



EDITORIAL

Hold the US-Duterte regime accountable for worsening economic and political crisis

The Filipino people are gravely suffering under the increasingly acute economic and political crisis of the ruling system under the US-Duterte regime. This is a result of the regime's adamance to implement neoliberal economic policies while imposing its tyranny and fascism to railroad these policies and establish its dictatorship.

The backward, non-industrial, agrarian, import-dependent and export-oriented economic is in crisis. Like the past regimes, the Duterte regime blindly follows neoliberal policies. He is now pushing for all-out liberalization in trade and investments, especially in further liberalizing importation of rice and other agricultural products.

The regime portrays these as solution to the lack of supply and high food prices. It obscures how local productive capacity has been wrecked by all-

out liberalization since the 1990s and how local production sorely lacks state support. Over the past two decades, the local economy has further been debilitated, and has become ever dependent on importing food and other necessities.

Foreign trade is become ever unequal. The trade deficit in the first seven months of the year has reached unprecedented levels. The balance of payment deficit has shot up. Last week, the dollar slid to P54 to the US dollar,

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Armed actions in NCMR, Negros and Bicol

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA) launched a series of armed actions across the country in the past few weeks.

Agusan del Norte. On September 18, at around 3:40 p.m., the NPA detonated an explosive against operating troops of the 23rd IB in Barangay Lower Olive, Buenavista. Three soldiers were killed while four were wounded.

On the same day, at 5:24 a.m., the NPA fired at police officers stationed at Barangay San Mateo, Butuan City. PO1 Ritchel Gulandreno was wounded in action.

On September 15, two soldiers were killed in an armed encounter between the NPA-Agusan del Norte and

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its lowest in close to one decade and a half.

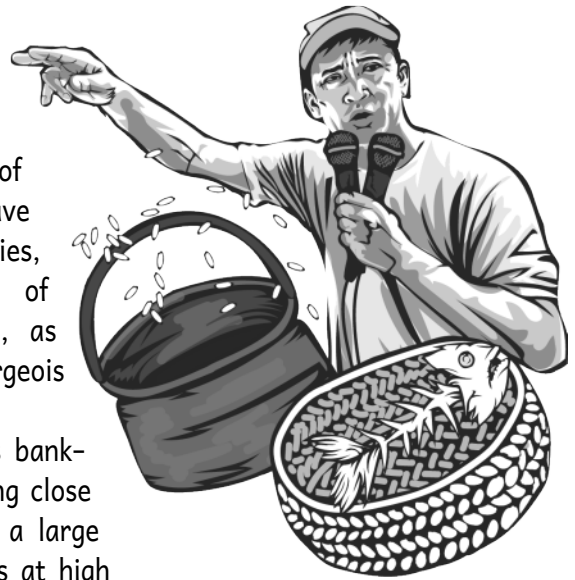
As before, Duterte favors and seeks to attract foreign and local big capitalist investments. His "Build, Build, Build" program aims to build the infrastructure for their needs. These include hydroelectric dams, roads, railways, airports and others. These serve to connect the "special economic zones" with the international assembly line of multinational corporations. Millions face threats of being ran over in their farm lands, ancestral lands, homes, fishing ground and other sources of livelihood.



Bureaucrat capitalists are drooling over infrastructure projects to pocket kickbacks. Many of these project contracts have been awarded to cronies, dummies and relatives of Duterte and his minions, as well as to favored big bourgeois compradors.

The Duterte regime is bankrupt. It is set on borrowing close to P900 billion this year, a large part from foreign agencies at high interests. For the Philippines to get a higher "grade" as a creditor country, Duterte imposed a slew of taxes under the TRAIN law, a measure long pushed for by foreign credit rating agencies.

Prices of commodities have skyrocketed this year. Last August, inflation shot up to 6.4%, the highest in almost a decade. Prices of rice, fish and other food-



stuff, oil and other necessities are soaring, while ordinary people's wages and income remain low.

The crisis in the economy and people's livelihood further isolates the Duterte regime from the people and engenders a severe political crisis.


To stabilize his regime, Duterte is resorting more to state terrorism to impose intimidation and fear. Thousands upon thousands are being aggravated by Oplan Kapayapaan, Mindanao martial law, Oplan Tokhang and its war against the Moros.

By unleashing terrorism and rampant abuses by state forces, Duterte is now among the most detested icons of fascism in Philippine history. In the recent proceedings in Belgium of the International People's Tribunal, Duterte and US President Donald Trump were found guilty of widespread violations of the Filipino people's human rights.

Duterte is becoming more isolated because of the consolidation of the Duterte-Marcos-Arroyo alliance. Internal rifts within the ruling regime are sharpening as the jostle over pork barrel and bureaucratic privilege. Duterte's scheme to impose his own dictatorship in the guise of "charter change" is being opposed even by some of his allies.

The ranks of various democratic forces united and determined to

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intensify their common struggle to oust Duterte from Malacañang are expanding. This is exemplified by the increasingly larged demonstrations mounted these past months.

To consolidate his power, Duterte wishes to extend Mindanao martial law and impose it nationwide.

However, the combination of the economic and political crisis only fans the flames of people's resistance. There is widespread clamor for a solution to skyrocketing prices, costs of education, medicine and other necessities. There is resounding demand of workers for higher wages, jobs and job security and their right to unionize and strike.

In the countryside, the peasant masses and minority peoples are being compelled to struggle for land, assert their right to till idle land for food production and push for just farm prices for their produce and state subsidies for agricultural production.

The revolutionary armed struggle being waged by the New People's Army advances solidly nationwide. The declarations made by Duterte the AFP to crush the NPA before 2018 or by the middle of 2019 will be frustrated. Everyday, the NPA grows as more and more people want to take up arms to oppose the AFP's armed suppression to defend the interests of big capitalists.

The economic and political crisis under the Duterte regime exemplify the inexorable and accelerated decay of the ruling semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system. The people are suffering from the sharp crisis and socio-economic degeneration. The situation is favorable for waging armed and other forms of struggle to overthrow the fascist, rotten and puppet US-Duterte regime and carry forward the national democratic revolution.

AB

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operating troops of the 23rd IB along the Minpayaw Creek in Sitio Bulak, Barangay Lower Olave, Buenavista, at around 2 p.m. On the next day, two more soldiers were killed in another encounter that took place in the same barangay at around 3 p.m.

Bukidnon. The NPA-Bukidnon attacked an AFP operating unit in Purok 3, Barangay San Rafael, Talakag on September 16. A soldier was killed while ten others were wounded.

Misamis Oriental. The NPA-Misamis Oriental harassed a detachment of the 58th IB-CAFGU in Palo, Barangay Minalwang, Claveria.

Southeast Negros. On September 15, the NPA-Southeast Negros under the Rachelle Mae Palang Command (RMPC) mounted a punitive action against H.N., a quarrying company owned by Hayney and Nestor Lim conducting destructive operations in Sitio Major, Barangay Cawitan, Sta. Catalina.

The NPA disarmed the security guards and burned the backhoe and payloador of the said company.

Ka Estrella Banagbanag, spokesperson of the RMPC, said that the aforementioned action was a response to the demands of the people. A research by the RMPC reveals that deep dredging activities of the said company along Cawitan River has already claimed the lives of at least seven residents.

Camarines Sur. On September 6, at 12:30 a.m., the NPA-West Camarines Sur harassed a detachment of the 22nd IB-CAFGU in Si-

tio Dinumpilan, Barangay Malinao, Libmanan. A CAFGU member was killed in action.

On August 14, at around 6 a.m., a certain PFC Espiritu was killed while another CAFGU element was wounded in an ambush launched by the NPA in Barangay Cambalidio, Libmanan. The Red fighters also harassed the same detachment on July 27.

On August 10 in Barangay Veneracion, Pamplona, the NPA fired at armed elements of the Military Intelligence Company (MICO) of the 9th ID which was operating together with three former Red fighters including a certain "Boris." One of them was killed. The said group is responsible for the murders of Danilo Abunin Sr. and Danilo Abunin Jr. on August 26, at around 5 a.m., in the said barangay.

On July 20, at around 10 a.m., PFC Jhony Franco, who was then aboard a motorcycle, was killed in an ambush mounted by the NPA in the same barangay. Franco was an element of the MICO. A .45 caliber pistol, magazine, and various intelligence documents were seized from him.

Sorsogon. The NPA-Sorsogon fired at a detachment of the Alpha Coy 31st IB in Barangay Casay, Casiguran on August 28, at around 8 p.m. An hour earlier, the Red fighters also fired at the 22nd IB-CAFGU camp in Sitio Bungsaran, Barangay Rizal, Gubat.

On September 2, at around 2 p.m., the NPA fired at a company of the 31st IB operating in Sitio Lokot, Barangay Sta. Cruz, Barcelona.

AB



Grave crisis under the US-Marcos dictatorship

Forty-six years have passed since the fascist US-Marcos regime declared Proclamation 1081 which placed the entire country under martial rule. Halfway through the martial law regime, in 1979, the country fell ignominiously into grave economic and political crisis. Curtailment of civil rights was also pervasive.

Amid this, the resistance of the Filipino resolutely surged onward across the country. Thousands participated in open and underground struggles and several hundreds joined the revolutionary armed movement to overthrow the US-Marcos dictatorship.

Bankrupt economy

The Philippine economy deteriorated as the inflation rate rose rapidly in 1979. This was prompted by lavish foreign loans contracted by the dictatorship for its grandiose infrastructure program. More and more workers and peasants were reduced to eating two meals a day.

Oil price hikes also triggered an unprecedented increase in the prices of all basic commodities and services. The price of premium gasoline increased by 800% in 1979, from P0.37/liter prior to the martial law declaration to P3/liter. Prices of ordinary gasoline also increased by 900%, from P0.31/liter to P2.8/liter during the same period.

Connivance between US imperialism and its puppet, Marcos, was very evident in the implementation of the said price hikes. The imperialist oil cartel got 36% of the increase, while the Marcos puppet regime got 60% in the form of specific taxes. As a result, inflation ballooned to 21% on July and peaked at 30% by the end of the year.

This also resulted in the further devaluation of workers' wages. At that time, there were at least 11.5

million unemployed or underemployed Filipinos, or 40% of the country's labor force.

