

LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL

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Corruption charges mount against US-Aquino regime

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

The Filipino people's fight against corruption under the US-propped Aquino regime is intensifying. Aquino's fraudulent slogan of a "righteous path" is pushing the country deeper into the quagmire.

Through a combination of the mass movement and legislative action, Filipinos are undertaking an organized step towards abolishing the "pork barrel" system – the long-cultivated government budget allocation that feeds the corrupt patronage politics in Philippine society.

Several people's organizations, concerned citizens, and social and religious institutions, including the majority Catholic Church, have launched a "people's initiative" to create a new law criminalizing the creation and spending of pork barrel funds. Among others, they demand the prosecution and punishment of everyone – including officials of the Aquino regime and President Benigno Aquino III himself – involved in the plunder of public funds through the pork barrel system.

Under the reactionary government's Initiative and Referendum Act of 1989, private citizens can push for the passage or amendment of a law by having a petition signed by at least 10 percent of all registered voters and at least three percent in every legislative district. A referendum must be held within 45 to 90 days once the petition has been filed with the Commission on Elections.

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Photo credit: Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, Peasant Movement of the Philippines)

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Formally announced in June 2014, the initiative is an expression of the widespread revulsion over government corruption, involving the diversion of hundreds of billions of pesos into the pockets of high government officials, Aquino's political allies, and his extended family.

The popular call actually began in mid-2013 as an initiative in the social media by a concerned citizen, and developed after the "pork barrel" scam was exposed to have diverted huge amounts of public funds to bogus NGOs and pocketed by several senators.

It is widely believed that the exposure of the scam was manipulated by Aquino propagandists ostensibly to censure his political critics and potential rivals in the coming 2016 presidential elections. But the ploy backfired and exploded in their faces as Aquino himself and his cronies are now being accused of themselves pocketing billions of pesos of public funds.

Soon, the social media call solicited the support of countless individuals and organizations, and culminated in a "million people's march" in August 2013 at the Luneta park in the middle of Manila, that drew almost half a million citizens.

The People's Initiative Against the Pork Barrel (PIAP) held a "people's congress" on 23 August 2014 in Cebu City in central Philippines, to formally begin the collection of signatures. Adding a big boost to the campaign is the recent decision of the Supreme Court declaring Aquino's pork barrel – also known as Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) – as unconstitutional. It was reported that Aquino's DAP has been used to bribe senators to impeach a sitting Supreme Court Chief Justice, buy off the loyalty of congressional allies, and divert funds to NGOs that were found to be affiliated with presidential relatives and cronies.

PIAP organizers have accused Aquino of a massive cover up of high administration officials and political allies linked to the scam. Only three opposition senators have been charged with plunder before the Ombudsman, while Aquino continues to protect his allies in the lower and upper houses of parliament, and his own budget secretary, the architect and implementor of Aquino's pork barrel funds.

BAYAN (New Patriotic Alliance) has been leading the people's protest movement with several mobilizations, including

the mobilization for the anniversary of the "million people march" on 25 August, and many community-level educational campaigns nationwide. BAYAN projects the campaign on the people's initiative to culminate in November this year.

Meanwhile, in the lower house of parliament, a number of impeachment complaints filed against President BS Aquino have been successfully blocked by his political allies.

In order to drown-out the impeachment complaints from public consciousness, and conceal the regime's further political isolation, Aquino's spin doctors have floated the idea of a second term for the "pork barrel" president. This, despite a constitutional prohibition on a president's second term, in order to prevent a possible return to an open dictatorship such as that of Marcos.

Ang Bayan, the publication of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), in its editorial of 21 September 2014, succinctly articulates what is obviously repulsive, thus:

"No one is being fooled by Aquino when he claims that there is widespread demand for him to extend his current term or seek another one. For months now, Aquino's yellow army of specialists in public opinion manipulation has been trying to generate 'public clamor' for 'one more term' but could only afford to come up with a poorly 'liked' Facebook page and scantily attended public activities.

"There is an objective self-serving basis for Aquino's desire to perpetuate himself in power. He is utterly terrified of the possibility of ending up behind bars like his predecessor Gloria Arroyo, especially amid intensifying demands for his accountability in the anomalous and graft-ridden Disbursement Acceleration Program.

"Beneath the false veneer of 'good governance', the Aquino regime has, in fact, brought the old bureaucrat capitalist system to new heights. The biggest beneficiaries of Aquino's 'economic growth' are a handful of close big business supporters including the Ayalas, the Pangilinan group, the Cojuangcos, and the Consunjis, as well as the economic empires of Henry Sy and Lucio Tan.

"Aquino has openly usurped powers in order to redirect public funds to projects and programs that invariably serve the interests of big business and aggrandize his political supporters." ■

Photo from arkibongbayan.org



US-Aquino regime guilty of atrocious rights violations

By Isah Antonio

Extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, hamletting, aerial bombings and artillery shelling of communities, forced surrender, military encampment in schools and places of worship, destruction of property, displacements, harassment and threats, using civilians especially children as human shields and guides in military operations, curfews, filing of trumped-up charges, criminalizing political offenses – these are all components of the counter-insurgency program “Oplan Bayanihan” under the US-supported Benigno Aquino III government that have caused massive and despicable violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Oplan Bayanihan is a monstrous military plan devised by the US-Aquino regime in a futile attempt to stem the growth and development of the revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines.

