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Editorial

Indict Aquino for criminal negligence and demand justice

It is just for the Filipino people, especially the millions of victims of the recent disaster to rise up in protest and indict Benigno Aquino III for his criminal negligence which brought death to more than 4,000 people and caused injuries to tens of thousands on November 8 as supertyphoon Yolanda barreled through the Philippines and wrought widespread devastation. The Filipino people demand justice.

They must take the Aquino regime to task for its failure to effect the rapid evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people living along coastal areas, near riverbanks and at the foot of mountains who were in danger from floods or storm surges. This, despite warnings from weather forecasters that a massive evacuation was needed up to 8 to 16 kilometers inland in areas along the supertyphoon's path.

All Aquino did was to go on television on the eve of the supertyphoon's arrival to give a weather forecast. No mass evacuations were undertaken in Tacloban City, which has a population of scarcely 200,000. In contrast, the Vietnamese government evacuated 600,000 people almost two days before typhoon Yolanda (international name Haiyan) hit its coastal areas. Vietnam sustained less than ten deaths.

There was no government presence in Tacloban City in the first 48 hours after the supertyphoon struck and completely devastated the city. The local government was completely wiped out. It turns out that the national government did not even have a system in place to look into the situation in the stricken towns despite the fact that communication lines were completely cut off in these areas. It only began to take measures after local and foreign journalists fed images on primetime television of the widespread devastation in Leyte 36 hours after the typhoon.

Chaos began to erupt on the second day of the calamity as a result of the lack of food and water. Instead of rushing in emergency supplies, the



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Aquino government deployed thousands of armed soldiers and police personnel in an effort to quell the mass discontent. The Aquino regime even had the gall to invoke the tragedy to cover up the AFP's offensive operations in various parts of the Visayas. Malacañang also spread intrigues against the NPA to justify the deployment of soldiers in different areas.

Aquino only declared a "state of national calamity" four days after the widespread devastation. It took him and his officials five days to realize that transporting emergency supplies to Tacloban and elsewhere will be the "largest logistical effort" yet to be undertaken by the government.

The Aquino regime failed to effect the massive mobilization of ships and other sea transport despite the fact that Tacloban and other Leyte towns are but a few hours away from the central commercial port of Cebu or from other ports in Luzon and Mindanao.

Neither did Aquino take measures to supplement the roll on-roll off transport ships at the Matnog port in Sorsogon, resulting in a long queue of trucks and other land vehicles carrying emergency food and medical supplies and personnel from Metro Manila to Samar and Leyte.

To cover up his incompetence, Aquino and his PR staff unleashed a campaign to downplay the tragedy and blame the ensuing devastation on his rivals. Aquino insisted that the number of deaths will not go beyond 2,500 but this was quickly shot down by the United Nations when it revealed its independent estimated death toll of 4,500. Aquino's tourism officials even declared that the Philippines "is still fun" to visit even as thousands of victims had to go on long queues and beg for food, water and other assistance.

More than a week after the supertyphoon unleashed its fury, thousands of people have

yet to receive emergency supplies and medical care. Food and water are in short supply. The government has not even provided temporary shelters for the thousands who had lost their homes.


International relief organizations, the media and even the United Nations are thoroughly disappointed with the Aquino government's failure to provide emergency supplies to hundreds of thousands of other victims more than ten days since the supertyphoon hit. There have also been complaints of aid packages from other countries being opened and repacked by government agencies.

The government has not provided any funds to the victims to enable them to rebuild their lives. It should be the state's responsibility to secure the people against the destruction of their property. But the government has no plans to provide compensation to the victims.

Tacloban City, as well as other cities, have become practically uninhabitable, and will remain so for the next several weeks or months. Yet the government has made no effort to bring people en masse to other areas where they could be provided electricity, health care, shelter, food and temporary livelihood.

The government's failed response is so blatant, leading some people to think that Aquino is deliberately displaying incompetence in order to make the US military forces look like the heroes and thus justify the presence of a giant US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, at least six other warships, and nearly 10,000 American troops.

The Filipino people must

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rise up in protest at the Aquino regime's gross incompetence. They must spurn appeals from Aquino government loyalists to refrain from blaming Aquino and unite with him instead. In fact, they must indict Benigno Aquino III for the deaths of thousands due to his government's failure to take preventive action.

The Filipino people must demand justice for the plight of the hundreds of thousands of calamity victims. The Aquino regime must pay for the terrible tragedy that has befallen the people, not so much because of the supertyphoon, but

due to the Aquino regime's gross failure to undertake disaster preparedness programs and post-calamity emergency relief.

They must demand that the Aquino regime provide the people immediate emergency relief funds (not loans!) to resume their livelihoods, give them emergency employment and pensions, grant reparation and order the cancellation of all debts to government agencies.

They must assail the Aquino regime for allotting a measly ₱7 billion for calamities, which resulted in its inability to set up the necessary infrastruc-

ture to prepare for and address emergency situations. Instead, Aquino has been content to allot monies from his unprogrammed funds to justify bloating the President's Social Fund and the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP).

On the other hand, the Aquino regime is not keen on carrying out a massive environmental regeneration program to desilt the rivers and other critical water systems and undertake massive reforestation. Instead, it is bent on bringing in foreign mining companies to continue plundering the environment. **AB**

Ceasefire declared in devastated areas

The Communist Party of the Philippines issued on November 14 a ceasefire declaration for all concerned commands of the New People's Army (NPA) and people's militia in areas devastated by the recent supertyphoon Yolanda. This declaration will remain in effect up to 2359 hours of 24 November 2013.

The declaration covers the Eastern Visayas Regional Command; Panay Island Regional Command; Central Visayas Regional Command; and Negros Island Regional Command. Concerned regional commands must also transmit this ceasefire declaration to the concerned provincial commands of the NPA, namely: Masbate Island Command; Palawan Island Command; and Mindoro Island Command.

Depending on their assessment of the extent of the devastation of the recent supertyphoon in their areas of

responsibility, concerned regional commands can extend the effectivity of this ceasefire declaration in their areas of concern, while other regional commands of the NPA can issue similar or limited ceasefire declarations in areas within the scope of their operations.

In line with standing policy and with the CPP's call for calamity-related mobilization, the above-mentioned NPA units have in fact al-



ready shifted their mode of operations even before super-typhoon Yolanda hit land on November 8. This ceasefire declaration, thus, is a positive declaration of the practical mode shift already in effect. It gives priority to assisting victims to cope and recover.

For as long as the ceasefire is in effect, all NPA units and people's militias shall cease and desist from carrying out offensive military operations against the armed units and personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other paramilitary and armed groups attached to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. While all units of the NPA and people's militias are in active defense mode, they will remain ever militant and vigilant to the encroachment and hostile movements of the AFP within the territory of the people's democratic government.

The revolutionary movement assures all local and international relief organizations of safe passage through and into the calamity-affected guerrilla zones.

Before the typhoon struck, the CPP called on all revolutionary forces to immediately put into place plans to collectively confront the "world's strongest typhoon" in the past 30 years.

Said the CPP on November 7, all revolutionary forces, especially barrio revolutionary committees in areas within scope of the most likely path of the incoming supertyphoon must immediately pay attention to population centers in geologically hazardous areas, including those at the foot of mining areas and logged over

CPP assails AFP offensives in the face of calamity

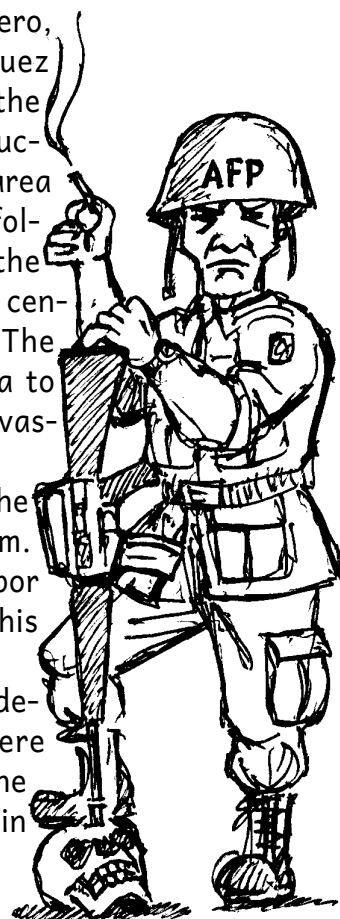
The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) assailed the AFP's continued operations in the face of a massive calamity and despite the ceasefire declared by the CPP. Armed clashes erupted twice between the 47th IB and an NPA unit in Sitio Pating, Barangay Magbalyo, Kabankalan City in Negros Occidental on the morning of November 16. The 303rd Infantry Brigade commander boasted that the clash was the result of the AFP's all-out offensive against the NPA.

Prior to this, a firefight occurred in Barangay Balacawe, Matnog, Sorsogon after the AFP launched offensive operations in the area on November 12. Although the clash took place in an area far away from the land route to Samar, the AFP claimed in its media reports that the military unit that figured in the gunbattle with the NPA was transporting supplies for Yolanda victims.

According to Ka Samuel Guerrero, spokesperson of the Celso Minguez Command of the NPA-Sorsogon, the guerrilla squad was busy giving instructions to mass organizations in the area to prepare for the typhoon to hit, following the directives issued by the Communist Party of the Philippines central leadership on November 7. The guerrilla squad remained in the area to distribute rice to the mass base devastated by the typhoon.

The 31st IB troops encircled the NPA squad on November 12 at 5 a.m. NPA Red fighters Ka Weng and Ka Ebor valiantly sacrificed their lives in this firefight.

In related news, the NPA-Leyte denied that armed NPA troops were among the people who stormed the National Food Authority warehouse in Alang-alang, Leyte on November 11.



mountains. The CPP called for organized mass evacuation in these areas and in places in the typhoon's direct path. It likewise called for putting into place measures to collectively monitor the exact path of the typhoon in the crucial hours before impact to enable the

people to act with dispatch in the face of any contingency.

After the storm, the CPP called for mass mobilization to generate emergency supplies and relief funds and their immediate delivery to those most devastated by the typhoon.

NDF-Panay calls for immediate aid

The eye of supertyphoon Yolanda passed through central and northern Panay, areas where guerrilla fronts and Red power represented by the National Democratic Front-Panay are found.

Although Panay came in second in terms of the damage sustained by the regions hit by the storm, more than one to two million people, or half the island's population were affected. Hundreds were killed and thousands injured.

Almost a million houses were either partially or totally damaged. Tens of thousands of public buildings like schools, hospitals, gyms and barangay halls, markets and small stores were destroyed and could not be used to provide social services and emergency provisions for the people. With most lines of communication (cellphones and telephones, radio and internet) down, people are unable to coordinate and provide assistance and condole with each other in the face of disaster and loss.

Road networks linking vari-

ous areas in the entire island have been cut. Except for Iloilo City and its environs, the entire island is shrouded in darkness due to a power blackout. The Panayanons' farms, fishponds and livestock have all sustained damage. Pieces of equipment, vehicles, stores, pieces of machinery have been smashed and are in disarray. It will take years before the Panayanons will be able to recover and get production going in the island back to the level before the storm, and for them to repair or rebuild their ruined houses.

Like the vast majority who were devastated by the typhoon, the masses in the revolutionary territories of Panay also lost their homes and livelihood, are cut off from other areas, were drenched in rain, shivered in the cold and suffered hunger. They themselves

bore witness to the reactionary regime's incompetence in delivering aid to the victims.

Despite all this, the revolutionary forces and masses in the affected areas of the island took the initiative to help the people. As soon as the storm winds abated, they searched for the injured and evacuated those who were in dangerous areas. They made an accounting of the people in their re-

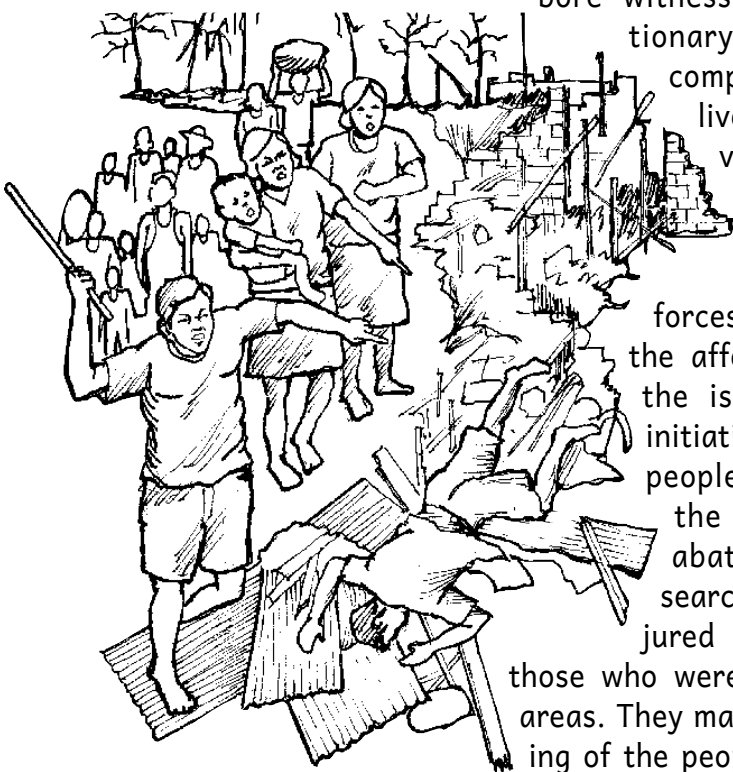
spective areas, cleared the roads of broken wood, metal roofs and other debris and built temporary shelters for the victims. They also distributed food and water to the best of their ability.

To fully mobilize the people's strength and facilitate relief and rehabilitation efforts and recovery from the devastation wrought by supertyphoon Yolanda, Ka Concha Araneta, spokesperson of NDF-Panay called on the Panayanons to accomplish the following urgent tasks:

1. The revolutionary forces must focus on launching and advancing the movement to organize relief and rehabilitation operations. They may begin with immediately gathering and distributing food and water especially in areas that are accessible and have sustained intense damage, areas that have not received assistance but can be reached by the revolutionary forces and the areas organized and influenced by the revolutionary forces.

For the Panayanons, they must begin organizing self-reliant recovery projects by constructing shelters that could be used immediately and planting food crops especially on idle land. They should plant on public land and likewise demand that landlords and banks that have foreclosed land in their possession provide land for this purpose.

They must demand that usurers and banks reschedule debts or cancel the principal or even just the interests on loans. The banks must also extend deadlines for payment and stop foreclosing properties of debtors who are unable to make their payments on time. Creditors must raise the debt ceilings for typhoon victims.



With ever worsening calamities, the movement for disaster preparedness must be developed. Warnings on future supertyphoons, strong rains and floods must be timely and adequate. Information on the dangers faced by the people and the particular forms these will take in various areas are of crucial importance.

The people must demand a stop to the construction of the grandiose Jalaur Dam project to avoid more devastating floods should the dam break from torrential rains.

2. We must demand that the regime, its agencies and local officials provide immediate, sufficient and sustained food and water supplies, medicines and health services and shelter for the hundreds of thousands of other victims. We must demand that the regime provide sufficient assistance to Panay even if it only ranks second in terms of devastation. We must make sure that aid provided by

other countries reaches the real victims.

We must demand the prompt restoration of power and communication lines to enable the people to send messages to their families or ask for assistance.

We must likewise demand that the regime massively distribute free seeds and other agricultural inputs as well as seed capital for farmers and fisherfolk. We must demand the creation of emergency livelihood for the hundreds of thousands who have been rendered jobless.

3. The New People's Army immediately declares a unilateral suspension of tactical offensives against the reactionary military to enable the NPA to focus on organizing relief operations for the hundreds of thousands of typhoon victims in the guerrilla zones. In accordance with the revolutionary movement's existing policy, the NPA will not hinder agencies of

the reactionary government responsible for distributing aid to the people within the guerrilla zones.

NPA units will be on active defense mode against attacks by the 3rd ID and 301st Bde. They did this when the NPA declared a ceasefire after typhoon Frank caused massive flooding in June 2008 and go on the same mode during the Christmas and New Year ceasefires. The reactionary military maliciously cloaks its attacks by claiming to be engaged in the delivery of relief goods. If the soldiers will really be distributing relief goods, then they need only do the following:

They should only bring short arms and inform the NPA that they will be escorting relief goods and they will not be attacked. This is no different from what some PNP elements have been doing whenever they have to arrest a notorious criminal within a guerrilla zone. **AB**

Condoling with the victims of supertyphoon Yolanda

The National Democratic Front in Mindanao and Southern Tagalog expressed their heartfelt condolences to the thousands of families severely hit by supertyphoon Yolanda. They likewise expressed grave concern for all members of the Party, New People's Army and people in the guerrilla zones and bases in the devastated areas.

They also called on the revolutionary forces in the five regions affected by



the calamity to mobilize the masses and allies to raise material and financial support for the victims. Ka Oris of NDFP-Mindanao particularly called on the revolutionary forces in the island to hold frugal but meaningful celebrations of the Party's 45th anniversary on December 26 as well as other activities that would be needing resources. Whatever savings they have could be donated to the victims of Yolanda.

The NDFP-Mindanao and NDF-ST also roundly assailed

the Aquino regime for its failure to immediately respond to the disaster. This was no different from the regime's snail-paced and inadequate response during past calamities like typhoon Sendong in December 2011, typhoon Pablo in December 2012 and the strong earthquake that hit Central Visayas in October.

The NDF-Mindanao also condemned continuing militarization in the Mindanao countryside and other parts of the country, saying that funds used for military operations could have been better used to help the victims of the calamity.

They also traced the roots of the calamity to the unbridled destruction of the environment in the past 50 years due to illegal logging, agribusiness plantations and destructive mining, which have all benefited imperialist corporations and their local ruling class partners.

Meanwhile, Ka Maria Malaya, spokesperson of NDF-Northeastern Mindanao Region stressed the need to immediately send aid to the victims of typhoon Yolanda. She gave practical suggestions on what could and should be done.

"Use the many ships, charter ships and load them with relief goods and send them directly to the affected provinces. Use or rent fishermen's pumpboats to directly send relief goods from the ships to the cities. Distribute two weeks' supply of relief goods," said Ka Maria.

The NDF-NEMR proposed the use of Surigao City in the Caraga Region as the start-off point for relief goods from the government and overseas since it is near Leyte and Samar and ships could reach the Visayas overnight.

