



EDITORIAL

## Oppose the use of ATL to persecute the people

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) denounces and repudiates the US-Duterte regime and its Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC) for the tagging of 19 alleged leaders of the CPP as terrorists. Most of them are consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in the peace negotiations. Last December, the ATC also terrorist-tagged the CPP and the New People's Army (NPA).

Going by principles of law, the ATC's terrorist-tagging of the 19 is arbitrary and baseless. The ATC's allegations are final even if no evidence was presented against the accused and despite no court proceedings. This is the extraordinary power held by the ATC under Duterte's Anti-Terrorism Law (ATL). This violates fundamental legal principle that the burden of proof is on the shoulder of the accuser. Not only does the ATC accuse, it also judges and metes out punishment against those it designates as "terrorists." The claim that accused have the right to ap-

peal despite not being informed of their crimes is utterly senseless.

The arbitrary designation underscores why the ATL is repressive and anti-democratic. It is now crystal clear how the ATL is being used as an oppressive weapon against the critics and opponents of the fascist regime.

The terrorist-tagging endangers the lives of its victims, especially the NDFP consultants who are in jail or being hunted down by the armed agents of the reactionary state. Such tagging, harassment and repression against the peace consultants are a treacherous strike by

Duterte against the NDFP for its refusal to bow and surrender to his power. It is an outright violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) between the NDFP and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) which prohibits either party from persecuting or harassing anyone involved in the talks.

The accusation against the 19 personages as "leaders of the Party" are an open threat against their lives. Terrorist-tagging is a virtual death sentence by the murderous regime.

Terrorist-tagging is an extension to red-tagging where people are accused of being communists or members of the CPP and the people's army and of the campaign of murder or arrests and prolonged detention based on falsified evidence and

trumped-up charges. The Duterte regime targets the legal forces who advocate national freedom and democracy—such as organizations of workers, peasants, minority people, youth, women, nurses, teachers, rank-and-file employees and others who struggle for the interests of ordinary people.

The terrorist-tagging was done amid the deliberations of the ATL. Instigated by the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), the ATC openly humiliated the magistrates of the Supreme Court and put its hearings in a quandary.

Terrorist-tagging is also a desperate attempt to conceal the state terrorist crimes of the Duterte regime. The number one terrorist in the Philippines is no other than Duterte himself. Using the entire violent machinery of the state—the military and police—he has spilt the blood of tens of thousands killed in the "drug war" and counterinsurgency in order to impose his tyrannical rule over the entire country.

Through ATC's terrorist-tagging of progressive and patriotic forces, the Duterte fascist regime proved that "anti-terrorism" is an anti-democratic concept used by US imperialism and the local ruling classes to suppress the forces and movements that

are fighting for national freedom and social justice. Across the world, the US uses "anti-terrorism" to justify armed intervention and political interference in different countries to suppress the anti-imperialist and patriotic forces.

The ATC designation is also a desperate attempt to vilify progressive and revolutionary forces. Those terrorist-tagged by the ATC are all activists and revolutionaries known for offering their wisdom and strength in their lifelong service to the people. They are known for having stood against dictators and



tyrants. They all sacrificed personal ambition and self-interest. Unlike the bureaucrat capitalists, they did not accumulate wealth nor became a burden on the people. They are known as honest people's servants and promoters of freedom and rights.

Such tagging to vilify patriots and revolutionaries have long been done by the country's rulers. They have been called "bandits" and "insurrectos" by foreign colonizers to justify the armed suppression and drown their clamor for freedom. All the genuine heroes—Andres Bonifacio, Macario Sakay, and the Dagohoyos and Ricartes—were all victims of defamation. History has proved that those who vilified them are the real enemies of the Filipino people.

Duterte is bound to further use the ATL against all those who fight his fascist reign. He will use this to ram over every obstacle to his ambition to remain in power in the form of a fascist dictatorship or manipulating the 2022 elections. It is not unlikely that it will be used not only against the national democratic forces, but also against the conservative opposition and other forces who are united against his tyranny, corruption, abandonment of the people's welfare amid the pandemic and betrayal of the nation over the seas surrendered to China.

The Filipino people must unite more firmly. They must act and fight to end Duterte's tyrannical and terrorist rule at the soonest possible time.

AB

# ANG Bayan

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# What did Samarnons gain from RCSP?