It is also aimed at crushing any opposition to the policies of the Aquino regime, especially policies that benefit and protect the interests of the domestic ruling elite and the foreign monopoly capitalists.

It is therefore not surprising that the most despicable violations of human rights are taking place in areas where there is strong opposition to the operations of large-scale mining, logging, plantation, tourist resorts, and so-called urban development.

Foremost Philippine human rights organization KARAPATAN (Alliance for the Advancement of People’s Rights) has reported that at least 170 political critics and activists have been murdered by suspected security agents under the Aquino regime. There are more than 500 political prisoners unjustly languishing in jails and various police and military detention centers.

Following are partial reports of violations of human rights and humanitarian law gathered by KARAPATAN:

- On 10 September, in Barangay (village) Lydia La Paz, Agusan del Sur, in Mindanao, around 450 Manobo (indigenous people) evacuees, half of them children, were surrounded by soldiers of the 26th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army. The Manobos were forced to leave their homes after intensive military operations. These operations are meant to clear the area for business operations of the Makilala and Malampay mining companies.
- On 5 September, soldiers of the 41st Infantry Battalion stationed in Lacub, Abra, in northern Philippines, launched military operations against the New People’s Army. In the process, the mercenary troops murdered



Victimized children demand: Stop military aggression in Mindanao! Photo SALINLAHI Alliance for Children’s Concerns, arkibongbayan.com.

civilians Noel Vista and Engr. Fidela Salvador. Engr. Salvador’s body was desecrated by the military to instill fear among the local population; 24 Tingguians (indigenous people) were used as human shields; civilians were coerced to act as guides for the soldiers; families trying to flee the military operations were fired upon with rifles and grenades; and schools were used as military detachments during the operations.

- On 26 August, Librado Adoptante, Sr., Bayan Muna (political party) coordinator in Baao, Camarines Sur, was gunned down by bonnet-wearing and motorcycle-riding assassins widely believed to be government security agents and their hired killers. To make sure that Adoptante would not survive, the killers fired two more shots in the head as he fell to the ground. Members of the 42nd Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army and the paramilitary CAFGU had earlier accused Adoptante of being a member of the NPA and “visited” his house several times.
- On 23 August in Carigara, Leyte, two motorcycle-riding men wearing bonnets shot and killed Jefferson Custodio, member of Municipal Farmers Association in Carigara (MUFAC). MUFAC is involved in the rehabilitation of communities affected by typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) providing the peasants and their families with shelter materials, seedlings, and farm tools.

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- On 14 August, Marcel Lambon was gunned down in Barangay Kalabugao, Impasug-ong, Bukidnon, in southern Philippines. He died on the spot. Lambon was a council member of PIGYAYUNGAAN, a Lumad indigenous people's organization campaigning against environmental destruction, particularly the expansion of an oil palm plantation in Impasug-ong.
- On 9 August, soldiers of the 26th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army swooped down on Barangay Lydia, La Paz, Agusan del Sur province, in southern Philippines. The mercenary troops threatened to massacre the whole community of Mintake-i including teachers of the literacy-numeracy learning center administered by the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines-Northern Mindanao Region. The terrorized residents were forced to leave their homes and took refuge in the forests to avoid the military and the paramilitary groups.
- On 8 August, two students, Guiller Cadano and Gerald Salonga, from the University of the Philippines-Clark, in Northern Philippines, were illegally arrested by elements of the 3rd Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army, and the Philippine National Police. They were arrested without any warrant, blindfolded, and denied access to their relatives and lawyers. Both students are youth organizers of the Kabataan Partylist.
- On 6 August in Candelaria, Quezon Province, northern Philippines, another relief worker, Gildegardo Hernandez, was killed by motorcycle riding assassins. Hernandez was working for the Relief Delivery Operation for the people affected by typhoon Glenda (international name: Rammasun).
- On 22 July, farmer Melvin Espinoza was arrested with two others in Iba, Cabangsalan, Bukidnon, southern Philippines, falsely being accused of burning heavy equipment of the Sumifru Philippines Corporation, a company owned by the Japanese transnational Sumitomo Corporation. The three arrested were active in the community's anti-landgrabbing campaign against the expansion of Sumifru's pineapple plantation in the area, their anti-labor policies, and their environmentally-destructive plantation operations.
- On 20 July, children from Sitios Mangkay and Kapatagan in Kapalong, Davao del Norte, southern Philippines, were forced to serve as guides and human shields during military operations conducted by the 60th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army. Classes were also disrupted when the military occupied the schools in the area.

KARAPATAN has also documented that 18 children have been killed because of military operations conducted by the US-Aquino regime, especially in remote areas of the country.