In a separate statement, Ka

Cesar Renerio, NDF-North Central Mindanao Region (NCOMR) spokesperson said they truly felt the bitter plight of the victims of typhoon Yolanda because they too experienced the fury of typhoons Sendong and Pablo in 2011 and 2012. At least 1,268 people died from typhoon Sendong, mostly in NCOMR, with the victims sustaining billions of pesos worth of damage to their livelihoods and properties.

Renerio called on all revolutionary forces in the region and the victims of Yolanda to unite and help each other, try to rise up from the devastation they have suffered and identify the reasons behind the disaster and who should be held accountable for it. He said that responsibility for the disaster should be pinned on none other than the US imperialists and the local ruling classes who are currently represented by the Aquino

government. For so many years, they have massively plundered and destroyed the environment for capitalist production in the name of superprofits. Their environmentally destructive operations have now culminated in climate change in the form of global warming, which in turn has resulted in a series of furious storms that have pummeled the impoverished sectors, who are the most vulnerable.

Renerio added that people should not stop studying environmental and world conditions and doing what they can. This year, as a fitting commemoration of the second anniversary of typhoon Sendong, he urged the region's forces to collectively plant trees. The region is also raising donations from the people and allies for the victims as part of its meaningful celebration of the Party's 45th anniversary. AB

KM forms Serve the People Brigades

THE Kabataang Makabayan (KM) called on the Filipino youth to form Serve the People Brigades to raise and collect needed food and other supplies for those who have been devastated by typhoon Yolanda. The KM stressed that the victims could not hope for help from the antipeople and corrupt US-Aquino regime.

The KM also urged progressive and mass organizations of the youth to take the lead in forming teams to reach out to other organizations, student councils and alliances to gather resources.

KM joined the International Day of Solidarity for the Victims of Yolanda Super typhoon on November 13 to distribute needed goods and help in the rehabilitation of the affected areas. Ever since, KM has had a tradition of leading and conducting relief and rehabilitation operations.

KM is set to celebrate its 49th founding anniversary on November 30, alongside the 150th birth anniversary of Andres Bonifacio. AB

Catastrophe in the lives of the oppressed and exploited

Supertyphoon Yolanda has wrought unspeakable damage. It devastated more than 40 towns in Samar, Leyte, Panay, Negros, Cebu, Mindoro, Palawan and the island clusters in the Visayan Sea. Also hit were areas in Southern Tagalog, Bicol, North-east and Southern Mindanao.

As what happened in past typhoons, the worst hit are the oppressed and exploited classes. Most of the calamity victims are small fisherfolk, farm workers, poor peasants, small coconut farmers, urban poor, workers and semiproletariat.

In Tacloban City, not a single structure escaped damage. All houses made of light material were levelled and buildings made of cement had their roofs torn off and their doors and windows destroyed. On top of this, there were houses that were swept away by the storm surge. Not a single house was left standing in the towns of Guian and Giporlos. In the towns of Hernani, Quinapondan, Salcedo, Mercedes, Basey, Balangiga and Marabut in Eastern Samar, 95-100% of all houses and establishments were destroyed. The same fate befell the nearby islands of Manikani and Homonhon. Not a single tree or plant was left in the uplands and farms of Guian, Marabut and Lawaan.

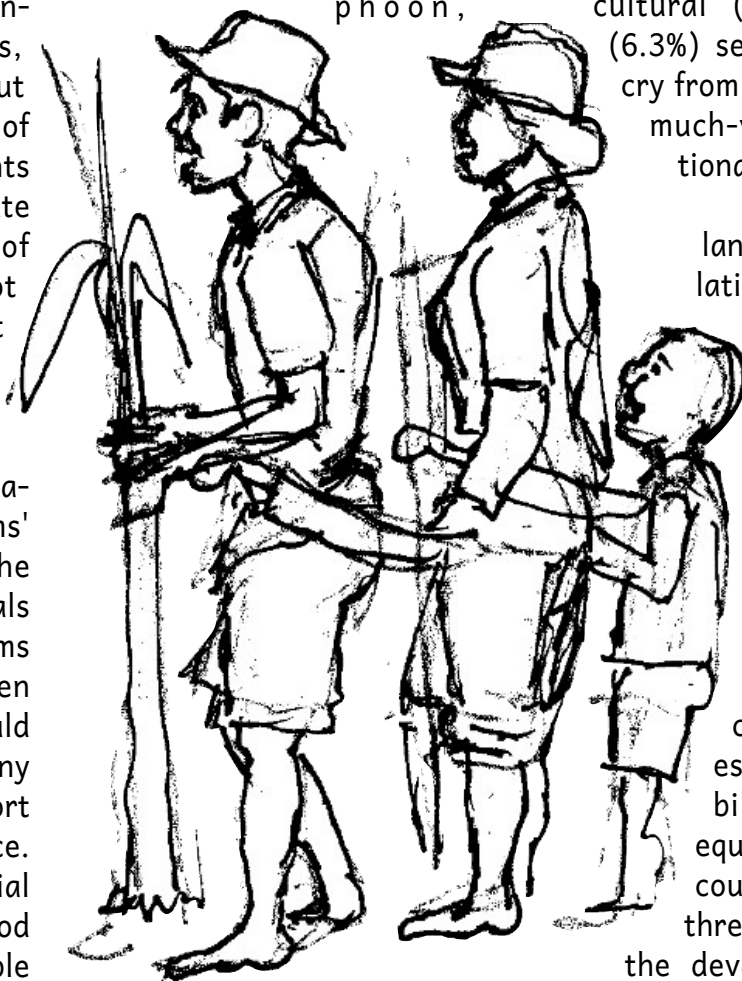
In Leyte, the towns of Palo, Julita, Burauen and Tabon-Tabon were ruined. Victims' bodies were strewn in the streets, in front of hospitals and municipal halls. The victims of the tragedy have been scrambling to leave but could not find any bus or jeep or any other mode of public transport to bring them to a better place.