Since Marcos wanted to borrow more funds, the dictatorial regime became a flunky of the imperialist-controlled International Monetary Fund (IMF) which imposed the removal of the remaining feeble price controls.

During the first half of 1979, the country's foreign debt stood at P70 billion (\$8.7 billion at an exchange rate of \$1=P8). This further increased to P72 billion (\$9 billion) by the end of the year.

The dictatorial regime also imposed a series of new taxes. The residence tax was increased from P1 to P10. Taxes on workers and migrants, on public utility vehicle operators, and on lending by financial institutions have been imposed as well.

To appease the people's anger, the US-Marcos regime ordered an increase in minimum wages from P11 to P13. But in fact, the meager increase was way insufficient to make ends meet for a family of six which during that period needed P45-P50 to live decently.

Advancement of the mass movement and armed struggle

In 1979, many thousands of Party elements and New People's Army (NPA) fighters aroused, organized and mobilized the masses in ten regions of the country—Northeastern Luzon, Northwestern Luzon, Eastern Central Luzon, Western Central

Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas, Mindanao and Manila-Rizal.

The workers and peasants, who were hardest hit by inflation, launched strike movements in factories and marches (lakbayan) to urban centers to protest against militarization and the skyrocketing prices of basic necessities, respectively.

Teachers, student youth, and professionals mounted boycotts and participated in protests to fight for their civil and democratic rights. Some of those from national bourgeoisie, the Catholic church and other religious have become allies and actively participated in mass mobilizations.

Broad mass protests have encouraged even a handful of reactionaries, notably Sen. Benigno Aquino, Jr., Sen. Gerardo Roxas and Diosdado Macapagal, to fight the dictatorship.

In the countryside, although relatively smaller and weaker in terms of personnel and firepower than that of the enemy, the NPA continued to build up strength and combat experience in numerous guerilla fronts. At that time, there were already 29 guerilla fronts operating in 39 provinces across the country.

The revolutionary movement was side by side with the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro people who waged armed struggle in Mindanao. As a result, the US-Marcos dictatorial regime was forced to stretch its armed forces in various parts of the country, and has been left with no choice but to feign ending martial law in 1981. AB

Based on *Ang Bayan*, November 1979

Protest actions against martial law

Protests were held in succession by various sectors in preparation for the 46th year commemoration of martial law declaration on September 21, 1972. In view of this, the Communist Party of the Philippines called on the people to use the lessons in struggle against the dictatorship to overthrow the loathed US-Duterte regime.

On September 7, the group Rise Up for Life and for Rights held a "Black Friday Protest" at the Boy Scouts Circle in Quezon City, together with parents of the victims of the Duterte regime's Oplan Tokhang, and human rights defenders.

They reenacted the renowned "Pieta" sculpture which symbolizes not only the parents' grief but also their desire for justice. The protesters said that Duterte's idol worship of Marcos is evident in his desire to surpass the latter's record in the number of killed under his regime.

Among those who protested was the mother of Joshua Laxamana, 17, a well-known player of the computer game DotA, who was killed in the "war against drugs." Laxamana was accused by the police of robbery and possession of *shabu* and a firearm in order to justify his execution last August 17. Up until now, his companion Julius Sebastian, 17 years old, is still missing.

Meanwhile, on the 101st birth anniversary of the former dictator, the Campaign Against the Return of the Marcoses to Malacañang (CARMMA) protested at the Libingan ng mga Bayani

in Taguig City, where Duterte allowed the burial of his idol's remains. CARMMA said that Duterte's overt alliance with the family of the former dictator in order to tighten his cling to power is utterly contemptuous.

In the afternoon of September 11, progressive groups protested in various parts of the country in response to the more than an hour "tete-a-tete" by Duterte and his legal adviser Salvador Panelo wherein he once again washed his hands of his crimes and pointed at his critics as responsible for the current economic and political crisis in the country.

No less than the University of

the Philippines administration, under its president Danilo Concepcion, issued a proclamation declaring September 21 as "UP Day of Remembrance" for the people's scholars who struggled and offered their lives during Marcos' martial law.

Lakbayan from Southern and Central Luzon

Hundreds of farmers, indigenous people, and fisherfolk from Central Luzon held a three-day "Lakbayan ng Magbubukid ng Gitnang Luzon," from September 18 to call for genuine land reform and condemn the regime's tyranny and fascism.

According to the farmers, the current rice crisis is caused by the state's neglect and disregard of the peasantry and their production, particularly in Central Luzon which is regarded as the "rice

granary of the Philippines."

Instead of supporting the farmers in im-

proving their rice production, the regime is bent on converting agricultural lands and even supports the arrogation of lands by local and foreign landlords and big bourgeois compradors.

The farmers also condemned Oplan Kapayapaan which led to militarization of their communities.

Farmers, Aetas and fisherfolk from Tarlac, Zambales, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan and Pangasin-

NEVER AGAIN



an participated in the said march. A program was initially held in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform's regional office in San Fernando, Pampanga before proceeding to Bulacan, and to Manila to join the United People's Action against Martial Law.

Hundreds of farmers and members of Bicol Movement Against Tyranny (BMAT) and Bayan-Bicol also held a lakbayan to Manila to join the commemoration of 46th year commemoration of the martial law declaration.