The fraudulent slogan of "the righteous path" being peddled by Benigno Aquino III has failed to sugar-coat the violations of political, economic and human rights of the Filipino people. His Oplan Bayanihan does not only mock human rights but has surpassed the bloody records of past presidents in human rights violations. The US-Aquino regime will be brought down in ignominy as the most massive violator of human rights and international humanitarian law in the country's history. ■

Gen. Jovito Palparan, military "butcher"

By Ed Ladera

His trail of blood covers four regions of the country, 142 extrajudicial killings, 50 enforced disappearances, 26 frustrated killings, and 38 cases of torture, from May 2000 to September 2006.

He is accused of abducting University of the Philippines students Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan on 26 June 2006 in Bulacan, north of Manila, together with peasant Manuel Merino. A former political prisoner, Raymond Manalo, also abducted by General Palparan, testified before the Supreme Court after his escape from prison that he witnessed Karen and Sherlyn being tortured and raped by General Palparan's soldiers. Raymond Manalo's testimony has been declared by the Supreme Court as clear and convincing, credible and consistent.

"I heard a woman screaming for mercy... It was Sherlyn. She was hanging upside down and the soldiers were hitting her in the stomach, playing with her genitals, and poking a piece of wood in there. Karen was rolled up near Sherlyn, almost naked, and her skin was covered with cigarette burns," declared Raymond.

Concepcion Empeño, mother of Karen, stated, "Before this, I was not an activist. But this has made me an activist. Whatever work Karen started, I am going to continue. I have learned about what she was fighting for." She is now vice-chairperson of Desaparecidos, the organization of families of victims of enforced disappearances.

Palparan arrested: Transferred to military center

In hiding since 2011 when a Regional Trial Court issued a warrant of arrest for abduction and serious illegal detention, Palparan was arrested on 12 August 2014 in Manila.

Parents of Karen and Sherlyn, with members of Desaparecidos and other human rights organizations, burned his effigy and picketed court hearings where Palparan appeared. At first detained in the Bulacan Provincial Jail, he said he feared for his life and pleaded to be transferred.

Despite the objections of Empeño's and Cadapan's families and their lawyers, the court invoked Palparan's "existing threat to life and security" and ordered his transfer to the Philippine Army Custodial Center, where he now stays under the protection of his junior Army officers.

Revolutionary People's Court issues warrant of arrest for Palparan

The revolutionary movement condemned this travesty of justice and declared that the warrant of arrest issued by the People's Court of the revolutionary movement is still in force and shall be carried out by the New People's Army when the opportunity arises. ■

People's militia grows stronger and broader in Mindanao

From *Ang Bayan*

In the first half of 2014, Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) in Southern Mindanao Region (SMR) were able to launch many successful military actions in the face of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) intensified military campaigns. Behind each victorious military action was mass support and, most of all, the participation of their armed forces in the locality – the people's militia.

In a shaded area in the middle of a meadow ensconced in a mountainous area of southern Mindanao, farmers, mostly men, began trickling in one morning. They were sweaty but greeted others with smiles, and they brought with them food packed in lunch boxes and banana leaves. They were villagers who had come to organize the second people's militia platoon in their village.

They continue to build the people's militia even if their area is surrounded by sections and platoons of the butcher AFP conducting a so-called Peace and Development Outreach Program (PDOP) under the counter-insurgency *Oplan Bayanihan* program of the Benigno S. Aquino III regime. This prompted an NPA member from another guerrilla front to ask the locals whether the venue was secure. They answered "yes", and the visitor did notice that the gathered villagers didn't mind the presence of many enemy soldiers around them because they relied on the masses.

The area's mass base is solid, even if the fascist enemy was encamped nearby, because the latter remained blind and deaf to the presence of the revolutionary mass movement.

The mercenary soldiers' objective is to destroy the villagers' unity, so the village folk continually plan how to defend and fight for their interests. One way is to build the people's militia. This is the usual course in the NPA's areas of operation where it is common to have a battalion-size militia in every municipality. Should the military chance upon them while having a meeting, they would be ready for any kind and manner of fighting based on their capabilities and concrete conditions. This is how important the people's militia is nationwide.

In-depth discussions were held in the process of organizing the militia. This is usually the time to rectify long-standing misconceptions that the people's militia is not part of the NPA. The gathered villagers were happy to learn that the militia is part of the NPA. The organizers explained that there were four basic types of NPA: the regular mobile forces, the armed propaganda units, the partisan units, and the people's militia. The only difference between the militia and the first three types is that the militias are part-time fighters. Militia members become even more enthusiastic when they are provided military training and are able to join military actions.

The meeting was over before dark and met no problems despite enemy movements nearby. It was noticeable how the militia members became even more trusting of each other and developed tighter bonds with the full-time NPA members after the militia platoon was established and the various points clarified. They were proud to be called the center of gravity among the masses and the backbone of the revolutionary mass movement. ■

NPA releases POWs to promote peace talks

By Ed Ladera

In a tactical offensive launched by the New People's Army on 10 July 2014 in Alegria, Surigao del Norte, in southern Philippines, four soldiers of the mercenary Armed Forces of the Philippines were captured by the NPA. The National Democratic Front of the Philippines in Mindanao offered their release as a gesture of good will, in order to promote the peace talks between the Aquino government and the NDFP.

After a declaration of Suspension of Military and Police Operations and corresponding NPA ceasefire for a specified time and area, the four POWs were released on 29 July 2014. The NPA safely delivered the POWs to officials of the Aquino government and to the families of the POWs. The International Committee of the Red Cross and peace advocates assisted in the safe and orderly release. Accompanying the POWs was a custodial force of the NPA consisting of several hundred Red fighters with high-powered rifles.

In September 2014, the NPA captured two more soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Again, in order to promote the peace talks between the Aquino government and the NDFP, the NPA in North Central Mindanao offered to release the two POWs, if the Aquino regime agrees to issue the required Suspension of Offensive Military and Police Operations. The NPA has committed to issue a corresponding ceasefire. Peace advocates are again helping to realize the safe release.

This gesture of the NDFP and NPA is in stark contrast to the Aquino government's continued detention of more than 500 political prisoners, in violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) signed by both Parties in 1998. ■

In areas of the New People's Army, it is common to have a battalion-size militia in every municipality... ready for any kind and manner of fighting based on their capabilities and concrete conditions.

The revolutionary proletariat in the Philippines: Building a just and democratic society

By **CONI K. LEDESMA**
International Spokesperson,
Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan

It is a great honor for me to participate in the fourth New World Summit – Brussels, and for me to speak under the section of Progressive State.

I would like to thank and congratulate Jonas Staal, Robert Kluijver, Younes Bouadi, René in der Maur, Paul Kuipers, and everyone else who worked so hard to make this fourth New World Summit a success.

Today I will speak about the progressive state developing in the Philippines today.

We have been waging our national democratic struggle for more than four and a half decades. Our struggle started in the 1960s when a group of Marxist-Leninist-Maoists led by Professor Jose Maria Sison identified the character of Philippine society as semi-colonial and semi-feudal, and put forward the general line of the national democratic revolution against US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

In 1968, the Communist Party of the Philippines was re-established. A Program for a People's Democratic Revolution was promulgated. In March 1969, the New People's Army was established to defend the people against injustice and tyranny, and to fight for the realization of the People's Democratic Government.

Since then a parallel state of the people is being built. Its presence is now in 71 out of 81 provinces in the country.

While the reactionary state still exists, the people's democratic government is steadily growing in the countryside. Local organs of democratic political power are being established. The barrio (village) organizing committees and barrio revolutionary committees in these areas have special committees for organization, economy, defense, justice, health, education, and so on.

Supporting the people's government are basic organizations of workers, farm workers, peasants, women, youth, children, and cultural activists. Each type of mass organization performs general functions as well as special functions specifically suitable to its members.

The people under organs of political power and mass organizations constitute the mass base of the revolutionary government. This mass base runs into millions, mostly in the countryside.

Let me concretize some aspects of the democratic Philippines that has been developing during the past four and a half decades.

Revolutionary land reform

Land reform is the main content of the national democratic revolution. The maximum goal of our land reform program is the free distribution of land to the peasants.

In our present stage of struggle, we are implementing the minimum land reform program, which is the reduction of



NDFP's Coni Ledesma speaking at the New World Summit in Brussels, Belgium, 20 September 2014. Photo from NWS.

land rent, abolition of usury, and the setting up of mutual aid and labor exchange systems among the peasantry. Wages of farm workers and the prices of agricultural products at the farm gate have also been improved.

In areas where the local organs of the people's revolutionary government are strong, land has been distributed to or taken over and tilled by peasants or peasant associations, especially in cases where the landlord is absent or afraid to return to the land. In several provinces, several hundred hectares of land are already in the hands of the revolutionary peasants.

Revolutionary Justice

An important aspect of building a progressive state is defining and ensuring a good justice system.

The revolutionary movement has developed a justice system which is being implemented in areas of its responsibility.

To give a concrete example of this, I will quote the experience of a woman member of the New People's Army. She writes:

“The Party is very clear about the equal rights of citizens as stated in its documents regarding the establishment of a Democratic People's Government. A related document on the setting up of revolutionary People's Courts also guarantees the protection of women, especially against rape.

I have had opportunities to participate and lead in the conduct of Revolutionary People's Courts for cases of rape.

One case involved a perpetrator who was a member of the village-based people's militia, which assists the NPA in the revolutionary defense of the people against fascist attacks

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and incursion. His sister-in-law came to us, asking for justice, claiming that he had raped her. At first, it was difficult to believe he was guilty, for he was soft-spoken and mild-mannered. He was also of good standing in the militia. The man's wife also defended her husband from the charges.

The Party organization in the area organized a jury composed of respected residents of the barrio, and a representative of the local Party branch. I sat as a member of the jury, representing the local NPA platoon.

The case became a thorn that severely divided the masses in the barrio. It became a bitter fight between the victim's relatives, on one hand, and others who doubted the victim's claim.