By November 20, the official death toll from the storm stood at 4,011. Up to 20,000 people

were injured. And more than 2,000 remained missing. An estimated 9.7 million Filipinos, or almost 10% of the entire population were affected by the typhoon.

Long impoverished

Eastern Visayas is one of the regions most neglected by the reactionary state. In 2012, it was considered the third poorest among the Philippines' 17 regions. No less than the reactionary state's doctored statistics state that the poverty incidence in EV is at 45%, more than double the national average of 22%. In the towns devastated by the recent typhoon,



45-55% of the population live on less than ₱90.00/day (\$2.00) and are considered among the poorest, according to international standards. In 2011, the region had the most number of families who experienced hunger (16%).

Employment and underemployment rates are high in the region—34% or 540,000 people, compared to the national average of 25%. This is aside from the 36% who are part of the labor force but do not participate in production. The regional labor participation rate is 63.7%.

Eastern Visayas' backward, agricultural and pre-industrial economy has long been suffering from limited production and development. In 2004-2009, production in the region grew by a mere 3.6%, which was only half of the targeted 6.1% and lower than the national average of 4.3%. In 2010-2012, the region's economy plummeted by 6.2% due to the shrinkage of the manufacturing (40%), agricultural (3%) and fisheries (6.3%) sectors. This is a far cry from the Aquino regime's much-vaunted 6.8% national growth rate.

Despite its vast land area and big population, the region contributed a mere 2.2% to the national economy (compared to 17% from Region IV-A/CALABARZON).

Aquino's tiny calamity budget

The damage caused by Yolanda is estimated at up to \$15 billion (₱604 billion, equivalent to 5% of the country's GNP). This is three times bigger than the devastation caused by

typhoons Pepeng and Ondoy.

Nonetheless, the reactionary state allotted only P23 billion for reconstruction and rehabilitation in last year's budget. This is woefully inadequate compared to the estimated P60 billion minimum needed for reconstruction in the wake of the damage caused by typhoon Pablo in 2012, the soldiers' bombing of Zamboanga and the earthquake that struck Bohol and other Visayan islands in October.

The reactionary government has no infrastructure for disaster preparedness. It is incapable of effecting the rapid evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people. It has no funds for the rehabilitation of the environment (both for forest renewal and desilting of rivers and other bodies of water). The government does not provide security for typhoon damage. It has not allotted funds for any social benefits for calamity victims who have lost homes and jobs. The reactionary government has offered nothing except loans from the Social Security System and the GSIS. Experts estimate, however, that only 10-15% of the victims are covered by the SSS and GSIS.

In 2011, Benigno Aquino III dismantled the disaster preparedness fund and has instead allotted a small amount for relief operations. This fund is only enough to purchase two days' worth of relief goods. Worse, Aquino has subsumed the minuscule P5-billion calamity fund to his pork barrel and has been actively using the latter as a carrot-and-stick on local politicians. AB

The Cuban example in dealing with calamities

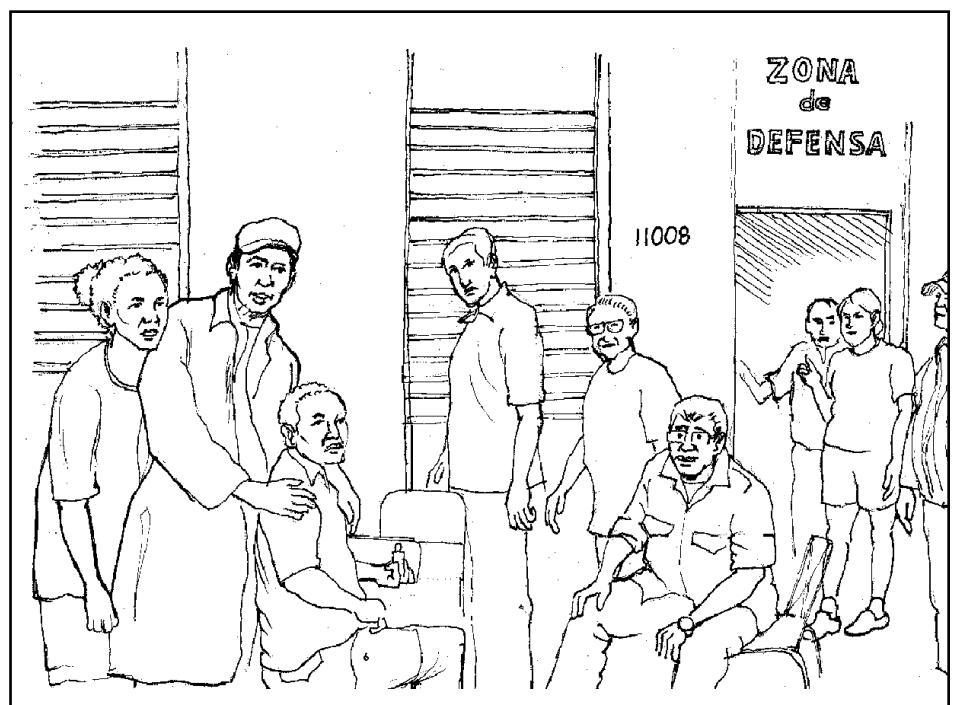
Cuba is recognized as a model the world over for its comprehensive readiness in rapidly and effectively confronting calamities caused by hurricanes. Cuba has time and again demonstrated its expertise in saving lives and property, reflecting its government's firm political will.

Cuba is a small country in the Caribbean located 150 kilometers south of the United States that is often visited by strong hurricanes. It is led by a revolutionary government that advocates socialism, anti-imperialism and the welfare and interests of its people. Cuba's success in dealing with disasters relies on mobilization, coordination, uninterrupted social services and guarantees to property and the people's welfare.

Mass movement to deal with disasters. Cuba's preparedness in the face of calamities is based on the people's thoroughgoing readiness and participation—it is a mass movement. There are education campaigns to make the people highly conscious about the dangers of

calamities, the “culture of readiness” and spirit of responsibility of every citizen. Young or old, everyone joins an annual two-day hurricane drill to raise the level of national and local preparedness in conducting evacuations whose designs are based on the specifics of each locality.

During hurricanes, the leaders of every institution (schools, hospitals, hotels and others) become members of the Cuban Civil Defense. Their duty is to ensure the welfare of the people in their respective jurisdictions. The Cuban government strictly coordinates with the Civil Defense leaders, the Ministry of Health, municipal people's councils and local organizations in rapidly mobilizing the people in the event that an evacuation is needed.



Guarantee to properties.

The state guarantees the personal properties of its citizens. Part of the preparations of civil defense leaders is to devise a plan to evacuate the people's endangered property and equipment. Individuals in need of special health services such as pregnant women and the disabled are identified. In cases where houses have been damaged, the government goes all out in supporting the repair or rebuilding of these homes. Due to such government guarantees, the people voluntarily and actively participate in planned evacuations.

Developing weather forecasting technology. The Cuban Meteorological Institute is responsible for providing timely and accurate information to the public. Cuba's weather forecasting technology, which is among the most modern in the world, is one of the things that the Cuban revolutionary government has prioritized since its establishment in 1959. The Cuban Meteorological Institute has 68 weather stations nationwide that monitor hurricanes and issue warnings as they approach the island.

The Cuban government is able to prepare the people promptly through its well-developed weather forecasting technology, good communications system and the people's participation. The first alert is given 72 hours before the hurricane's arrival. Alongside the alert given 48 hours before the hurricane hits is the order to evacuate areas along the storm's path.

Uninterrupted social services. The government makes detailed disaster preparedness plans to ensure the people's basic needs. Generators

Disaster preparedness success stories

The Aquino regime's grave neglect and failure to mobilize the people and evacuate them to safer ground is the single biggest reason behind the huge number of deaths and injuries when supertyphoon Yolanda struck.

In contrast to the Aquino regime's inaction, the Vietnamese government quickly acted when typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) hit. The government identified the 15 provinces that would be vulnerable to the storm and immediately evacuated up to 174,000 families or 600,000 individuals. Thus, Vietnam's deaths were limited to six while more than 4,000 people were killed in various provinces in the Philippines.