In Samar province, at least 11 barrios in the town of Calbiga, five in Pinabacdao, and five in Hinabangan have been under relentless Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP) operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) since 2019. During this period, the Duterte regime poured millions of funds into these barrios for various projects which remain incomplete.

To create an illusion that counterinsurgency bring development, the government and military launched various road and bridge construction projects, as well as projects by national and local government agencies, the National Greening Program, livelihood programs by the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), surrender programs and many others.

After two years, however, not a single infrastructure was completed. Construction projects progress very slowly. In fact, the government has just started bulldozing to pave the way for these road projects. Its plan to cement the road in Barangay Guinbanga, Calbiga remain unaccomplished. Because of this, residents by themselves had to construct a temporary bridge using logs. "I think that these projects will not be completed," commented one resident. "Funds for these could have already been pocketed," he added.

The military is currently using the billions of pesos allocated for

the Barangay Development Program (BDP) of NTF-ELCAC to further put barrios under their control. The implementation of the BDP is linked to repression and abuses perpetrated by soldiers. For instance, the AFP promised all barangays ₱20 million each if they will allow soldiers to encamp inside villages or if residents will "clear their names" or "surrender." In other barrios where no one voluntarily surrendered, the soldiers list down the names of individuals who they target to coerce into surrendering.

"Blood, lives, and disruption to our livelihood." These are what residents got from RCSP operations, said farmer Ka Ruben.

Peasant communities under RSCP operations will never forget the killing of the barangay captains of Daligan and Beri in Calbiga, the wife of the captain of Sinalangtan, a farmer in Buluan, and a youngster in Minata. All of the victims were killed by soldiers. Meanwhile in Pinabacdao, two farmers were killed in Canlubo and another in Magdawat.

Scores of farmers have also been mauled and tortured.

RCSP operating troops also promote gambling in communities such as illegal cockfighting and card games, illegal fishing in rivers using toxic chemicals and electrocution, illegal logging, abuse of women and rape of minors.

Even farmers recruited into the CAFGU have quit after suffering abuses by soldiers. Of the promised ₱35,000 monthly salary, they receive only around ₱6,000, paid to them every two to three months. They also suffered beatings, verbal abuse and discrimination.

"Every time I pass by these roads and bridges which are being constructed, I couldn't help but remember the fate suffered by my fellow farmers who were killed in the name of these projects. No amount of money or project can compensate for their lives."

The regime's promise that these road projects will improve farmgate prices is a lie. "Farmgate prices have actually even become lower and the cost of transportation has even increased."

"I am convinced that the only way for the poor to achieve development and peace is through struggle," concluded Ka Ruben."

(Corresponsal from Larab)

AB

## #NDF48 commemoration in Northern Samar

THE PEASANT MASSES and people's army in Northern Samar held a joyous celebration to mark the 48th anniversary of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) on Abril, in the face of the focused military operations of the enemy in the area which has been ongoing for half a year now. Residents from six barrios attended the celebration and pledged to further oppose militarization in the area.

During the program, comrades discussed the current situation in the area which has been under focused military operations since

December last year. The report stressed why the revolution is the only solution to the hardships faced by the people.

**AMBUSH IN PANAY.** Five soldiers of the Scout Platoon of the 61st IB were killed and five others were wounded in an ambush mounted by the NPA-Panay along the boundary of Miag-ao, Iloilo and Sibalom, Antique on May 15. The said military unit is responsible for the massacre of the Tumandok 9 and the killing of John Farochilin, a barangay official and peasant leader in Miag-ao, last year

## State forces arrest 2 peasant leaders in Caraga

**J**oint elements of the police in Caraga and 3rd Special Forces Battalion (SFB) arrested Marcela Diaz, 59, on May 14 at 4 a.m. in Marihatag, Surigao del Sur based on a trumped up frustrated murder charge. Diaz is a member of the Kapunungan sa mga Mag-uuma sa Surigao del Sur, which has long been red-tagged by the military for actively fighting for the rights of farmers to land. Diaz's relatives demanded her immediate release as she has stage 4 cancer. She is detained at Camp Rafael Rodriguez in Butuan City.

On the same day, state forces arrested Virgilio Lincuna, 70, member of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas-Caraga, in Barangay Banza, Butuan City, Agusan del Norte based on a trumped up murder charge. He was previously detained in 2019 after being slapped with trumped up charges. Lincuna is a stroke survivor suffering from partial paralysis and can barely walk.

On May 17, policemen arrested Elisa "Tita" Lubi, national chairperson of Karapatan, based on trumped up charges. She was released on the same day after posting bail.

**Killing.** Suspected members of a anti-communist group gunned down Briccio Nuevo, Jr., lay minister of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, in Barangay Poblacion Guihulngan

City, Negros Oriental on May 4. Nuevo has long been red-tagged by Kagubak, a vigilante group that is operated by the police and military in the province.

**Abduction.** Suspected military elements abducted Ed Navalta, coordinator of the Camarines Sur People's Organization in District 1 on May 18, 5 p.m. in the town of Ragay, Camarines Sur. His whereabouts are still unknown.

**Militarization.** Ten barangays in Tinambac, Camarines Sur are have been occupied by the 9th ID since the second week of May. This includes the barangays of San Roque, San Ramon, Salvacion, Pantat and Turo where soldiers are conducting house to house searches. **AB**

## Bakwit School 7 freed

**AFTER THREE MONTHS** of detention, the Bakwit School 7 were finally released on May 14 following a Davao del Norte court's dismissal of the trumped up charges filed against them. The Bakwit School 7 are Chad Booc, Roshelle Mae Porcadilla, Benito Bay-ao, Segundo Milong, Jomar Benag, Esmelito Oribawan and Moddie Mansimuy-at. They were arrested during a police raid inside a campus of the University of San Carlos in Cebu City on February 15. They were falsely charged with kidnapping and illegal detention of Lumad children.

Earlier, the military and police forcibly took into custody 26 Lumad students and forced them to go home to Mindanao. Among them, eighteen along with their parents today remain under military custody.

Despite the court's decision, the NTF-ELCAC threatened on May 19 that it plans to file new charges against the seven.

## Joseph Canlas, victimized by the state twice over

**HUNDREDS OF ACTIVISTS** and farmers aboard 20 vehicles joined a caravan to accompany the ashes of Joseph Canlas back to his hometown in Arayat, Pampanga last May 14. Canlas, vice chairperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, died early morning of May 11 due to complications caused by Covid-19. He was arrested on March 30 and was detained for two months in congested prison cells in Angeles City and City of San Fernando where he contracted the virus. Canlas was elderly and suffering from diabetes.

## Residents rally for aid in Congress

**THE 10K AYUDA** Network picketed protest last May 17 in front of Congress in Quezon City to demand the immediate distribution of aid for all, implementation of the ₱10,000 Ayuda Bill, ₱100 daily wage subsidy, paid "leave" for Covid-19 positive workers, and a ₱15,000 subsidy for farmers. The mobilization was held in conjunction with the opening of session in Congress.

The group submitted to Rep. Stella Quimbo, principal author of the Bayanihan 3, the petition for aid which was signed by around 14,000 individuals.

The 10k Ayuda Network is an alliance of sectoral organizations launched on May 15 to demand another tranche of cash aid for families affected by the lockdown.

**FIGHT VS. LAYOFF.** Workers of the Alaska Milk Corporation in San Pedro, Laguna mounted two successive protests on May 17 and May 19 after the company management threatened mass layoffs. Alaska Milk is owned by Dutch multinational Royal Friesland-Campina.

**FREE SASAH STA. ROSA!** Youth groups protested in front of the Ateneo de Naga University, Main Campus in Naga City on May 14 to demand the release of Sasah Sta. Rosa of Jovenes Anakbayan, and urge university administration to support the call.

# "Arrest those who are not wearing face masks" and abusive orders in Duterte's lockdown

Rodrigo Duterte once again exposed his tyrannical response to the pandemic by arbitrarily ordering on May 5 to arrest "those who are not wearing their masks properly." This was his response after local cases of Covid-19 surged. Government agencies rushed to devise new guidelines disregarding the Department of Justice's clarification earlier in April that state forces cannot arrest anyone for violating health protocols, except when they are resisting violently.



Following the dictator's order, the police and barangay officials apprehended more than 18,000 individuals in just a span of four days, or around 4,500 individuals per day.

Among the victims, 904 were reportedly arrested and detained, while 8,027 were fined, and 491 others were ordered to render community service. These figures exclude those who have been apprehended for not following other protocols such as social distancing, curfew and others.

