



ANG

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## Massacre in Lianga

THE Communist Party of the Philippines strongly condemns the Aquino regime and its Armed Forces of the Philippines for the massacre of civilians in Surigao del Sur last September 1. The inhuman military and paramilitary troops of the 36th IB no longer recognize any bounds in murdering a teacher, a tribal leader and his cousin in Han-ayan, Barangay Diatagon, Lianga.

The Filipino people are burning with rage over the regime's dirty war orgy. The successive massacres and killings these past weeks are clearly carried out under the command of the military's top echelon.

The paramilitary Magahat-Bagani murdered Emerito Samarca, 54, Dionel Campos and Bello Sinzo in front of hundreds of their barrio-mates. The Magahat-Bagani is organized, armed and directed by the 36th IB.

Samarca was the director of the Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (ALCADEV) while Campos was the leader of Mahutayong Pakigbisog Alang Sa Sumusunod (MAPASU). Sinzo was Campos's cousin.

On August 30, troops of the 36th IB and Special Forces Regiment arrived in Han-ayan. They set up their position in the barangay center and occupied the function hall of ALCADEV and some classrooms of the school run by Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao del Sur (Tripfss).

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Editorial

## Oppose US military domination in the Philippines

**A**quino and his military and security officials odiously saluted visiting Adm. Harry Harris, recently installed commander of the US military forces in the Pacific. In the course of three days, Aquino and his officials threw away all remaining national dignity and presented themselves as lackeys of high American officials.

The chief of the US Pacific Command (USPACOM) made the rounds to inspect the status of the facilities being prepared by the Philippine government for the US military. The very top echelon of the AFP itself served Harris in his "area familiarization".

The visit of the puppet state's master comes amid non-stop effort to strengthen US military presence in the Asia-Pacific. US military "Asia pivot" operations continue to be carried out to ensure strategic interests in the region.

Over the past years, the Philippines has served as a large US milit-

ary base for its surveillance, muscle-flexing and power projection operations in the region.

Even if the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) for reestablishing US military bases in the Philippines signed last year is not yet fully implemented, US military warships have been making around a hundred port calls a year. They dock wherever they wish for repairs, resupply and rest.

For over a decade, several hundred American soldiers have been stationed in the Philippines and intervening in its internal affairs.

US and Philippine military offi-



cialists have been talking of "interoperability" or supposedly raising the capability of both military forces to cooperate in operations. To make US military intervention acceptable, it falsely claims that such "interoperability" serves cooperation during disasters. It also claims that its heightened presence in the Philippines favors Philippine assertion of sovereignty in its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone against Chinese claims.

In truth, the US has no other aim behind "interoperability" other than directing and controlling the programs, priorities, plans and operations of the AFP in order to make it serve their interests and needs.

To this end, the US military is pushing for AFP

"modernization" to use it for advancing its interests and needs in its operations in the region. This includes the "modernization" of naval base facilities in Palawan boasted by the AFP that will be mainly used by large US warships. The plan to build "world class" training facilities inside Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija will mainly serve the US troops who plan to base there.

In the name of "interoperability", the US military is launching trainings which include indoctrination in the ideology and interests of the US imperialists. The US controls the minds of Philippine military and po-


lice officials. This is starkly evident in the AFP's Oplan Bayanihan that is closely patterned after the US Counter-Insurgency Guide.

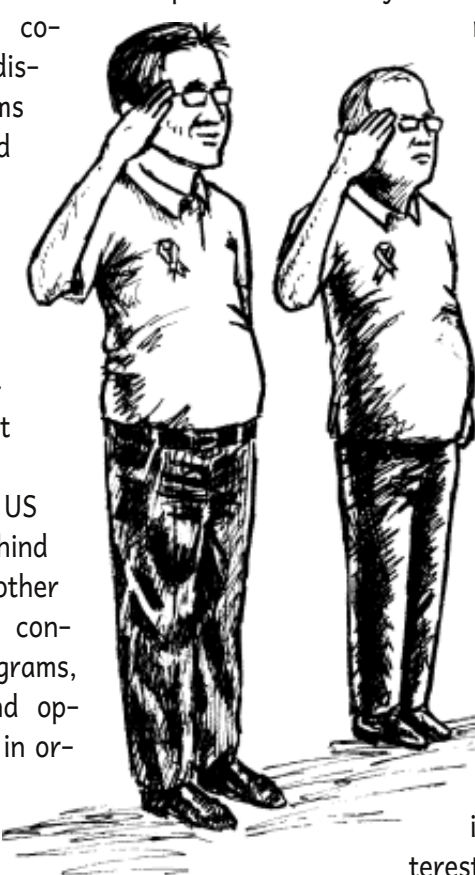
US military domination in the Philippines is flagrant. Just as in the bungled Mamasapano operations, the US outrightly tramples on the country's sovereignty in launching operations in the country, and worse, using local and police forces in these operations.

The AFP's counter-revolutionary war tactics are all derived from the manuals of its US military masters. The Aquino regime's "straight path" psywar was directly set by its US embassy teachers. The current campaign of suppression of the AFP against civilians they suspect to be part of the revolutionary mass base are also drawn from the campaigns of violence and bombing being conducted by US military forces and its allies in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey and other countries.

Under the Aquino regime, the US imperialists' military interventionism has become more brazen and outright. The regime is more determined to serve its imperialists masters hoping its faction will enjoy continued political support especially with the approaching 2016 elections. Thus, the US is able to further economic and political domination in the country. The Philippines has no independent foreign policy and instead just follows US lead.

The Filipino people must oppose all-out US military domination in the Philippines. They must assert the country's right to be free from the presence of foreign military forces. They must oppose with all their might the implementation of EDCA and demand its repeal.

The Filipino people must bring to justice the Aquino regime responsible for its treachery to the country's sovereignty. Aquino must pay dearly for allowing the US to rule and control the country. 



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The next day, paramilitary troops of Magahat-Bagani arrived, fired indiscriminately and set fire to the MAPASU cooperative. More than P5 million was lost as the cooperative building was entirely gutted including items of merchandise and sacks of rice inside.

Before dawn on September 1, the paramilitary troops went around the community. They kicked doors and told the people to gather at KM16 in the said village. The staff, teachers and students of ALCADEV were driven out of the school but Samarca was detained. At KM16, Campos and Sinzo were ordered to sit in front of a store where they were both gunned down in front of the residents of six sitios who were told to gather there. The people were told to leave the place in two days otherwise they would all be killed.

Before the Magahat-Bagani troops left, they ordered the people to remain prostrate while confiscating their cell phones and cameras. They burned down parts of the Tripfss school, and scattered leaflets with the Bagani logo. It took some 20 minutes after the Bagani left before the shocked people stirred.

When the students and teachers returned to ALCADDEV, they found Samarca's body on the second floor, arms and feet bound with rope, throat slit from ear to ear, face bruised and almost unrecognizable, with several stab wounds on his stomach.

Because of this, around 362 Lumad families or 1,804 individuals have now sought refuge in the Provincial Capitol Sports Complex in Tandag City. They came from 10 communities of Diatagon, five communities of Buhisan, San Agustin, and one community of Carasan, Tago. Among the evacuees are 27 teachers and staff of ALCADDEV and seven schools of Tripfss. This is the second evacuation of the Lumad

community in Diatagon since October 2014. At that time, 1,800 Manobos evacuated after the Bagani gunned down Henry Sarsona Alameda, a council member of MAPASU, and Aldren Dumaguit.

The forced evacuation came at the heels of another evacuation of more than 300 Lumad families from San Miguel, Surigao del Sur, after Bagani troops under Hasmin Acevedo murdered brothers Crisanto and Ely Tabugol inside their own home the night of August 28.

Around seven in the evening, the Tabugol brothers came home to find the paramilitary troops already inside. Despite their pleas for mercy, Ely was shot at close range first at the foot then on the forehead. He died from nine gunshot wounds. Crisanto tried to run but was felled by three bullets.

#### **Widespread outrage and condemnation**

Various progressive groups immediately expressed indignation over the massacre and the intensifying militarization in the countryside.

On September 1, Karapatan and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan held a candle-lighting ceremony in Quezon City.

The University of the Philippines (UP) community, together with the Save Our Schools Network, also held a candle-lighting ceremony on September 2.

Last September 3, angry youth and students stormed Gate 2 of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City in reaction to the series of massacres. They threw red paint-bombs and painted slogans on the camp's walls. Among those who joined the protest were students of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines, League of Filipino Students and Anakbayan.

The Education Forum for Development (EFD), a network of 100 schools, asserted that "it is disturbing that military harassment and attacks against Lumad-built



schools as well as their communities have escalated under the Aquino administration...[It's] silence or inaction to address the matter is tantamount to the government's promotion of big business at the expense of the lives of the indigenous people's communities."

According to Anakbayan-USA, "The spate of... human rights violations, military operations on communities, and killings of community leaders are products of Aquino's Oplan Bayanihan, wherein the Philippine military is serving as an 'investment defense force', or as a private military for large corporations."

The New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines strongly condemned the torture and murder of Samarca, Campos and Sinzo. BAYAN-USA also expressed solidarity with the victims and declared that "Under Oplan Bayanihan, the Armed Forces of the Philippines are escalating their repression against activists with complete impunity as Aquino prepares to exit Malacañang."

Rep. Carlos Zarate of Bayan Muna noted that "killings and human rights violations have become the Aquino administration's legacy to the Lumad."

ALCADEV was established by MAPASU and Tripfss in response to the dearth of education services to the Lumad people of the Mindanao mountains. Aside from literacy and mathematics, they also study agricultural production and Lumad people's rights. This has earned the ire of the state because the indigenous people are learning to fight for their rights. AB

# Mounting fascist terror in the countryside

Amid the din of pre-election scene-stealers, fascist terror is engulfing the countryside under Oplan Bayanihan's war of repression. Whether armed or civilian, no distinctions are made in the increasing number and intensifying massacres, extra-judicial killings, illegal arrests and indictments on trumped-up charges, torture, harassment, threats, strafing, bombardment and other human rights violations.

## Civilian massacres and extrajudicial killings

As the latest figures show, there have been 36 victims of extrajudicial killings in the first eight months of 2015. Twelve of them were in August alone. From July 2010 to March 2015, the Bicol region registered the highest number of victims at 69. Southern Mindanao came next with 35 murders, followed by Southern Tagalog with 22. There has been 14 massacres, with 48 victims. Seven of them were minors.

**Bukidnon.** In August 18, the butcher unit of the 3rd Special Forces Company (SFC) of the 1st SF Battalion (SFB) under the command of Captain Balatbat massacred five Manobos belonging to the Samia and Somina families in Barangay Mendis, Pangantucan. Herminio Samia, 70, his son Joebert, 20, grandson Norman, 13, and nephews Elmer Somina, 17, and Emir Somina, 19, were gunned down brazenly even as they raised their hands and declared that they were civilians.

Earlier, at 4:00 p.m., an NPA unit ambushed troops of the 3rd SFC about four kilometers from the Samia household. 2Lt. Alvin Balangcod was killed in the firefight and another soldier seriously wounded. At around 5:30, the soldiers retaliated and slaughtered the Samia family. They then took a weapon which the NPA had left behind and placed it near their bodies. The 403rd Brigade commander himself and his spokesperson presented the bodies to the media as "NPA members" killed in an encounter.

Herminio's 15-year-old grandson survived the massacre. He related how they were ordered to come out of the house and then shot one after another. Due to his poor eyesight, the senior Herminio was the last to come out. Nevertheless, the soldiers shot him first. His guts were blown out and his spine shattered. Elmer was shot next. His hand was torn off from his arm and his face badly damaged by a bullet which hit him at his nose. Jobert was shot beside him. Emir was shot near the door, with Norman only a few steps away. Norman's right ear was torn off and his jaw splintered.

According to the survivor, the victims pleaded for the soldiers to arrest them for whatever cause instead, but they were still shot at close range. The survivor was able to hide behind some rocks, then managed to run away. After he recounted the ordeal to his barriomates, he lost his voice and has difficulty speaking due to trauma since then.

Herminio is known as Datu Intabol, a member of the

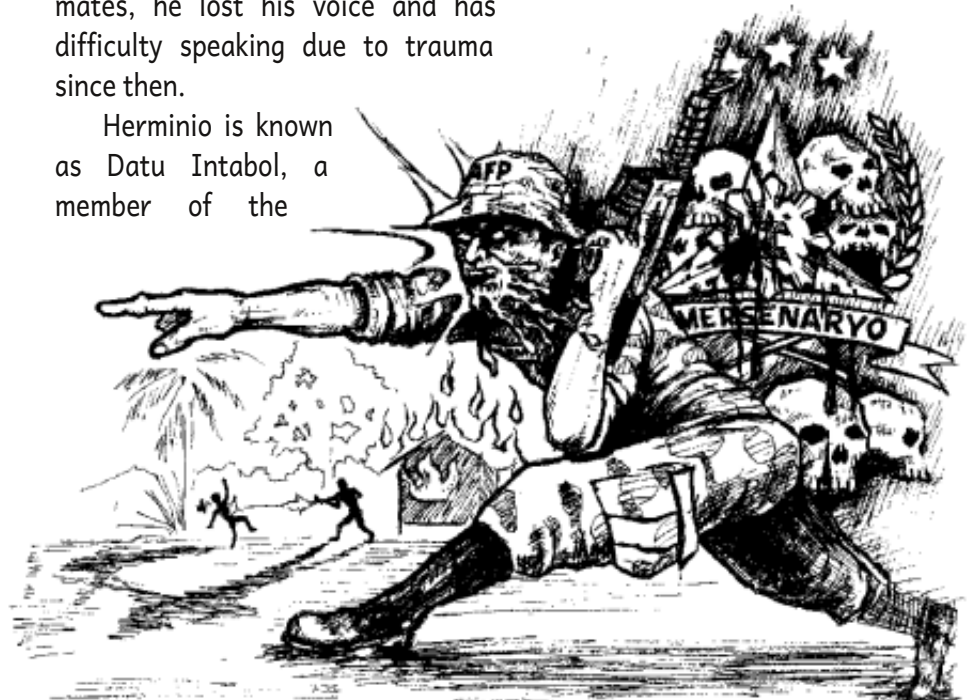
leading council of elders in their community.

The next day, 22 soldiers ordered 27 residents of Sitio Mandum of the same barangay to take the corpses to the funeral parlor, while the murdering troops remained at the daycare center and barangay hall. They listed down the residents' names, took their pictures and told them to refrain from looking at the soldiers' faces.

The 15-year-old survivor is now in the custody of Jomorito Goaynon, chairperson of Kalumbay, a regional organization of indigenous people of Northern Mindanao. He is in the process of overcoming his trauma.

According to Erio Inahan, chairperson of the Manobo Farmers Association in Pangantucan, the victims were peasants and members of their organization, registered voters in the barangay, and are even listed 4Ps beneficiaries.

Soldiers of the 1st SFB also massacred four farmers in Bugna, Barangay Casinglot, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental last March 28. Aside from the four killed, three others were wounded in this massacre. Like the Samia and Somina families, they were accused of being "NPA members". This was also the fate of the four habal-habal drivers who were shamelessly massacred by the 9th IB in Cawayan, Masbate last August 3 after they helped transport



wounded soldiers, and the father-and-son victims Ariel and Allan Bartulay of San Jacinto, Masbate last August 2. (See *Ang Bayan*, August 21, 2015.)

**Bicol.** Elements of the 31st IB shot and killed radio broadcaster Teodoro “Ka Tudy” Escanilla, 63, Karapatan-Sorsogon spokesperson, in Barangay Tagdon, Barcelona, Sorsogon in August 20. Escanilla was sleeping when six soldiers whose faces were covered with black cloth hurled stones at his house at around 11 pm. When he looked out the window, he was shot with a cal. 45 pistol and an M16. The killers escaped on three motorcycles together with eight others aboard a tricycle. Ka Tudy sustained gunshot wounds on the stomach, left shoulder and right cheek. He died while being treated in a hospital.

Escanilla has long been a target of the 31st IB because of his daring exposés about the military’s human rights violations in his radio program “Pamana ng Lahi” (Legacy of the Race).

**North Cotabato.** Joel Gulmatico was shot to death while passing by a detachment manned by elements of the 57th IB on his way home to Barangay Naje, Arakan, North Cotabato in August 18. Gulmatico is the chairperson of Arakan Progressive Peasant Organization and an active defender of peasant rights.

### Illegal arrest and torture

Under the US-Aquino regime, laws which are supposed to protect citizens are turned against them. Filing of trumped-up criminal charges against activists and ordinary citizens are part of the military’s standard operating procedure when they find it difficult to use the worn-out excuse of identifying the victims as “NPA members.”

**Bukidnon.** Fifteen civilians were illegally arrested by troops of the 23rd IB and 8th IB in Kitaotao in August 26. Among them are Ellen

Manlimbaas, chairperson of Nagkahiusang Maguuma sa Barangay White Culaman, Elizardo Labadan, Editha Bontao, Jun Pellazar, Camilo Asunan, Noeda Manlumaray and her 12-year-old child. Eight other residents of Sitio Placatta of the said barangay were also arrested. The soldiers first ransacked the houses in the sitio and planted evidence so that they would have a reason for the arrests. The peasants were detained at the barangay hall until the next day, then taken to Malabalay City by helicopter. Thirteen were charged with rebellion and illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

**Isabela.** Danggayan Dagiti Mannalon ti Isabela (Dagami-KMP) and Anakpawis-Isabela strongly denounced the warrantless arrest of Vic Feliciano in his home in Matusalem, Roxas, Isabela last August 13.

Feliciano had just attended a meeting of AMARI-Dagami when he was arrested. The organization was discussing their plans regarding their rights to the land being grabbed from them.

**Sarangani.** Last June 17, more than 19 individuals were charged with attempted murder, illegal detention, child abuse and violation of Republic Act 9851. Among them were leaders of the B’laan, pastors of the United Church of Christ of the Philippines and members of human rights organizations. One of those charged was Ruben Wating, a farmer who was arrested last April in order to prevent him from complaining about the torture inflicted on him by troops of the 73rd IB.

The soldiers were conducting military operations in Barangay Upper Suyan, Malapatan when they arrested and tortured Wating. He was forced to drink two gallons of coconut wine, kicked on the neck, his left

thumbnail clipped by pliers, and mauled. A soldier pointed a gun at his forehead and ordered him to drop to the ground, while soldiers repeatedly stepped on his back and legs. He was then ordered to stand up and run, but he refused to follow, fearing that he would be shot if he did. Later, he was taken to a neighbor’s house where he was again mauled, his hands crushed with a bamboo stick, and lashed on his back with a belt before being sent home.

### Criminalization of political activities

The filing of trumped up charges continues against activists and leaders who assisted Lumads who fled from their communities in Sarangani, Davao del Norte and Bukidnon. At the last count, 70 leaders have been included in the charges. Among them are Karapatan secretary-general Cristina Palabay and Jacqueline Ruiz of the Children Rehabilitation Center. The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group also crammed into the list of John Does and Mary Does the names of Rep. Emmi de Jesus of Gabriela, Rep. Carlos Zarate of Bayan Muna, and former congressman Teddy Casiño.

Since last year, 20 cases have been filed against activists and human rights defenders in Mindanao. The overzealousness of the military in filing all sorts of cases makes their charges ridiculous and even absurd. Francis Morales, erstwhile director of Balsa Mindanao and the




environmental group Panalipdan! Mindanao, is included in the list although he died in November last year. His name appears twice on the list and one of his pictures is pasted under the name of Transmission-Piston's Edil Gonzaga. Furthermore, Rep. Crispin Beltran's picture is used to identify former Rep. Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis. Also included in the list of accused individuals are Jose Maria Sison and Juliet de Lima, who have been out of the country for almost 30 years.

In the meantime, the Aquino regime's much vaunted inter-agency group which the Department of Justice established purportedly to review cases of extra-judicial killings is inutile and has done nothing to help the victims.

In another front, national democratic groups filed a case against Rep. Nancy Catamco of North Cotabato for her role in the police assault at the Haran Compound

last July. Catamco, a rabid defender of the 10th ID, is also being questioned for providing defense lawyers to two paramilitary forces who were charged for the murder of Fr. Fausto Tentorio.

In related news, a group of activists and health workers petitioned the Supreme Court for a writ of amparo and writ of habeas data. Dr. Darby Santiago, chairperson of the Health Alliance for Democracy and his colleague Imelda Gerali, a nurse, fear for their lives after receiving threats and alarming text messages on their cellphones. Joining the petition were Rebecca Abelong of the Allied Workers Federation-Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU); Neil Ambion, Renato Asa and Loreto Victoriano of KMU; Josephine Carlos Betana of Migrante; Lovely Carbon and Jessica Ferrera of the National Union of Students of the Philippines; and John Paul Lapid of the Kabataan Partylist. 

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## Fascism and deception

IT is grossly insulting and derisive of the 4th ID to extend "condolences and sympathies" to the families of the Manobos massacred by the 3rd Special Forces Company last August 30 in Pangantucan, Bukidnon. (See *related article on page 4*). They are inciting outrage in offering "necessary assistance to the concerned local officials in order to facilitate the decent burial" of the victims of their dastardly crime.

This kind of double-faced, forked-tongue regard for the people is part of what Lt. Col. Ronnie Felix Babac, commander of 73rd Infantry Battalion, calls "gentle persuasion". While carrying out massacres, shelling communities or forcing peasant folk to join paramilitary forces like Alamara, the AFP has the gall to count this as "gentle persuasion." This is part of what Gen. Eduardo Año calls "social pressure," which he says must go with "military pressure" for the US-Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan to succeed.

### Dole-out projects for show

One of the manifest features of Oplan Bayanihan is its use of deceptive programs. