* as the most effective means to defend their ancestral lands and their tribe's way of life. Although the ordinary *pangayaw* is indiscriminate in its targets and is spontaneous, "Pulang Pangayaw" has definite and legitimate targets and closely plans and carefully implements whatever armed action it undertakes. This is evident in the "Pulang Pangayaw's" recent ambushes and earlier encounters with the armed forces of Xstrata-SMI. Ka Efren said that "Pulang Pangayaw" will not stop until SMI pulls out of the B'laan's ancestral lands. **AB**

AFP suffers casualties in Bukidnon and Antipolo



The enemy suffered 14 casualties in four gunbattles between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the New People's Army (NPA) in the last half of June in Bukidnon province and Antipolo City.

In Bukidnon, nine soldiers of the 8th IB were killed in an ambush by Red fighters of the Ernesto "Boyboy" Roa Command along the boundary of Barangays Namnam and Bunacao in San Fernando town on June 17. The sheer extent of their casualties forced 8th IB chief Lt. Col. Jose Ma. Cuerpo to admit in a radio interview on June 24 how many soldiers really died. To make up for its battlefield losses, Cuerpo lambasted the NPA for allegedly using prohibited land mines and violating the rules of war.

What Colonel Cuerpo conveniently failed to mention is that only the use of contact-detonated explosives is prohibited. Under the Ottawa Treaty on Land Mines, the use of com-

mand-detonated explosives is legitimate.

Earlier, at around 8:30 a.m., two enemy soldiers were killed in a harassment operation by another NPA unit on another column of the 8th IB conducting military operations in Kisayab, Bunacao. Still another NPA team harassed the military detachment in the village of Dao on June 16.

Meanwhile, in Antipolo City in Rizal province, three soldiers were wounded when a unit under the 59th IB attempted to encircle an eight-man NPA team under the Narciso Antazo Aramil Command in Sitio Apya, Barangay Calawis on the night

of June 30.

The NPA unit was conducting a consultation with the residents of Sitio Apya when it espied the approach of a 12-man unit of the 59th IB. The NPA unit immediately left the populated area to avoid having any civilians caught in the crossfire. After several minutes of waiting, the NPA ambushed the 59th IB troops at around 6:30 p.m., wounding three of the attacking soldiers. The Red fighters were able to return to their camp in the Sierra Madre mountains without suffering a single casualty. AB

Repression in Lacub

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the local government have virtually imposed martial law in Lacub, Abra to suppress the people's opposition to large-scale mining. Terrorism, harassment, bribery and fraud are rampant, making it impossible for the residents to have freely given their assent to the entry of mining in their communities.

The mining companies were not really able to obtain the people's Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before beginning their operations. The residents of Lacub have long been opposed to large-scale mining. In 2011, they even barricaded the town center to prevent a Korean mining company from conducting surveying operations.

The mining companies used armed goons to terrorize the residents. In November 2011, the town's mayor and vice mayor visited two of the town's villages to "convince" residents to allow mining operations in their areas. There were no free-wheeling discussions during the public meeting called by the local officials, however. Aside from the politicians' private armies, the 41st IB's Charlie Company surrounded the area where the meeting was called.

Residents were not properly informed about "consultations." This was done on purpose to prevent many of the residents from attending the consultations and voting. Government employees and local officials opposed to mining were harassed and coerced into siding with the mining companies.

The mining companies also gave out bribes to buy the residents' votes. Voting was not done secretly to allow the military and the mining companies to know who are against them. Fearing reprisals, many residents refused to take part in the voting. In Barangay Bacag, the mayor's allies counted as among those in favor of mining even those who absented themselves from the referendum. AB

Environmental activists victimized by Oplan Bayanihan

The most striking human rights violations documented in the last week of June and first week of July involved the harassment and extrajudicial killing by armed minions of the state of antimining activists and advocates of the rights of national minorities.

July 4. Elements of the Police Regional Office 2 Intelligence Unit arrested Agnes Mesina, Makabayan coalition coordinator for Cagayan Valley. She was in the middle of a consultation with ACT Partylist Rep. Antonio Tinio and organizers of local ACT chapters at the Hotel Roma coffee shop in Tuguegarao City when the police intelligence agents suddenly arrived. They had also just concluded a consultation with public school teachers. Mesina has been slapped with a trumped-case murder case.

Noon, July 3. Two unidentified gunmen shot to death Dutch lay missionary Wilhelmus Geertman, 67, in front of his office at the L&S Subdivision, Barangay Telebastagan, San Fernando, Pampanga.

Witnesses said the assailants forced Geertman to kneel before shooting him in the back. A CCTV camera was able to capture images of the fleeing gunmen aboard a Honda motorcycle driven by a third conspirator. They were tailed by a red Mitsubishi car.

Geertman was the executive director of Alay Bayan Inc. (ABI) which provides assistance to Central Luzon farmers, including those in Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac. He was also an advocate of the rights of Dumagat minorities under BATARIS, an environmental group based in Aurora province. He helped form the Samahan ng mga Katutubo sa Sierra Madre (SKSM), a provincial organization also based in Aurora.

Geertman studied at the University of the Philippines-Diliman and Ateneo de Manila in 1970. Since then, he has considered the Philippines his second home and continued helping the Filipino peasantry.

Peasant, environmentalist and other groups strongly condemned Geertman's killing.

July 2. Philippine Army troops harassed the grieving families of three members of the New People's Army (NPA) and other residents of Barangay Camflora, San Andres, Quezon. The troops swooped down on the funeral wake and interrogated those present.

The three Red fighters were among 11 NPA guerrillas slain by the military in San Narciso, Quezon on June 30.

Evening of June 30. Gunmen shot to death Romualdo Palispis, 54, in his house in Maria Aurora, Aurora province. Palispis was a member and convenor of Bayan Muna-Central Luzon, according to initial reports. He was also active in environmental issues and led the Justice and Peace Action Group in Maria Aurora.

June 29. Officers of the 3rd Infantry Division of the Philippine Army accused Cynthia Deduro, executive director of the Panay-Guimaras Indigenous Peoples Network of being a leading element of the Panay Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Deduro, who is also a coordinator of Migrante International, vehemently denied the accusation. She also said this kind of vilification campaign followed a sinister pattern since the AFP did exactly the same thing to activist Fernando Baldomero of Aklan before he was killed by military agents in 2011.

June 29. The military harassed an eight-day Peace Caravan and Mercy Mission organized by the Save Bondoc Peninsula Movement

(SBPM) to provide food packages, medical services and psychosocial first aid to victims of militarization in Mulanay, San Narciso and San Andres, Quezon. In San Andres, the mission arrived to find soldiers from the 74th IB in a public meeting and ordering residents not to join the SBPM activity since the latter was allegedly composed of NPA members. When the SBPM's 17-vehicle convoy passed by Catanauan town, three of the vehicles suffered flat tires after the military scattered metal spikes near the 76th IB camp in Barangay Malaahos.

June 24. Elements of the 42nd IB abducted four members of a peasant family. According to relatives, the military came to the Marcenilla family's house in Goa, Camarines Sur to "borrow" Herman Marcenilla, the head of the family. Fearing what would become of Herman, his wife Dolores, their daughter Maricel and son-in-law Christian Macasinag accompanied him. The military claims that Herman and Maricel are both NPA members who had surrendered and voluntarily come with them. Relatives denied the military's claims. The family does not know the whereabouts of the victims to date.

June 22. Troops of the 26th IB arrested six civilians from Nakadayas, Mahagsay, San Luis, Agusan del Sur.

The military and CAFGU elements did not have an arrest warrant when they took into custody Noel Canhatan, Rogelio Galino, Jackylo Gumansil, Jojo Gomez, Gemar Matebulig and Maymay Matebulig at a checkpoint in Km 41, San Luis. The military also failed to present a search warrant when they ransacked the victims' personal belongings. The civilians were handcuffed and brought to the 26th IB headquarters in Talacogon town.

The San Luis town mayor has vouched for the victims, saying they are ordinary civilians and residents of his municipality. In spite of this, 4th ID-PA spokesman Maj. Eugene Osias IV arrogantly announced in a local radio station in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur that the six arrested were NPA members and had already been charged with arson and rebellion.

It is believed that the military vented its ire on the civilians because of a successful NPA raid on a Philippine Army detachment in Binicalan, San Luis, Agusan del Sur on May 30.

June 19. A Civil-Military Operations (CMO) unit under the 17th IB made the rounds of high schools in Allacapan, Cagayan and harassed the students. They interrogated and took pictures of Olipa Gunayon, a Second Year student of Mallig Valley National High School because her sister Jessica was a former NPA member. They also paraded before the students an NPA surrenderee named Michael Bugarin alias Spyke. The military took down all the students' cellphone numbers and told them they were obliged to submit reports on the NPA. They also told the students that they would be monitored. The soldiers presented an anti-communist film, gave lectures on the "evils" of communism and showed the students photographs of alleged NPA guerrillas.

June 17. Joey Bayaua, a 14-year old peasant from Barangay Babatacan, Lasam, Cagayan was shot in the back by elements of the 17th IB who attacked an NPA unit under the Danilo Ben Command. Ten military elements were wounded in this firefight.

June 16. The office of Allacapan Sangguniang Bayan secretary and Anakpawis municipal chair Telynor Ponce was ransacked by suspected military elements. **AB**

Jazmines illegally transferred to Bicutan

Detained National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) consultant Alan Jazmines was arbitrarily transferred from the PNP Custodial Center in Camp Crame to Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig City in the early morning of June 29.

Human rights watchdog KARAPATAN reported that no reason was given for the sudden and clandestine transfer. Jazmines was not even allowed to notify his lawyer and call his family.

Commission on Human Rights chair Loretta Rosales did nothing and may have been complicit in Jazmines' illegal transfer. She was seen with PNP Custodial Center chief P/Supt. Cesar Magsino before Jazmines was brought to Bicutan.

Jazmines' transfer was a violation of his civil rights since it was done without a court order.

In a statement, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said the transfer was a reprisal by the US-Aquino regime against Jazmines for his exposés on the abuses committed against political prisoners at Camp Crame. He had also recently exposed the presence at the detention facility of foreign nationals renditioned by agents of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) abroad, given fake Filipino identities and remanded to the custody of the Philippine National Police.

The NDFP also vigorously condemned Jazmines' treacherous and forcible transfer. It added that NDFP consultant Tirso "Ka Bart" Alcantara's inhumane treatment and the continuing illegal detention of its other consultants have a serious dampening effect on the formal talks' resumption.

Jazmines' harassment just weeks after the resumption of formal peace talks smacks of insincerity on the part of the Government of the Philippines (GPH) in seriously addressing the issues raised by the NDFP.

The NDFP said that the Aquino regime must conduct a serious investigation on the grave violations of national sovereignty and territorial integrity exposed by Jazmines instead of making this cause for a treacherous act of reprisal that reeks of subservience to the US. AB

Intensifying militarization in Bukidnon

The 8th IB has been relentlessly conducting military operations in San Fernando, Bukidnon to pave the way for the entry of large-scale mining and the opening of agro-business plantations in the area.

The Lumad people's stand against the seizure of their ancestral lands and the destruction of their livelihoods has been met with fierce repression.

San Fernando is practically under martial law. The local government and police are inutile in the face of virtual military rule, unable to defend the victims of military abuse. They themselves are being intimidated by the bandit forces of the New Indigenous People's Army Reform (NIPAR) under Aldie "Butsoy" Salusad and the Tribal Reform Indigenous Organizing in Mindanao (TRIOM) under Benjamin "Loloy" Salusad. NIPAR and TRIOM are both paramilitary groups organized by the AFP.

It is common knowledge that "Butsoy" Salusad is able to roam the town freely despite the issuance of an arrest warrant against him for the murder of Jimmy Laguyon, the barangay captain of Dao, San Fernando who strongly opposed the seizure of Lumad ancestral lands by big mining companies.

"Loloy" Salusad, who is also a CAFGU element, has likewise been lording it over the town. In an interview over a local radio station on July 3, Salusad arrogantly admitted that it was he who ordered the hamletting of residents of Sitio Kisayab, Barangay Bunacao in San Fernando. Salusad bragged that he had been given authority by 8th IB chief Col. Jose Ma. Cuerpo to force the people to obey his orders. Colonel Cuerpo also reportedly assured him that he would not be held accountable for any crime.

Soldiers have been forcibly staying in the houses of more than a hundred families living at the center of Sitio Kisayab since June 17. Datu Lauro, a local leader who was forced to guide the troops in their military operations was accused of being a member of the New People's Army. The soldiers planted a cal .45 pistol on his person to use as evidence against him. Many Lumad folk are being forced to admit to being NPA members and surrender. Residents are banned from going around their community and are given only an hour daily to work their farms. AB

Armando Albarillo: Mass leader, victim of fascism, people's martyr

Armando "Ka Arman" Albarillo was one of 11 Red fighters killed in a gunbattle with fascist soldiers of the US-Aquino regime on June 30 in San Narciso, Quezon. He was formerly the secretary-general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Southern Tagalog (BAYAN-ST).

It has been a decade since Ka Arman's parents Expedito and Manuela were killed. The military had raided their house in Sitio Ibuye, Calsapa, San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro on April 8, 2002. His parents, who were both members of Bayan Muna were brutally murdered by fascist troops under then 204th Brigade chief Jovito Palparan Jr.

Orphaned, Arman and his younger sister Adeliza were given sanctuary by church and human rights groups.

It did not take long for Arman to join rallies where he assailed the Arroyo regime's inaction not only on his parents' murders but on the plight

of many other victims of extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances and other forms of human rights violations. He became a good organizer of the masses and eventually rose to the position of BAYAN-ST secretary-general. He was loved and admired by the people and his co-workers for his militant style of leadership and his determination.

In early 2008, military agents offered him a huge sum of money in exchange for cooperating with the reactionary government. Ka Arman flatly refused the offer. He and his wife joined the New People's Army when Arman's name was included in a list of 72 mass leaders and activists of Southern Tagalog who were slapped with trumped-up criminal charges in 2008.

Ka Arman was killed at the age of 34 amid his continuing quest for justice for his parents and the oppressed and exploited Filipino people. **AB**

26 hospitals nationwide to be privatized

Reactionary politicians are currently pushing for the privatization of 26 public hospitals even as health services continue to suffer cuts in budgetary allocations.

At the Lower House, Bacolod Lone District Rep. Anthony Golez Jr. filed on March 28 House Bill 6069 to corporatize 26 government hospitals nationwide.

A similar bill will be filed at the Upper House by Sen. Franklin Drilon during Congress' next session. The bills call for granting "fiscal autonomy" to the affected hospitals. Under a corporatized regime, hospitals will be responsible for raising their own funds through programs and services aimed at raising profits and income.

Golez's bill was approved by the Lower House's Committee on Health on May 16 despite opposition from other legislators who said that the process has been shortcut and that the nec-

essary consultations with stakeholders were not conducted.

The bill's real objective is to effect the hospitals' eventual privatization and for government to renege on its obligation to the people. The bill will have terrifying repercussions on the poor who could not afford to pay hospital bills. The hospitals will merely be run as businesses instead of providing free and affordable services.

The Aquino regime's Public-Private Partnership is behind the Golez bill. The privatization of the 26 hospitals is

only the first step in the privatization of all government hospitals nationwide.

Such a bill completely disregards standards set by the World Health Organization which call for countries to allocate 5% of their Gross National Product to health care. The Aquino regime allotted a mere P42.69 million last year to its health budget. The country's GNP for the third quarter of 2011 stood at P3 trillion, however, meaning that

government should have allocated P15 billion, following United Nations standards.



With the government's abandonment of its obligations to the people, many patients who have been unable to receive medical attention have had no choice but to await their demise.

Public hospitals that have already been corporatized are already charging huge fees. The Philippine Heart Center, for instance, no longer provides any kind of medical service for free. Last year, up to 1,600 indigent patients were not operated on because the hospital lacked funds for them. Currently, only 20% of its beds are reserved for charity patients, down from 70% in 2010. Indigent patients (Class C and Class D) have to shell out ₱10,000 for every surgical procedure.

The National Kidney and Transplant Institute charges more for blood sugar analysis (₱600) compared to private hospitals like Capitol Medical Center (₱400). It also charges more for dialysis compared to private dialysis centers. The NK-TI and the PHC charge ₱1,680 and ₱1,800 respectively for ultrasound and ₱415 to ₱430 for chest x-rays while private facilities charge ₱350. Laboratory and x-ray examinations suffered

Hospitals to be privatized

Cagayan Valley Medical Center, Veterans Regional Hospital, Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center, Ilocos Training and Regional Medical Center, Region Medical Center, Dr. Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center, Jose B. Lingad Memorial Medical Center, Bicol Medical Center, Bicol Research Training and Teaching Hospital, Quirino Memorial Medical Center, Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center, Rizal Medical Center, Amang Rodriguez Medical Center, San Lazaro Hospital, Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center, Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center, Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital, Western Visayas Medical Center, Northern Mindanao Medical Center, Southern Philippines Medical Center, Zamboanga City Medical Center, Cotabato Regional and Medical Center, CARAGA Regional Hospital, Davao Regional Hospital, Mayor Hilarion A. Ramiro, Sr. Regional Center and Training Hospital and Batangas Regional Hospital.

a 100% hike at the Philippine Orthopedic Center. Even the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) now charges for x-rays and laboratory tests when these used to be provided for free to Class D patients. At the Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital and Tondo Medical Center, normal deliveries cost ₱1,500 to ₱5,000.

Last year, the practice at the Philippine Children's Medical Center of requiring patients unable to pay their bills to leave their cellphones, watches and other personal belongings as security was exposed in the media. Meanwhile, inside the PGH, there are private facilities such as the University Physicians Medical Center that accept contracts for services such as radiology. The National Center for Mental Health is about to be evicted from its current location because it is within the sprawling Welfareville compound which has been sold to give way to a Public-Private Partnership project.

AB

CPP assails Aquino request for US spy planes to fly over South China Sea

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) assailed the Aquino regime for requesting the US government to send spy planes to monitor the South China Sea. The US government has long been waiting for such a move from its puppet.

The open invitation for US intervention constitutes an outright betrayal of the people by the Aquino regime. It provides the US with a pretext and legal cover to intervene militarily in

the Philippines and the South China Sea—which falls squarely within the US' objectives of dominating the Asia-Pacific region.

The request for US spy

planes follows other statements and actuations that prove that Benigno Aquino III is a true-blue US puppet. On June 25, the US submarine USS Louisville docked at the Subic Bay Freeport in Olongapo City and stayed until June 30 ostensibly to resupply and for R&R despite opposition from various sectors.

It came as no surprise that

Aquino and his minions were conspicuously silent even if the USS Louisville is a nuclear-armed vessel. They seem to have been too busy gawking open-mouthed at the sight of a modern submarine that they forgot to even raise the fact that the reactionary constitution itself prohibits the entry of any foreign vessel bearing nuclear arms or any other weapons of mass destruction.

Instead of raising this issue, the Aquino regime even justified its inaction, saying that the US' growing military presence in the Asia-Pacific strengthens the Philippines' claims over the Spratlys and

other islands in the South China Sea.

Meanwhile, the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan called on the Senate to investigate the presence of a private contractor at the Subic Bay Freeport. BAYAN said AMSC-Huntington Ingalls, the biggest company worldwide engaged in the construction of nuclear-armed warships is currently in a joint venture with the Korean-owned Hanjin Corp. to gradually transform the civilian facilities at the Subic Bay Freeport into a US military base. AMSC-Huntington Ingalls will be repairing US warships and providing other logistical services. AB

Protests greet CARAT 2012 in Mindanao

Patriyotiko-SOCSKSARGEN launched a protest-caravan on the occasion of Philippine-American Friendship Day on July 4 to express vehement objection to a nine-day joint naval exercise between the US Navy and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Sarangani Bay called Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) 2012.

From General Santos City, the protest-caravan proceeded to Glan town in Sarangani where American soldiers were slated to provide "inland medical and dental services" and where the US 7th Fleet Band was to give a concert.

Glan is one of the areas included in the Coast Watch Stations. The other areas are Kiamba and Maitum in Sarangani; Kalamansig in Sultan Kudarat; Balut Island in Davao del Sur; and Cape San Agustin in Gov. Generoso, Davao Oriental. These Coast Watch Stations are part of Coast Watch South, a US defense project likewise supported by the Australian government. The project makes use of high-tech equipment like radar and is capable of monitoring activities on land, air and sea.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) expressed its ardent support for the anti-imperialist mass action of the people of General Santos and

Sarangani, calling it an important expression of the Filipino people's patriotic demand to put a stop to US interventionism and oppose the Aquino regime's all-out puppetry to the US government.

Joining CARAT 2012 are the USNS Vandergrift, USNS Safeguard and the US Coast Guard cutter Waesche, and the Philippine Navy ships BRP Magat Salamat, Miguel Malvar, Salvador Abcede and Teotimo Figuracion.

The exercises that began on July 2 and will end on July 10 involve 500 American troops and 450 troops from the Philippine Navy and Philippine Coast Guard.

The American troops were barred from leaving their ships for "R&R" to avoid a repeat of US Lance Corporal Daniel Smith's rape of Filipino woman "Nicole" at the Subic Bay Freeport in 2006. But the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN)-SOCSKSARGEN said

that on the night of July 1, some soldiers hired prostitutes from General Santos City and had them brought aboard two US ships docked at the Makar port.

CARAT 2012 is part of the US' intensified moves to use the Philippines as a launching pad for activities that would strengthen its hegemony over the Asia-Pacific region. Particularly in Sarangani, the US plans to build an additional naval base in Sumbang Point in Glan that will provide it with the necessary facilities for repairs, resupply and rest and recreation for its troops.

Through this military exercise, the US hopes to build up its presence in Mindanao and expand its network of bases and ports providing access to US naval combat planes and warships assigned to an area stretching from the northern tip of Australia to southern China and up to the Korean peninsula.

CARAT 2012 is part of US-led "multi-national military exercises" dubbed "Rim of the Pacific" involving 22 countries, including India, Russia and Australia aside from the US and the Philippines. AB

Obama regime's extrajudicial killings

It is now public knowledge that the US is engaged in covert and illegal operations to pursue and assassinate persons it perceives as terrorists in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Through so-called special operations, the Obama regime has been killing people it considers to be threats to US security and interests without resort to any judicial process.

In April, US Pres. Barack Obama's direct participation in the extrajudicial killings done by US operatives in the Middle East, Africa and Asia was bared. Every week, more than a hundred officials of various intelligence and security agencies in the US reportedly hold a teleconference meeting to discuss and assess who among the suspected terrorists the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) would pursue. The officials secretly vote on a "kill list" and submit their candidates to Obama. Along with John Brennan, the president's assistant on "counter-terrorism" issues, Obama approves the chosen candidates for assassination on the basis of his own "moral responsibility."

The Obama regime's arbitrary process and method of killing are contrary to all recognized international statutes. The targeting of an individual for liquidation based on his or her political beliefs is considered an extrajudicial crime. The US does not even bother to secure the permission of the countries where it conducts its assassinations, as in the case of Osama bin Laden's extrajudicial killing in Pakistan. In many cases, there is insufficient evidence against the slain individual. There is no due process to determine what crime an individual has committed and the ex-

tent of his guilt.

Despite the people's widespread criticism and condemnation, Obama has not only continued such arbitrary killings, he even stepped up and expanded them when he allowed the use of drones in CIA operations. Thousands of civilians have not only ended up as collateral damage in drone attacks. They have been targeted on purpose because of their presence in "terrorist territory." A big percentage of drone attacks targets compounds or clusters of houses where the accused's wives and children live.

The killings of civilians and innocents worsened after Obama approved the launching of "signature strikes" or drone attacks without specific targets. Under this framework, any group of suspected terrorists or any group engaged in "suspicious" activities can be targeted. It is no longer necessary to specify targets or to determine whether they are legitimate military targets or not. Any male of military age who is present in an area targeted for attack or wherever "suspicious" activities are being conducted is automatically deemed a terrorist. The victims may posthumously be declared non-combatants if their civilian status can be definitively proven in an investigation to be conducted by the US after the killings.

Using this definition, Bren-

nan recently announced that there were no longer any civilian casualties in US drone attacks in Pakistan last year. But according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (BIJ), an independent media agency, in up to 461 drone strikes conducted by the US in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia from 2004 to 2012, there were more than 1,400 civilians killed, including 425 children. The BIJ also said that up to 535 civilians (60 of them children) were killed in drone strikes during Obama's three-year rule.

A BIJ investigation into drone strikes in Pakistan from March to May this year showed that at least 50 civilians have been killed in "follow-up strikes" or attacks on groups rescuing victims of earlier drone attacks. In the same period, up to 20 civilians were killed when the US purposely attacked people attending the funeral wakes and burials of victims of drone strikes. The actual number of slain civilians may even be higher since many incidents are not reported in the media.

In the Philippines, the US launched a signature strike in February. Upon the US' orders and direction, AFP troops bombed an alleged Abu Sayaff camp in Parang, Sulu. The targets were supposed to be Zulkifli bin Hir, a Malaysian and Mohammed Abdullah Ali, a Singaporean. These two were supposedly members of Jemaah Islamiyah, which is alleged to be al-Qaeda's Asian branch, and were said to have been granted sanctuary by the Abu Sayaff. The US launched the attack without knowing whether the two targets were actually in the area and without ascertaining the identities of the individuals who were present in the vicinity.

NDFP declaration: The revolution is for children

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) held a successful launch of its declaration and program of action for the rights, protection and welfare of children on June 29 in Cubao, Quezon City. The gathering was held under the auspices of the NDFP Monitoring Committee and attended by leaders of mass organizations, progressive parties, media people and concerned government agencies.

Through the internet, the NDFP peace panel presented from Utrecht, The Netherlands the major points of the declaration.

NDFP-Mindanao spokesperson Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos; NDFP-Bicol spokesperson Greg Bañares; Maria Malaya of NDFP-Northeastern Mindanao Region; and Simon "Ka Filiw" Naogsan, spokesperson of the Cordillera People's Democratic Front gave videotaped messages. They likewise recounted the sufferings of children victimized by intense militarization and abuses and violations of human rights committed by the reactionary regime's armed troops.

The spokespersons shared the revolutionary movement's current efforts and programs to address the needs of children. The Communist Party of the Philippines also sent a message of solidarity.

Ang Bayan released a special issue on June 29 containing the complete text of the NDFP Declaration and Program of Action for the Rights, Protection and Welfare of Children.

Meanwhile, the National Statistics Office (NSO) reported in June that there are 5.6 million child workers in the Philippines, with most of them working under hazardous conditions. Up to 19% of the total 30 million chil-

dren aged 5 to 17 years are forced to work for a living. Sixty percent of them are in the agricultural sector.

Three percent of those surveyed work in mines and factories. According to the survey, there may be up to three million child workers engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including prostitution, drug trafficking and other antisocial activities.

Many of the child workers aged 5 to 9 years are in school. But as they get older, a growing number stop their schooling. Only half of the number of children in elementary schools are able to enter high school. The biggest numbers of child workers are in Central Luzon, Bicol, Western Visayas, Northern Mindanao and Central Visayas.

The NSO survey was commissioned by the International Labor Organization. **AB**