Progressive groups in the Bicol region led by BMAT and Bayan held a "Lakbay Dalangin" last September 15, which coincided with the feast of Peñafrancia. They held a procession from Peñaranda Park, Albay to Naga City, where they offered prayers for victims of state violence, and prayed for an end to the killings in Bicol.

Strike

Workers of the so-called sunshine industry, business process outsourcing (BPO), are set to stage a historic strike.

The 1,500-strong union of the Unified Employees of Alorica, submitted a notice of strike on September 7. The union said that workers have been suffering from illegal dismissals, systematic attrition through company policies that contradict even the Labor Code, and the unrelenting refusal of the management to recognize their union.

BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) said that the impending strike in Alorica proves that call center agents will fight back and not remain mum amid oppression.

Meanwhile, terminated workers of Jolly Plastics Molding Corporation mounted their protest camp outside their factory in

Valezuela City on September 17. They were dismissed upon refusing the order of their management to misdeclare during an inspection by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) last September 11 that they are working only eight hours daily and were receiving minimum wage.

Instead of following the management's order, the workers walked-out on the day of the inspection and reported to the DOLE that they were made to work for 12 hours daily and compensated a meager P430 daily salary. They were terminated the following day.

On September 12, hundreds of contractual workers of Magnolia (a subsidiary of San Miguel Corporation) trooped to the DOLE office in Intramuros to pound on DOLE Sec. Silvestre Bello III to fulfill his promise of regularization for the company's 404 contractual workers in General Trias, Cavite. Most of the workers have been working for more than two years in the company's butter and cheese factories, including that of Star Margarine and Dari Creme. The workers complained of extremely low wages and benefits, no days off and uncompensated mandatory overtime work.

Bakwit school

The University of San Jose-Recoletos in Cebu launched, during the first week of September, its "Bakwit School" for Lumad students who were driven away from their communities as a result of intense militarization of the countryside in Mindanao. The school has 30 students. Another "Bakwit School", with more than 70 students, was simultaneously launched at the Baclaran Church in Metro Manila.

Last September 10, the University of Santo Tomas in Manila

likewise opened its doors to Lumad students. More temporary schools are set to be launched in other parts of Metro Manila and urban centers in various regions in the following weeks.

Protests in other countries

In the US, more than 300 members of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan-USA) staged a flash mob last September 16 in New York City.

The group unfurled banners with the slogans "Resist US-led war and militarism" and "United States out of the Philippines" at the Grand Central Station in Manhattan before marching towards the Philippine Center New York to hold a program. Bayan-USA said that Duterte is one of the Philippines' most dangerous presidents, not only on the basis of his butchery, but also on the basis of plunging the economy in deep crisis, inflation, and obeisance to foreign powers.

In Japan, workers from Toyota Motors Philippines Workers Association (TMPWA) protested at Toyota Motors' international headquarters to call for the reinstatement of 237 workers dismissed from the company's factory in the Philippines 17 years ago. In the protest at the Toyota Nagoya Building on September 16, TMPWA demanded the company to compensate for the workers' lost wages due to the illegal dismissal and abide by the International Labor Organization's recommendation to reinstate them.

Another protest was held by TMPWA members at the Japanese Embassy in Pasay City last September 17. Filipino workers of Toyota gained the support of their fellow workers in Indonesia, who protested against the company in the districts of Temate, Ambon, and Makassar. AB

International court finds Duterte and Trump guilty

The International People's Tribunal (IPT) held in Brussels, Belgium on September 19 found Rodrigo Duterte and US President Donald Trump guilty of their fascist crimes against the Filipino people.

From September 18, the IPT heard 21 cases filed against the two presidents. Among these are cases of violation of socioeconomic, civil and political rights, and the right to self-determination.

The IPT is an international court composed of international organizations, lawyers and human rights defenders. According to Karapatan, the court hearing is part of the broadening resistance against the regime's tyranny, fascism, militarism and US foreign intervention.

Contrary to the attempt of the Malacañang to declare the IPT proceedings as "sham" and mere "propaganda," organizers of the IPT asserted and emphasized that the authority of all courts—either local or international—comes from the people.

Globally eminent lawyers and human rights defenders from the US, Netherlands, Iran, Italy and France serve as judges of the IPT. The IPT's verdict will be submitted to the International Criminal Court, the European Parliament and the United Nations Human Rights Council as cases against the US-Duterte regime.

Among the cases heard are the brutal killing of more than 23,000 poor Filipinos under the guise of the regime's "war against drugs" and the politically motivated killing of 160 peasant and national minority leaders; slapping of trumped-

up charges against the leaders, activists, and government critics; and arbitrary arrests of more than 500 individuals merely because of their political stand.

The IPT also heard various cases of socioeconomic rights violations including the regime's incessant implementation of anti-worker and anti-people policies.

Meanwhile, violations of the international humanitarian law and the right to self-determination include cases of attacks on 226 Lumad schools in Mindanao, airstrikes and mortar shelling of indigenous communities, and the continuous US political and military intervention in the country.