In the course of the trial, however, several other women also came forward, claiming to have been either raped or sexually harassed by the same man.

In the end, the evidence proved too strong. The man's guilt was beyond reasonable doubt."

Education

Education, especially in far-flung barrios in the countryside, has never been a primary concern of the Philippine reactionary government. There are no schools here. Where there are schools, they lack classrooms, textbooks, desks and other facilities. This is especially true in areas of indigenous communities. The lack of basic education exacerbates the conditions of poverty, landlessness and displacement. Children, if they are able to go to school, often have to stop studying because they need to help their parents in the agricultural work.

The revolutionary movement has assumed the responsibility to provide education in areas under their control or influence. Literacy and numeracy classes are given to adults, followed by mass courses on their socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions, based on the concrete social investigation of their own situation in the locality. Classes are held once or twice a week.

Primary schools have also been set up in some provinces.

A few secondary schools have been opened. These schools operate on the principle that community development must start from securing the economy and livelihood of the people. Since most peasant and indigenous communities are dependent on agriculture, students are taught scientific ways in farming and animal husbandry. The students are trained for community service. They are also trained to be community organizers.

As part of their training, before classes start, the students work their agricultural fields. So theirs is an integrated program of production and education.

When students reach a certain level, they also become instructors themselves, passing on their knowledge to younger students. This develops their sense of responsibility.

The biggest problem faced by these schools is the ongoing militarization in the countryside. The military often occupy their classrooms or harass the residents of an area, disrupting their schooling. This can sometimes go on for months. But as soon as the military leaves, classes resume.

Health care

The Philippine government is also negligent in providing health care for people who cannot afford to pay for their medical needs.

The revolutionary movement has taken on this responsibility in their areas. Doctors and other health personnel conduct missions regularly in these areas. The residents in the barrios are trained in hygiene, primary health care, and preventive medicine, as well as in the use of Western medicine, acupuncture and herbal cures. Simple medical procedures are taught, including performing appendectomies, helping in childbirth, simple dental procedures, etc.

Natural Disasters: Relief and rehabilitation work

From its beginning, the revolutionary forces have always been the first responders in relief and rehabilitation work in all kinds of natural calamities and disasters such as floods, earthquakes, typhoons, landslides, and mudflows in their areas. Volunteers led by youth and student activists in the cities

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A company of the NPA during a community meeting in a guerrilla front. Photo from www.philippinerevolution.net



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respond quickly to undertake disaster relief work in affected areas, especially in the countryside, and gain awareness of the dire and impoverished conditions of the people there, as well as of the need for revolutionary change.

Global warming has also generated unprecedentedly stronger typhoons, and have brought widespread death, destruction and loss of crops.

Among the three strongest typhoons to hit the Philippines in the past years have been Ondoy (international name: Ketsana), Pablo (Bopha) and Yolanda (Haiyan). Revolutionary forces in the area where these typhoons hit were the first ones to do relief work. Through the experiences in relief and rehabilitation in these areas, the work has been systematized and efficiently carried out.

Relief and rehabilitation is comprehensive. That is, when the teams go to the disaster area, they do relief work, psychosocial work, and organizing. These are the three components of relief work.

Relief work:

Relief workers go to the remotest areas where other relief teams do not go. They bring with them five kilos of rice for each family, sardines and dried fish, soap, water and clothing.

Medical missions are also organized. Volunteer doctors, nurses, health personnel bring medicines. When needed, minor surgeries are also performed.

Psychosocial:

After the first needs of food, clothing and shelter are taken care of, the psychosocial part of the relief work takes place. For a session, about 30-50 persons composed of children, parents, grandparents, are gathered. They tell their stories, speak of their experiences, express their sorrow for the loss of loved ones. This is a whole day activity. For many of them, it is a great relief just to share their stories and to listen to the stories of others who underwent the same trauma.

Organizing:

The third part of the relief work is the organizing component. Discussing the causes of natural disasters, and the root causes of their problems helps empower the people. Instead of pitying themselves, they organize themselves to demand their rights.

The relief team is transitory. The people must help themselves. In Mindanao, after Typhoon Pablo, when the reactionary government's Department of Social Work and Development did not distribute the relief goods due them, the people raided the storage places and took over the distribution of the relief goods. They were organized and empowered!

Rehabilitation:

The next phase is the rehabilitation work. Donations for iron sheets, nails, electric saws (to cut the fallen trees into lumber for rebuilding their houses), hammers, and other building equipment are brought in. Then the people begin rebuilding their homes.

Seedlings are also given to the people. In Mindanao, after Typhoon Pablo, the people were taught sustainable agriculture techniques, to help them in their food security. They are taught integrated farming: planting rice, vegetables, and raising pigs. They are also taught to produce and use organic

fertilizers. At a later stage, a carabao (as work animal) dispersal program is initiated.

The Woman Question

From the very beginning of the revolutionary movement, the importance of women participating in the revolution has been emphasized. The revolution cannot achieve victory without unleashing the revolutionary potential of women.

Women from the oppressed classes, like men, suffer the exploitation and oppression of living in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. In addition, women suffer from gender oppression and patriarchy. That is why Makibaka, the revolutionary women's organization that I am a member of, undertakes projects which include awareness raising among women and men, providing support services for women, improving their productivity, promoting equal responsibility in child-rearing, advocating democracy in family relations, safeguarding reproductive rights, and advancing the rights and welfare of children.

It was Makibaka which advocated, when the 12-Point Program of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines was being written, that women should have a Program Point to bring out the specific oppression and exploitation of women, and the importance of the participation of women in the struggle, and the continuing tasks of women even after nation-wide victory. This is number 11 in the 12-Point Program.

The right to divorce is one of the rights that women have gained in the course of revolutionary struggle. The Philippines is one of two countries in the world where divorce is not allowed. But it is allowed within the revolutionary movement.

Women's right over their bodies is also guaranteed.

In the mid-1970s, the Communist Party came out with a document on the Guidelines and Rules on Marriage inside the Party. In 1998, this document was improved.

Among the provisions in the improved document is removing the period of six months to one year before a divorce can be effective.

The 1998 document also recognizes the right of individual Party members to their sexual preference. The basic principles and rules governing marriage inside the Party also apply to same-sex marriage.

This was as early as 1998! The Netherlands recognized same sex marriage in 2001, and was the first country in the world to do so. The revolutionary state in the Philippines was way ahead of the Netherlands!

Conclusion

Ours has been a long and hard protracted struggle. We have lost comrades – women and men – who were daring, full of initiative, fearless. Through the years, a parallel state has developed next to the oppressive and exploitative one. This state is democratic and free.

What once was just a dream, is becoming more and more of a reality. The years of hard struggle are bearing fruit. We see it all over the country.

There is life. There is growth. The new Philippines has been born and is growing. ■

*Contribution to the Fourth New World Summit
20 September 2014. Brussels, Belgium*

Palestinian resistance calls for international solidarity



SOLIDARITY. Charlotte Kates (3rd from left) and Khaled Barakat (3rd from right) pose with Philippine revolutionaries (L-R) Coni Ledesma, Luis Jalandoni; Jose Maria Sison, and Julie Sison, after the 01 August forum. Photo by NDFP-IIO.

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

Our people (Palestinians) are angry because of the (Israeli) atrocities, but they can never be broken inside. Thus stated Khaled Barakat of the Free Ahmad Saadat movement, which is part of the Palestinian resistance movement, to describe Palestinian sentiment amidst continuing Israeli attacks in Gaza.

Barakat and Charlotte Kates of the Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, spoke as guests during the Forum on the Situation in Palestine organized by the International Information Office of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, in Utrecht, on 01 August 2014. The discussion was attended by several dozen concerned Dutch citizens and solidarity activists interested on the developments in Palestine and how they could help in demanding that Israel stop its war crimes against the Palestinian people.

Barakat explained that what is happening in Palestine – the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestine, the attacks on the people of Gaza - should be understood from its historical context. He said that since the Balfour Declaration of 1917 creating the state of Israel, the Palestinian people have suffered tremendously from colonialism, mass displacement, racism and ethnic cleansing. Israel, he said, is the Zionist outpost of colonialism and imperialism in the region.

Barakat stressed that since 1948, Israel has committed several massacres against the Palestinian people but has never been held accountable. For demanding an end to the occupation, clean water, electricity, opening of borders and the enjoyment of basic human rights, the Palestinians are being massacred, he said.

“Israel massacres people who are not even fighting – people in their homes, children in schools, people in hospitals, people praying in mosques and churches, even people who are just standing behind the wall”, Barakat stated.

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US & Israel: Terrorists!

By Ed Ladera

When an indefinite ceasefire was declared on 26 August, the Gaza Health Ministry reported:

- 2,145 Palestinians in Gaza killed, including 578 children
- 11,000+ wounded, including 2,374 children
- 10 hospitals, 19 medical centers, 36 ambulances destroyed
- 199 schools bombarded
- 10,483 homes destroyed
- 64 Israeli soldiers killed in battle, many scores wounded
- 3 Israeli civilians killed

As the world watched the horrors being unleashed on the Gaza population, Israel built 1,472 settlements, killed 32 Palestinians, injured another 1,397, and detained 1,783 in the West Bank.

Israeli Premier Netanyahu’s popularity rating plunged from 82% in mid-July to 38% on 25 August.

Palestinian leader Khalida Jarrar declared: “We must adhere to resistance as a way of life! The celebration on the occasion of victory and the joy of the people throughout the West Bank and Gaza are a testament to the people rallying around the option of resistance, for the Liberation of Palestine.” ■

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Kates for her part explained that since Palestine has been continually occupied, there is really no principle of proportionality between an occupying force and occupied. "There is no right to be a colonizer, but there is a right to resist via armed struggle against an occupying force," she emphasized.

She said that since the Palestinian resistance began in 1948, when the people were colonized and displaced, the Palestinian people have learned to use all forms of resistance – from peaceful to armed resistance. "People fight with whatever they have in resisting the 4th largest military power in the world, supported by the world's number one military power," she said.

Kates condemned the continuing complicity of the US government and the role of the European Union in propping up Israel and Zionism, and putting the entire Palestine and Middle East region in chaos.

She said that there is a strong international solidarity movement for Palestine, which is also a resistance movement against US imperialism. The international solidarity movement for Palestine has been calling on the international

community to increase the level of civil disobedience in support of Palestine, to boycott products and services from Israel and the occupied territories, and to isolate the Israeli state from the international community.

Barakat added that many Israelis and Jews outside Israel are actively involved in the resistance movement against the occupation. Both Barakat and Kates took exception to the western imperialist propaganda line of equating the condemnation of Israel, its atrocities and colonialism with anti-semitism (prejudice, hatred of, or discrimination against Jews as a national, ethnic, religious or racial group). "It is not anti-semitic to oppose the Israeli state", they added.

"Israeli and US imperialist spokesmen are the ones being anti-semitic, in brazenly representing the Jewish people in committing genocide and war crimes against the Palestinians", they countered.

Liberating the Palestinian people and creating a Palestinian state free from colonialism and imperialism that would represent all Palestinians, Jews, Arabs, Muslims, Christians and other peoples are the only genuine solutions to the conflict in the region, they concluded. ■

Russia is real target in US-instigated regime change in Ukraine

By Bagani Dong-Ilay

The US and EU applauded loudly when pro-Russian President Yanukovich was ousted by a coup in February 2014, that paved the way for the assumption to power of a cabal of pro-Western oligarchs, fascists and neo-Nazis in Ukraine.

Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland boasted in public that the US had bankrolled the coup in Ukraine to the tune of US\$5 billion. She was also caught in a telephone conversation badmouthing the EU incompetence in Ukraine ("F--- the EU"), while arrogantly giving instructions to the US ambassador in Ukraine on who, from among the street rabble that participated in the coup, should constitute the new government in Kiev.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter from 1977 to 1981, wrote two decades ago in one of his books that "without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be empire, while with Ukraine – bought off first and subdued afterwards, it automatically turns into empire." Brzezinski has argued that should Russia ever reunite with Ukraine, it will inevitably become a mighty Eurasian power. To the neo-conservatives in Washington with their dream of full-spectrum dominance of the US in world affairs spelled out in their Project for the New American Century (PANAC), the possibility of Russia becoming a rival is simply unacceptable.

But as usual, things do not always turn out as one would wish them. The US is facing enormous obstacles to achieve its goals in Ukraine.

The plan of the US is to wrench Ukraine from Russia and integrate it with the EU economically. Then bring Ukraine into NATO so that the US can establish military bases in Ukraine, in order to advance one more step in its scheme to encircle Russia. The US already has military bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, both parts of the former Soviet Union and considered by Russia as part of its sphere of influence.

Russia appears to have correctly assessed the threats posed by the US moves in Ukraine and it has moved quickly. It reintegrated Crimea, which had always been part of Russia and where Russia maintains a base that is strategic for its own security. It also supported the Russian-speaking regions in south-eastern Ukraine to demand for more autonomy and possibly independence from Kiev.

When the fascist junta in Kiev sent troops to suppress the Russian-speaking regions, civil war broke out. Russia covertly supported the pro-autonomy forces with weapons and logistics. The resistance is thus far proving to be effective in thwarting the advance of the junta forces.

By this time, the western propaganda machine through the mainstream mercenary media had already gone to work in demonizing Putin, comparing him to Hitler, notwithstanding the fact that the pro-Western regime in Kiev was in the pockets of neo-Nazi Banderites who were unabashedly brandishing flags with Nazi symbols. Bandera was a rabid anti-Soviet Ukrainian fascist who collaborated with the Nazis in World War II.

Then the Malaysian jet tragedy happened. The US and

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Citizens of southeastern Ukraine speak their minds on US and EU interventionism in the region. Photo from investwithalex.com

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EU immediately put the blame on the resistance fighters and Putin. Most evidence though point to a false flag attack planned and carried out by the US and its puppets in Kiev. This is reportedly aimed at isolating Russia and rallying international public opinion to justify more blatant intervention in the Crimea by the US-led bloc of western imperialist countries. The dastardly crime of deliberately killing nearly 300 innocent civilians for geo-political ends is a monstrosity that is utterly condemnable.

Russia has countered with more convincing evidence showing that the Malaysian plane was most probably brought down by Ukrainian jet fighters that intercepted it after receiving instructions from the Kiev airport tower to follow a certain course.

After failing in this murderous trick, the US and EU again tried to isolate and pressure Russia into withdrawing its support to the pro-autonomy resistance fighters by imposing economic and political sanctions. Russia countered with its own ban on EU agricultural products and getting its supplies from China. This has recoiled on the EU causing billions of euros lost in agricultural export income and generating discontent among Europe's farmers.

Meanwhile, in the battlefield, the junta forces have been suffering one debacle after another. They are being battered by determined resistance fighters who are fighting to defend their families, homes and land. The advance of the junta forces was not only halted; the tide of battle has now turned in favor of the resistance forces and they are going on the offensive.

The increasingly demoralized junta forces have been pushed back and the resistance forces are liberating

Russia has convincing evidence that the Malaysian airliner was brought down by Ukrainian jet fighters after instructions from the Kiev traffic controller to follow a certain flight path.

many areas formerly held by Kiev's forces. Many prisoners taken by the resistance forces who were treated humanely testified that they were deceived by their superiors into thinking that they were being sent to the southeast to fight invading Russian troops and terrorists.

Faced with the total disaster in the battlefield, growing criticism from his neo-Nazi partners, and an imminent economic collapse, Ukrainian President Poroshenko was forced to accept Russia's proposal for ceasefire and the opening of negotiations with the pro-autonomy forces to search for a political solution to the conflict.

So far, the US and its western imperialist allies have failed to have their way in their Ukrainian adventure. But for certain, they will try again and again to make trouble, not only to keep Russia busy but also to influence the course of events within Russia, to effect regime change, or subdue Russia and force it to give up its ambition to rise as a global power and accept US global hegemony.

As the contradiction between the monopoly capitalist powers intensify, the revolutionary movement of the working peoples around the world needs to strengthen itself for more intensified class struggles, on the path of toppling the ruling classes one by one and building socialism. ■

YPG, PKK fighting off Islamic State in West and South Kurdistan

By Roselle Valerio

The murderous rampage of the Islamic State continues, this time in the Kurdish regions of northern Syria and Iraq. In the months from July 2014, IS mercenaries have been pressing their attacks against the Kurds, especially the Yazidi people.

They have been murdering thousands of men, women and children, and raping, kidnapping and selling women as sex-slaves. What is so far preventing the IS from overrunning the entire region and completely annihilating the Yazidi population is the valiant defenses being put up by the combined armed forces of the People's Defense Forces (YPG), Women's Defense Forces (YPJ) and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

The IS has actually been committing massacres in Syria and Iraq in the last two years, especially in Kobane and Serekaniye, in their relentless campaign to establish a fundamentalist Sunni Islamic state. They consider the Yazidis as "devil worshippers" who need to be converted to Sunni Islam or face death. Varying degrees of financial, logistical and political support are reportedly provided to the IS by the US, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and United Arab Emirates, with the aim of toppling the Bashar al Assad regime in Syria. Turkey, in addition, keeps the supply and recruitment routes open along its border with Syria, in support for the jihadists against the Assad regime and against the Western Kurdistan government.

The Western media and imperialist states only began taking critical notice of these monstrosities in August 2014, after IS bandits launched a vicious attack on Sijar in northern Iraq, killing thousands, raping hundreds of women, and then selling them to slavery. Tens of thousands of the survivors have been stranded in the barren Sinjar mountains without food and water, and needing massive humanitarian aid. The IS mercenaries were threatening to march further east to the Kurdish capital city of Erbil, ruled by US-NATO ally Massoud Barzani.

In jingoist fashion, the US and its NATO allies responded with jet fighters and bombs, and additional military support

to the Barzani regime. Western media is now busy highlighting the air strikes targeting supposed IS positions around the city of Kobane, in northern Syria. Left out in the news is the lukewarm resistance put up by the Barzani regime and its peshmerga fighters. After earlier ignoring the IS threat to Western Kurdistan, peshmerga fighters shamelessly withdrew from the battlefields in Sinjar in August, abandoning the Yazidis to their own defenses.

In the meantime, the armed forces of the Western Kurdistan YPG and YPJ have crossed the Syria-Iraq border to rescue the stranded Yazidis. They have been joined by the guerrillas of the PKK in creating an escape route for the tens of thousands of survivors, who are now taking refuge in Derik, in southeastern Turkey.

Aside from the airstrikes courtesy of US and NATO jetfighters in the area of Kobane, fierce fighting continues on the ground, all along the Turkey-Iraq border, Syria-Iraq border, and around the city of Kobane. Despite the withdrawal of US-supported peshmergas, PKK fighters have been beating back the advance of IS in northern Iraq. In Kobane, YPG and YPJ fighters are so far holding off large numbers of IS fighters who are using heavy artillery and tanks.

The Kurdish fighters of Western Kurdistan and the PKK are calling for international solidarity in defending their homeland and in providing humanitarian assistance to the tens of thousands of mostly Yazidi refugees in Derik. Revolutionary forces around the world are called upon to condemn the Erdogan regime in Turkey for its collusion with the IS in the massacre of the Kurdish peoples, and for refusing border access to possible reinforcements for the valiant fighters in Western and Southern Kurdistan. ■

PKK fighters pose on top of a tank captured from IS gangsters in August 2014. Photo from unspokenpolitics.net



The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines. Its goal is to build a society that enjoys national sovereignty, genuine democracy, social justice, progress and peace.

It seeks to unite with all forces willing to achieve these goals.

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