## Arbitrary apprehension

The National Union of People's Lawyers (NUPL) rebuked the president's order calling it "cruel, degrading and inhuman punishment." The group argued that there is no basis in law for enforcing such arrests or even detention even if temporary and without bringing those apprehended to precincts. (Majority of those "arrested" are brought to barangay halls or covered courts.) This has been proven true with the junking of many other similar cases by courts since last year.

"This is another authoritarian edict akin to the law of rulers and undermines the rule of law," said NUPL. The lack of clear guidelines on how this should be implemented, especially by abusive police officers, will result in more hardships and arbitrariness.

Anna was among those who have been apprehended by the police for allegedly not observing so-

cial distancing. The jeepney she was riding was stopped for purportedly loading more than the allowable number of passengers.

"The number of passengers did not exceed the limit," insisted Anna. "We are fully aware of the guidelines that was why we complained after being fined ₱500 each," she added.

They were threatened to be summoned to court if they could not pay the fine within five days. As a student, Anna has no means to pay this, and just opted not to pay.

During the first quarter of 2021, there have been numerous reports of various human rights violations perpetrated by state forces against those who "violated" government restrictions. Victims include Darren Peñaredondo from Cavite who died after being forced by the police to 300 squats.

Ernanie Jimenez on the other hand was beaten by barangay watchmen for purportedly violating curfew in their area. Many of those arrested are crammed in congested prison cells and made to sleep on the floor where they are vulnerable to being infected with Covid-19.

## Effect on livelihoods

Small entrepreneurs are afraid of being apprehended, fined or detained, leaving them with no choice but to follow restrictions regardless of their huge losses.

In the case of Anna's family during the enhanced community

quarantine, they were compelled to close their market store as early as 5 p.m. "We could not cater to many of our customers who usually visit on their way home after work, that's why our sales dropped so much," she said.

According to Jenny, another small businesswoman, they lost more than ₱70,000 due to the restrictions. "Our income dropped with schools closed and students on remote schooling. In short, we lost our target market," she explained. During the ECQ, I temporarily closed my small store because it is not considered an "essential" enterprise.

Employees are also affected as many businesses are forced to streamline their operations. "We can no longer pay our employees especially that we do not earn anything on days when our store is closed," said Jenny.

According to Karapatan, militarist and punitive measures in addressing the pandemic go against the principle of upholding public health. "These policies have disproportionately targeted the poor and even political dissenters, while affording a double standard to this administration's allies and lapdogs," the group added.

"Don't say that for those with the smallest infractions, but there are other bigger personalities who have a worse infraction, but were not arrested," said Vice President Leni Robredo. AB

# —IN—SHORT

# 4.2%



**DROP** in the **gross domestic product (GDP)**

during the **first quarter of the the year**. Thus, it will be **impossible** for the Duterte regime to reach its **6.5-7.5% economic growth target** for 2021.

The **San Miguel Corporation** posted a

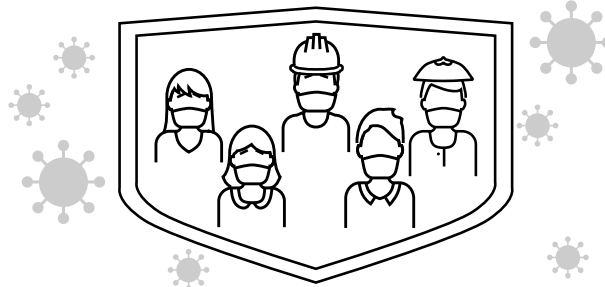


# ₱17.2 billion

**profit** during the **first three months of 2021**,

**higher by 15 times** than its profit during the same period in **2020 (₱1.1 billion)**.

# May 2026



at the rate of **75,000 vaccinations administered daily** nationwide. As of **May 18**, only **7,779,050 vaccine doses** have arrived in the country, just enough to fully vaccinate **3.54% of the population**.

Source: [herdimmunity.ph](http://herdimmunity.ph)

it will take about five years for the country to reach herd immunity,

**#Duterte Duwag**

**trended in social media**

on May 7 in criticism of Duterte's backing out on his debate challenge to Ret. Justice Antonio Carpio on the topic of the right of the Philippines in the West Philippine Sea.

# ₱75-₱90 billion

**loss incurred by rice farmers**

due to the **drop in farmgate prices** since the **Rice Tariffication Law** was implemented in 2018.