Among the court witnesses are Sultan Hamidullah Atar of Marawi City, who testified to the crimes perpetrated by the military when it besieged Marawi City in 2017, and Suara Bangsamoro Chairperson Jerome Succor Aba who was discriminated, tortured and illegally detained in the US last April. Rev. Ritchie Masegman of Rise Up for Life and for Rights also testified for the victims of Oplan Tokhang.

The US-Duterte regime was not the first puppet regime to have been found guilty by the IPT. In 1980, the same court sentenced the US-Marcos dictatorial regime guilty of gross and wholesale violation of the Filipino people's human rights. AB

Court sentences

Palparan to life

ON SEPTEMBER 17, Philippine Army Ret. Gen. Jovito Palparan, together with two co-accused former military officials, were sentenced to life imprisonment by the Malolos Regional Trial Court over the abduction and enforced disappearance of University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño on July 2006.

The ruling issued by Judge Alexander Tamayo states that Palparan, Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado Jr., and S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio are guilty beyond reasonable doubt of kidnapping and serious illegal detention of Empeño and Cadapan. Another accused, M/Sgt. Rizal Hilario, who is still at large, was ordered arrested. The accused were sentenced to "reclusion perpetua" or life imprisonment.

It has been 12 years since Empeño and Cadapan were abducted by military operatives in Hagonoy, Bulacan.

Empeño and Cadapan's mothers dubbed the ruling as an "initial victory." They said that even if Palparan and his cohorts were convicted, their daughters have yet to be surfaced, and justice has yet to be served to many other victims of murder and human rights violations perpetrated by the butchers.

Concepcion Empeño and Erlinda Cadapan, Karen and Sherlyn's mothers respectively, are perturbed by the possibility that Rodrigo Duterte may grant Palparan a presidential pardon as he was the the favorite general of Gloria Arroyo who is the currently the House Speaker and a close ally of Duterte.

Palparan is notorious not only as butcher but also as the "poster boy" of the bloody Oplan Bantay Laya

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(OBL) 1 and 2 of the Arroyo regime.

Palparan left a blood trail wherever he was deployed. Under his command, Palparan rabidly directed extrajudicial killings in Mindoro, Eastern Visayas and Central Luzon. On top of Empeño and Cadapan's enforced disappearance, he was also responsible for the murder of activist leader Eden Marcellana and peasant leader Eddie Gumanoy in Mindoro in 2013, UCCP Pastor Edison Lapuz and Atty. Fedelito Dacut in Leyte in 2005, and Supreme Bishop Alberto Ramento of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente in Tarlac in 2006.

Various progressive organization issued statements expressing their solidarity with the victims' families and their resolute call for justice for all the victims of human rights violations perpetrated by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and demand to hold House Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo accountable as mastermind of the OBL.

The Communist Party of the Philippines said that with the conviction of Palparan, the Filipino people must be further emboldened to demand justice and an end to Oplan Kapayapaan, martial law and all other fascist schemes of the US-Duterte regime.

The fight and resistance against the said fascists must be resolutely strengthened by mobilizing all revolutionary forces to achieve justice. AB

AFP massacres 7 Tausug youth

Elements of the Task Group Panther under the command of Lt. Col. Samuel Yunque and the 5th Scout Ranger Battalion led by Capt. Michael Asistores ruthlessly killed seven Tausug youths, ages 18-31, in Kabbon Takas, Patikul, Sulu in the afternoon of September 14.

The victims were identified as Makrub Diray, Basirun Hayrani, Mijan Hayrani, Binnajar Asak, Salip Maknun Sakirin, Hassan Hamsam and Alpadal Diray.

On September 14 at around 9 a.m., the young men asked officers of the operating troops of the 55th IB for permission to go to Sityo Tubig Bato of the said barangay to harvest mangosteen and lanzones. A certain "Lt. Col. Salvador" gave them the go-signal.

At around 11 a.m. of the same day, Scout Rangers arrested the seven. On September 15, kin of the seven were surprised to find the victims' lifeless bodies at a military camp in Jolo, which the soldiers claim as members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

In a statement, Suara Bangsamoro claimed that the victims were husbands of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries in Patikul, and their families are among those who evacuated and currently living temporarily in Barangay Igasan.

The victims' recounted that a fire-fight ensued on September 14 at nearby Barangay Bakong between the ASG and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). But when the soldiers passed by Barangay Kabbon Takas, they arbitrarily arrested the seven.

The AFP insists that the seven were ASG members, despite witnesses attesting that the victims were carrying their harvested mangosteen during their arrest. Alpadal Diray, one of the victims, was a student at the Jallao National High School.

Meanwhile, relentless bombings and mortar shelling were carried out by the AFP Joint Task Force Central in the towns of Shariff Saydona Mustapha and Datu Saudi Ampatuan in Maguindanao during the second week of September. This forced hundreds of residents to evacuate to-

wards Libutan, Datu Salibo and Shariff Saydona Mustapha.

Prior to this, the AFP bombed and shelled Barangay Bialong, Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao in September 5. According to a fact-finding team by the groups Kawagib and Suara Bangsamoro, Ustadz Abdulladzis Abdulrahim, 58, was killed in one incident. Farida Asim, 48, Saiden Ismael, 23, and Sema Bido, 62, were seriously wounded.

On September 4, the AFP, assisted by US Army Special Forces, bombed Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao, purportedly to target those behind the consecutive bombings in the town of Isulan, Sultan Kudarat last August 28 and September 3. The airstrikes killed a civilian, wounded three others, and forced thousands of families to leave their homes.

Suara Bangsamoro condemned the shelling as well as the direct participation of American forces in the said combat operations.

Killings. In Malabog Caramoan, Camarines Sur, soldiers belonging to the 83rd IB killed husband and wife Hermenio Aragdon, 69, and Soledad Aragdon, 60, both farmers, last September 11.

The couple were on their way to their farm to harvest bananas which they plan to sell in order to raise fare money to attend the feast of Peñafrancia in Naga City. On the way, soldiers blocked and opened fire at them. In a statement to the media, the military said that the elderly couple were members of the New People's Army (NPA) killed in an encounter.

In Karapatan-Bicol's record, up to 51 individuals have been extrajudicially killed in the region under the Duterte regime.

A Lumad farmer was also shot dead by elements of the 23rd IB in Sityo Bulak, Lower Olave, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte in September 15.

The victim, Rex Hangadon, and his father were resting in their farm hut when they soldiers suddenly fired at them. Witnesses said that the soldiers carried Hangadon's lifeless body outside the hut. His father is still missing.

As a result, the whole community evacuated to another area of their barangay. In September 7, around 38 Higaonon families have already left their community because of the military's presence.

In Masbate, consecutive civilian killings were reported from August up to the first half of September. Perpetrators were from the 2nd IB, 22nd IB-CAFGU, PNP Regional Mobile Force Battalion 5, and "rebel returnees."

Among the victims were Nonong Capellan of Uson; Johnel Dejudos and Pablo Dilao of Barangay Burgos, San Jacinto; couple Dominggito and Maria Deinla of Barangay Resurreccion, San Fernando; Dingdong Escorel of Barangay Cantorna, Monreal; and Ruel Nuñez of Barangay Biyong, Masbate City.

Harassment. Human rights groups condemned the memorandum issued by the PNP Intelligence Group last May which instructs the police nationwide to provide a "summary of information" on individuals accused as NPA leaders.

Included in the list are some known human rights defenders of indigenous peoples from the Cordillera, namely Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Joan Carling, Atty. Jose Molintas, Beverly Longid, Joanna Patricia Cariño, Windel Bolinget, Jeannete Ribaya-Cawiding and Sherwin De Vera.

In UP Diliman, elements of the Quezon City Police Department went to the residence of Student Regent Ivy Joy Taroma and repeatedly asked her housemate of her whereabouts. The UP administration questioned the PNP's unauthorized intrusion inside the university.

Illegal arrest. In Calayan, Cagayan, police and military elements arrested and filed trumped-up charges against couple Edison and Divina Erece last September 3. The Erece couple are active members of Amihan-Cagayan, an organization of poor peasants.

Militarization. In the first two weeks of September, two farmers fell victims to the brutality of the 94th IB in Barangay San Quintin, Moises Padilla (Magallon), Negros Occidental. Soldiers threatened to kill Esoy Villahermosa, over 40 years old and a resident of Sityo Uway-uway. He was forced to guide the military's combat operations. Villahermosa was beaten when he attempted to escape his abductors.

Meanwhile, the soldiers forcibly

entered the house of Eke Gimpayan in nearby Sityo Tibobong and robbed him of his hard-earned money.

In Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental, the 62nd IB used the residents of Barangay Cawitan as human shields. After the punitive action by the NPA-Negros on a destructive mining company in September 15, the soldiers set up camp at the Danao Elementary School and instructed 20 residents, including eight minors, to guard them at night.

Troops of the 24th IB under the command of 2Lt. Alquin Bolivar, also attacked the communities of indigenous peoples in Sallapadan, Abra. Their violations include the abduction of Adjato Pati and forcing him to serve as guide in their operations. Prior to this, soldiers held his wife and 8-year old child at gunpoint to force them to reveal Pati's whereabouts. Through bribery, harassment and filing of trumped-up charges, soldiers coerce the residents to testify against their fellow tribesmen.

In Mindoro Oriental, 58 indigenous Hanunuo families were forced to leave Sityo Panhulugan, Barangay Panaytayan, Mansalay due to the presence of the 4th IB since September 10. The soldiers occupied the village school, and have been prohibiting residents from farming and bringing their harvest to the market. AB

Hold big mining responsible—*Kalikasan*

GROUPS KALIKASAN AND Cordillera People's Alliance are demanding to hold big mining companies responsible for the landslides in Barangay Ucab, Itogon, Benguet during the height of typhoon Ompong last September 15 and in Naga, Cebu on September 20.

Latest tallies indicate that around 69 have died while 43 others are still missing after the mass of soil from an abandoned open-pit mine of the Benguet Corporation in Antapok, Itogon eroded, burying the community of small-scale miners located at the foot of the hill. It is wrong to blame the small-scale miners as the cause of the landslide, Kalikasan said, as it was the Benguet Corporation which drilled big tunnels in the area. Small-scale miners are also in contract with the company under in its Acupan Contract Mining Project. Benguet Corporation is owned by the Romualdez family.

Meanwhile, 52 have died while dozens are still missing in Barangay Tinaan, Naga, Cebu after a landslide in the quarry site of Apo Land and Quarry Corporation. The said company supplies limestone to Cemex Holding Philippines. Cemex Holding supplies is among the major suppliers of cement for the regime's Build-Build-Build program. The limestones mined by the former are processed in plants of the latter to manufacture cement. AB

Cost of *palay* production in Kalinga

Officials of the reactionary state have been using the high rice prices as a pretext to justify importation. However, *palay* farmers do not actually benefit from any increase in rice prices.

Rice prices continue to rise simultaneously with its cost of production, while farm gate prices remain low.

Kalinga is among the provinces with highest *palay* (unhusked rice) production in the country. Tabuk, its capital city, is known as Cordilleras rice granary. About 23,000 hectares or 37% of the total 116,000-hectare land area of the province are ricefields. Adjacent to Pinukpuk and Rizal, areas where large rivers converge towards the Chico River, the entire province produces up to 176,000

metric tons (MT) of *palay* every season.

Despite this, farmers fare badly in Kalinga. Overall, they spend up to P45,000 to farm a hectare of land. This includes expensive farm inputs (fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides) produced by foreign agro-chemical firms. (See table.) Machinery rentals, wages and transportation costs are also high. These are all shouldered by the farmer. Under favorable weather conditions (no typhoons and such), a farmer can generate a revenue of up to

P73,893. Deducting the cost of production and the landlord's share (P24,630) amounting to a third of the revenue, the farmer is left with a net profit of P4,508. Divided over four months, his daily income will only amount to P37.50/day, which is not enough to buy even a kilo of rice.

Extremely low profits force farmers to borrow money both needed to make ends meet for their families and to procure inputs for the next planting season. This hard-up situation is exploited by usurers who lend fertilizers and/or pesticides at high interest rates or under the "palit-*palay*" or land "sanla-bili" schemes.

Interest rates for fertilizer and pesticide loans can reach up to 5.7%. This amount will be deducted from the farmers' sales. Under the "palit-*palay*" scheme, a P1,000 loan means an additional two cavans of *palay* as payment. If the farmer opts to pay the interest, the usurer charges 5-15% per month or up to 20-60% every harvest. Under the "sanla-tubos" scheme, land is valued at P50,000-60,000 and used as collateral. The farmer can reclaim the land by giving his harvest to the usurer within a certain period. Failure to raise the said amount is tantamount to the confiscation of the land by the usurer under the "sanla-bili" scheme.

In addition to this, farmers' livelihoods in the province, especially in the Rizal plains, are endangered by land grabbing. This is true in the case of the farmlands in Hacienda Madrigal which cover the barangays of Babalag East, Babalag West, Macutay, Bolbol, San Pascual and San Quintin. Through a deed of assignment, Don Vicente Madrigal was able to

COST OF PRODUCTION PER CROPPING IN KALINGA		
(PER HECTARE OF LAND LEASED UNDER <i>TERSAYA</i> * TERMS)		
FARM INPUTS	VOLUME	VALUE
SEEDLINGS	2 CAVANS X P1,300/CAVAN	P2,600
MOLLUSCIDE	1 SACHET OF MITAVIT, 5 SACHETS OF SUREKILL	P3,650
HERBICIDE	1 LITER	P250
FERTILIZER	4 CAVANS OF UREA, 3 CAVANS OF AMMONIUM	P6,120
RENTED EQUIPMENT/ FARM ANIMAL	LABOR FORCE REQUIREMENT	
KULIGLIG		P4,500
CARABAO	1 CARABAO + 1 WORKER	P1,300
REAPER		P7,308
THRESHER		P6,496
OTHER EXPENSES	VOLUME	
GASOLINE	15-20 LITERS	P330
WATER	PER CROPPING (NIA)	P1,500
HAULING		P700
FOOD		P350
WAGES	30 WORKERS	P9,750
TOTAL COST OF PRODUCTION		P44,754
GROSS INCOME		P 73,893
Landlord's share		- P24,630
Farmer's share		P49,262
Cost of Production		- P44,754
FARMER'S NET INCOME		P4,508

* *tersya* = feudal rent amounting to 1/3 of gross income

transfer the title of the hacienda to Susana Realty, Inc., a company also owned by their family. Because of this, farmers have been repeatedly evicted from the said hacienda. The worst demolition happened on June 25, 2007 when nine were killed, four wounded and many illegally arrested in what has been called as the Malapiat Massacre.

Harmful policies

Almost a third of the cost of production are spent on buying foreign seeds and agro-chemical products peddled by the Department of Agriculture. These include hybrid seeds such as RC4, RC14, IR10, IR36, and IR64 among others. These seeds are from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) which is funded by transnational corporations such as Aventis, Bayer, Cyanamid, Monsanto at Novartis. The accumulated sales of giant companies such as Bayer, Pioneer, SL Agritech, Monsanto and Syngenta in the province alone reach up to P584 million annually.

Rising prices of petroleum products due to new taxes are also jacking up the cost of production. This year, oil prices increased on average by P12/liter.

Aside from the high cost of production, the state only provides meager agricultural services. This includes the lack of irrigation mainly in Tabuk and Pinukpuk. Water hardly reaches most parts of the said 6,180-hectare land. Despite this, the National Irrigation Administration still collects fees from peasant in the entire area even if they are not able to avail any of the said institution's services. AB

Based on the article in *Dangadang*, July-August 2018

Rice importation means death to small farmers

Officials of the US-Duterte regime insist that the sole solution to rising food prices is extensive importation. For rice, in particular, state officials are pushing for the lifting of quantitative restrictions (QR or the special treatment of rice which limits the maximum volume of rice the country can import) and the abolition of the National Food Authority. This will pave the way for the complete deregulation of rice importation which will authorize big businesses to directly import rice without limits.

In lieu of the QR, the regime suggests imposing a 35% tariff on imported rights, in accordance with the Philippines' ASEAN obligations. This is set to be lowered in the years to come. According to Duterte's officials, imported rice will lower local prices by P7/kilo or more, since imported rice is cheaper than local rice.

But according to studies by the reactionary state itself, this will immediately demolish the livelihoods of rice farmers. Since traders can buy imported rice at cheaper rates (landed cost of rice from Vietnam is at P27/kilo, transportation costs and tariffs included), local farmers will be forced to sell palay at even lower prices.

Based on 2014 prices, *palay* farmgate prices would have to be lowered from P12/kilo to P7-8/kilo (or lower by at least P4.50/kilo.) Also in 2014, the price of Vietnam rice was just P9.92/kilo (excluding importation costs) while that of local rice was P19.24/kilo. This is supposedly due to the low cost of rice production in Vietnam which was at P6.53/kilo for every hectare of ricefield, compared to P12.41/kilo in the Philippines. Before new taxes were imposed this year, this would have meant a P18,240 or more than 30% cut in profits per hectare of ricefield. Thus, rice importation will push the already

beleaguered farmer to further bankruptcy.

According to another state study released in 2004, the country will not benefit from the unrestricted and deregulated importation of rice. In fact, this will result in extreme hardship and dislocation of millions of rice farmers and the industries related to the subsector.

Rice production will fall, alongside farmgate prices. Milling operations and businesses will likewise fall. Demand for labor will go down and hundreds of thousands, if not millions, will become unemployed. There are approximately two million rice farmers in the country. As the subsector constricts, wages within it are expected to fall as well.

The same study also indicates that the fall in rice prices is way insufficient to balance out the destruction importation will bring to the largest agricultural subsector. Sixty percent of the Filipino family's expenditures are spent on food. The poorest families spend up to 21% of their budget solely on rice. Nevertheless, a large number of these families (up to half in rural areas) rely on the production of *palay* and other food crops, and thus are in danger of losing their livelihoods. In the end, unrestricted importation will only worsen their plight. AB

2019 budget proposal for all-out rampage

THE DUTERTE regime's P3.757 trillion budget proposal for 2019 contained significant cuts for social services while allotting huge chunks of funds for its suppression campaigns.

Overall, funds for economic and social services were cut by P2.18 billion and P1.2 billion, respectively. Among the budget losers are the Department of Education (P54.9 billion), Department of Agrarian Reform (P1.7 billion), Department of Agriculture (P5.9 billion), and the National Housing Authority (P2.9 billion).

Despite passage of the reactionary free education law which purportedly makes education in state schools free, 63 out of 114 state universities and colleges actually suffered budget cuts for 2019.

Not a cent was appropriated for the construction of new housing units and new facilities for public hospitals.

Meanwhile, budget for the De-

partment of National Defense rose by 35%. The DND was allocated a budget of P183.4 billion, which includes P25 billion for the Revised AFP Modernization Program for arms procurement; and P82 billion for the operations of Philippine Army battalions.

Funding for the Department of Interior and Local Government also rose by 31%, reaching P225.6 billion for 2019. This includes the P151.7 billion appropriation for the PNP Crime Prevention and Suppression Program, which the fascist police will clearly use to intensify its killings, repression and fascist violence.

Duterte's budget is gleaming with the amount of pork barrel he appropriated for himself and to in-

gratiate legislators. In fact, a peso in every three pesos of reactionary state's proposed 2019 budget is pork barrel. More than a third, or P1.69 trillion, was appropriated as "special purpose funds." This includes the P2.86 billion or 9% increase in the Local Government Support Fund, and P400 million in the Calamity Fund.

During the congressional budget hearings, rifts among the reactionary classes was evident as squabbles on how they want to divide the pork barrel were ignited. Committee on Appropriations Chairman Karlo Nograles and House Speaker Gloria Arroyo, in particular, argued over how to use the P55-billion fund which questionably slipped in the Department of Public Works and Highways budget. Nograles argued that Duterte personally ordered that the funds be left untouched. According to Makabayan, Duterte will surely use the budget for his own ends and to fund the campaigns of his candidates in the forthcoming 2019 elections.

To fund this budget, the reactionary government will certainly have to borrow billions from local and foreign financial institutions. The regime is set to borrow up to P624.4 billion for its 2019 budget. This will raise the country's debt per capita ratio from an P68,773 this year to P74,957 in 2019. **AB**