More people would have likely died if not for the initiative exercised by people in various parts of the country to evacuate. In one instance, some 1,000 residents of Tulang Diyot, a small island belonging to the Camotes Group of Islands in Cebu promptly evacuated. Their houses and crops sustained major damage but everyone survived. They also prepared three days' supply of food prior to their organized evacuation to a newly constructed school built to withstand strong winds and storm surges.

Worldwide, Cuba provides one of the best examples in the rapid and organized evacuation of the people. A striking example was the Cuban government's evacuation of 100,000 people from Pinar del Rio province in a mere three hours before hurricane Ivan slammed through the area.

All in all, up to 1.9 million people or more than 15% of the entire population were evacuated. Because they prepared early, almost 80% of the evacuees were able to stay in the private houses of relatives, friends and others who offered their homes as sanctuaries. Hundreds of thousands of students living in dormitories were transferred to their families where they felt more secure. Crops were hurriedly harvested and millions of farm animals evacuated. AB

are on standby to provide electricity. There is clean water and additional medical personnel in areas to be hit by the hurricane. Hospitals, food processing centers, hotels, communication services and education facilities are guaranteed to operate uninterruptedly.

During the calamity, all of the country's 243 hospitals remain open to provide needed medical services. Food distribution also continues and communication lines (telephones) are kept running, which is crucial in ensuring coordination, especially in the distribution of relief goods. AB

Landgrabber punished in Rizal

The Narciso Antazo Aramil Command of the New People's Army (NAAC-NPA-Rizal) launched a series of punitive actions on landgrabbers and destroyers of the environment in Rizal on November 9.

An NPA platoon raided Silangan Lumber, quarrying company in Sitio Paenaan, Barangay Pingay, Baras at around 4 p.m., for its landgrabbing and environmentally destructive activities. The guerrillas seized three shotguns, two pistols and an ICOM radio.

At around 6 p.m., an NPA team raided the treasure hunting area of Ret. Philippine Air Force Col. Lorenzo Deris in Sitio Kilingan, Barangay San Jose, Antipolo City and confiscated equipment. The Red fighters were implementing the orders of the People's Democratic Government (PDG) to put a stop to the digging because of the damage this was causing to the environment and its violations of

the PDC's policies.

An hour before this, an NPA team issued a grave warning to Ariel and Regina Bisgueras for terrorizing the locals and seizing the farmers' lands in Sitio Paenaan. The guerrillas also discovered that the Bisguera couple were members of the AFP reserve. Seized from them were military uniforms and important documents used in intelligence work.

These military actions were undertaken within the perimeter of a cluster of camps of the 16th IB, 59th IB, SAF-PNP and RMG-PNP. A composite force of military and police elements had also just concluded a week-long combat operation. **AB**

BM coordinator killed in Sorsogon

TWO armed men aboard a motorcycle shot to death Wellington B. Brogada Jr., 50, a member of Bayan Muna Partylist in Juban, Sorsogon. The killing took place on November 11, at 11:25 a.m. in front of the victim's house in Barangay Catanagan, Juban.

Brogada, a farmer and tricycle driver was shot four times by his assailants. He was hit in the face, neck and torso.

Bayan Muna and KARAPATAN condemned the killing. They said Brogada is the fourth victim of extrajudicial killing in Sorsogon province under the Aquino regime.

Cojuangcos destroy "bungkalan" area in HLI

Men from the Tarlac Development Corporation (Tadeco) and Luisita Realty Corporation (LRC) which are both owned by the Cojuangco-Aquino family attacked an area being collectively tilled by farmers and farmworkers of Hacienda Luisita.

Using bulldozers, the Cojuangco men tore down trees and vegetables planted on an 880-hectare lot in Barangay Balete and Barangay Cutcut, both located within Hacienda Luisita. The lot is the site of a collectively tilled area or "bungkalan" which the farmers opened in 2005.

The guards had long been harassing the farmers to put a stop to their collective farming and cause the eventually weakening of their organization. Tadeco even filed criminal cases against 81 farm workers in Barangay Cutcut,

accusing them of illegally claiming property. It is also evicting hundreds of beneficiaries.

The day after, up to 60 armed guards of Tadeco raided farm workers in Barangay Balete, Tarlac City, destroying structures that had been built by the peasants. Florida Sibayan, who heads the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Asyenda Luisita (Ambala) was injured along with her brother and 76-year old mother when the guards pushed them. The policemen stood behind the Tadeco guards when the latter attacked the farmers.

The DAR has done nothing, despite Ambala's request for assistance. Ambala remains firm in its position that the lot being claimed by Tadeco and LRC should be included in the land to be distributed to the beneficiaries. **AB**