Source: [Bantay Bigas](http://Bantay Bigas)



# 10 Mayo 1897

the day when **Andres Bonifacio**

**leader of the Filipino Revolution**, and his brother Procopio, were executed in the then forested areas of **Maragondon, Cavite** for treason and sedition. The execution was ordered by ilustrado **Emilio Aguinaldo** who subsequently betrayed the revolution and collaborated with American colonialists.

## Nos están matando

or "they're killing us"

has become the cry of the people in Colombia in the face of the **violent dispersal of their protest actions** by the police in which **42 rallyists have been killed** and **168 went missing**. Massive protests erupted in the country on **April 28** against a **proposal to increase taxes**, and further spread to **oppose the state's failed pandemic response** and **worsening economic crisis**.

# The plight of nurses amid the pandemic

Nurses led by the Filipino Nurses United (FNU) commemorated the International Nurses Day on May 12 by wearing red face masks and raising calls to just wages and occupational safety. Since last year, nurses and other health workers have been demanding for humane treatment from the regime in order for them to carry out their work efficiently. They are calling for adequate protection, additional personnel and just compensation.

According to FNU spokesperson, "nurses are demoralized as they have yet to receive the correct compensation for their work in the frontlines of Covid-19."

They are disappointed as many nurses in numerous hospitals are yet to receive wage increases as promised by the regime. Last July 2020, it can be recalled that the regime issued Budget Circular 2020-4 upgrading the salary of entry-level nurses in public hospitals from ₱22,316-₱24,391 (salary grade or SG 11) to ₱32,053-₱34,801 (SG 15). Up to the present, nurses are still demanding the immediate implementation of this order and the disbursement of the budget for special risk allowance (₱5,000) and active hazard pay (₱3,000) allocated for them.

On the other hand, the regime demoted by one rank lower all nurses with a position of Nurse II or higher, or those receiving a monthly salary of not less than ₱38,000. Many senior nurses complained that they were pressured to sign reappointment documents stating that they agree to the demotion. Their wages were not decreased but this meant that their salaries will not be upgraded.

Around 48,316 contractual nurses in public hospitals were not covered by the said order. The conditions of thousands of nurses in

private hospitals are far worse as they commonly receive an average monthly pay of ₱10,000.

Among health workers, nurses are most vulnerable to being infected with Covid-19 as they are the ones who attend to Covid-19 patients. Latest data by the regime indicate that 6,000 out of 17,000 medical frontliners infected with the virus are nurses. Despite this, the regime is too slow in compensating infected nurses for their hospitalization. According to FNU, some nurses have contracted the virus two or three times already but have yet to receive any compensation.

Many nurses are thinking about resigning and finding another job because they do not feel that they are being given "enough assistance or support" by the government despite their efforts and the precariousness of their job.

In the past, nurses are commonly pushed out of the country due to measly wages and limited opportunities in the Philippines. Latest data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development indicate that nurses can earn up to ₱445,000 monthly in other countries. The average salary for nurses in the US, where most Filipino nurses are commonly deployed, is ₱319,000 per month, and ₱190,000 in the United Kingdom.



When the pandemic broke out, the Duterte regime implemented a deployment ban on health workers in April 2020 purportedly to address the shortage in the country. The regime lifted the ban in November but imposed that only 5,000 health workers are allowed to be deployed to other countries annually. The regime did not compensate the 16,746 health workers who are affected by the restriction.

In February, Department of Labor and Employment Sec. Silvestre Bello III himself admitted that the country has an "oversupply" of nurses. He said that the country currently has around 400,000 nurses. According to FNU, around 200,000 nurses are currently unemployed but the regime is not doing anything to ensure mass hiring in the face of worsening shortages in nurses in public hospitals, especially those with Covid-19 wards. Recently, there have been many reports about the closing down of nurse stations and hospitals refusing to admit patients due to lack of nurses. This includes the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City which reported a deficit of 30-35 nurses.

AB

# The rise of mega-crony Enrique Razon Jr.

Rodrigo Duterte favored oligarch Enrique Razon Jr.'s proposal to build a mega vaccine center on public land this May. The project will cover 10 of the 15-hectare property managed by the Pilipino Nayon Foundation (PNF) in Paranaque. The said property is one of the last "urban jungles" in Metro Manila and has grown trees and tall weeds.

Razon is rushing to build the project before the 20 million vaccine doses he ordered from Moderna arrive in June. He plans to gather 10,000 to 12,000 persons each day in this center on the false reasoning that this will accelerate herd immunity in Metro Manila.

Duterte and Razon are trying to ram the project despite widespread opposition. According to groups objecting to it, there is no need for a mega center that will only gather so many people in a place where they can infect each other since there are many other places and open spaces that can suffice. Health workers say it is also better to use the funds to repair and strengthen barangay health centers so that they can be used not just for vaccinations but for other medical services as well.

The mega vaccine center is only the latest of Duterte's favors to Razon. Last April, Razon managed to wrestle control of Manila Water Company, one of the largest water companies in Metro Manila owned by the Zobel-Ayala family. This was after years of Duterte's threats of taking over the company and forcing the Ayalas to renegotiate their agreement with the government. In the end, the Ayalas were forced to cede 51% control to Razon, even though he bought only 25% of its shares.

In 2019, Razon grabbed monopoly control of supplying electricity to the Panay island from the Panay Electric Co. (PECO) after Congress refused to renew the latter's franchise. Instead, it awarded another franchise to Razon's company, More Power, and gave him the authority to seize PECO's properties in a

space of two months.

Before this, Duterte successively awarded Razon's companies with the Wawa Dam Project in Rizal and the Chico Hydropower Project in Tabuk, Kalinga. In both projects, Razon had Chinese partners, and is set to use Chinese loans, personnel and equipment.

## Port monopoly

Razon is the second richest Filipino in Forbes Magazine's list of global billionaires this year. Like the others, his wealth ballooned during the pandemic—from \$3.4 billion in 2019 to his current value at \$5.1 billion or an increase of 47%.

He controls the International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) which operates the Manila South Harbor Port and has a monopoly of managing all containers



which come in and out of the country. In 2017, ICTSI bought the local operations of Manila North Harbour Port from Petron Corporation. The ICTSI is the foremost company which manages other ports in the country.

In addition to the two major ports, the ICTSI operate ports in Laguna, Batangas, Zambales (Subic), Cavite, Misamis Oriental, Davao, Tagum and Gen. Santos City. Razon also has operations in not less than 23 ports in 18 countries.

Razon also has companies in construction and real estate (Prime Metroline Infrastructure Holdings

*"The rise..." continued on page 9*

## Enrique Razon Jr.'s dams

THREE OF THE deadliest dam projects in the country at present are linked to the businesses of Enrique Razon, Jr., one of the "Duterte-garchs" or big oligarchs favored by Duterte. These are the Jalaur Megadam Project in Iloilo which aims to generate and supply electricity for More Power Company; the Wawa Dam Project in Montalban, Rizal which will supply water to the Manila Water Company which is also owned by Razon; and the impending dam project in the Chico River in Kalinga. These projects are located in ancestral lands and rivers including those of the Tumandok of Panay, Remontado-Dumagats of Rizal and Igorots of Kalinga.

All these places have had a long history of struggles by residents, and violent suppression campaigns to silence them. Extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests and detention and forcible eviction are prevalent in these areas.

Unlike other bourgeois compradors, Razon explicitly expressed his support to Duterte's fascism. In 2017, he manifested his tyrannical stance by stating that no infrastructure program can be implemented without a dictatorship.



Corp.), gambling (Bloomsberry Resorts Corp.), mining (Apex Mining), water (Prime Water Metroline Holdings Inc), energy (Prime Metro Power Holdings Corporation), electricity (More Electric and Power Corp.) and investments (CLSA Exchange Capital Inc.).

### Getting rich by cronyism

Like many bourgeois-compradors, Razon's wealth grew due to cronyism. ICTSI's expansion was fastest under Gloria Arroyo's regime due to his close ties to the past president's husband Mike Arroyo.

Arroyo provided him with lucrative infrastructure contracts in and outside the country. Arroyo was also the first to award him with NPF's reclaimed land where his Solaire Resort now stands. The government then guaranteed his business loans.

Under Arroyo, Razon was instrumental in China's gaining control of the National Transmission Company's State Grid Corp. It was also Razon who fronted for the dummy corporation which was to be China ZTE's local partner in what is now known as the aborted NBN-ZTE agreement where Arroyo and her officials received millions of dollars in bribes and kickbacks.

In exchange, Razon funded Arroyo and her allies' candidacies. In the 2017 elections, he served as the treasurer of the Team Unity of Arroyo's Lakas-Kampi Party. When the coalition disintegrated, he became instrumental in building the National Unity Party. It now has 45 members in Congress and is part of Duterte's "supermajority." In the coming 2022 elections, Razon is one of the potential campaign funders of presidential hopefuls. AB

## Israel's relentless genocide in Palestine

Israel's brutal bombing of Gaza Strip, an enclave densely populated with 2 million Palestinians, has been on the news since the second week of May. The headlines screamed of an "Israel-Palestine conflict," an "escalation of violence" in Gaza Strip and of the "growing question" of crimes against humanity being committed by "both sides." These paint the situation like a boxing match, with contenders of equal strength and rules governing both sides.

But videos, photos and reports from Gaza Strip fail to hide Israel's disproportionate power and the widespread destruction and mass murder its bombs have wreaked on the Palestinian people.

By May 19, around 10,000 houses and buildings have been destroyed, if not pulverized, by Israeli airstrikes. These include schools, hospitals, press offices and the enclave's only Covid-19 test laboratory. A few days prior, Israel cut Gaza's internet connection and electricity supply and left hundreds of thousands without water, including the sick and those infected with Covid-19.

According to latest reports, 217 Palestinians have been killed in the bombings, 63 of which are children. More than 1,400 have been wounded and 52,000 forced to leave their homes. Aside from airstrikes, Israel has shelled Gaza from its border using howitzers and cannons.

Israel claims it is only "retaliating" to Palestine's firing of rock-

ets from Gaza Strip. But it was the first to raid the Al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem, one of the holiest places for Muslims, while Palestinians were in the middle of their Ramadan prayers last May 8. The raid resulted in the wounding of 205 Palestinians and 17 Israelis. In response, Palestine fired 1,000 rockets towards Israel on May 10. Some of these struck Israeli civilians and properties. Others dropped in Gaza. The majority (up to 90%) were intercepted by Israel's anti-rocket system.

The Al-Aqsa raid was a culmination of weeks of inciting to violence by Israeli groups in Palestine territory in East Jerusalem. Anti-Arab pronouncements of so-called extremist Israeli groups have been on the rise, calling for "death to all Arabs." Violent incursions of these groups into Palestinian communities intensified after the Israeli Supreme Court granted Jews the right to grab Palestinian houses in East Jerusalem in February. This

*"Israel's..." continued on page 10*

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### Free Palestine!

THOUSANDS protested in the streets of the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, New Zealand and other countries to express their support for the Palestinian people and condemn Israel's bombing of Gaza. Many of these groups carried the call: "Free Palestine!"

In United Kingdom, activists occupied on May 19 a subsidiary arms factory of the Elbit Systems, which supplies drones for Israel used against Palestine. The Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network declared May 15-22 as a Week of Struggle for Palestine.

In the US, 140 organizations called on the Biden government to oppose the eviction of Palestinians from East Jerusalem, condemn the Israel's violence in Gaza, and stop its war crimes using all means necessary.

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decision is against international pacts governing how the territories are to be divided between the two nations. Palestinians have actively resisted the impending eviction from the last of their communities in the sacred land of Jerusalem.

In reality, Israel's latest aggression is a continuation of its decades-long genocide campaign

and violent occupation of Palestinian territories. For Palestinians, it is the continuation of the Al Nakba of May 15, 1948, where their people were killed and driven out of their land to give way to the birth of the Israeli nation.

In over seven decades of Israeli occupation, Palestinians were forced into the separate territories of Gaza Strip and West Bank. The

deliberate imprisonment of Palestinians inside these territories is now being called a form of apartheid.

Israel has never been forced to retreat or made to account for the numerous violations and crimes it has committed against Palestinians. This is because the US and Europe's capitalist countries consider it as a key ally in the Middle East. The US continues to reject calls to condemn Israel's crimes, and has instead deemed Palestinians as "terrorists." It considers Israel's bombing spree as "pushing the limits" of the rules of war, and its genocide as a "right to self-defense."

US Pres. Joseph Biden has earlier refused to review US military aid to Israel. He also refused to impose the lightest conditions, such as banning Israel from imprisoning children in its congested jails. Annually, Israel receives the largest chunk of US military aid. AB

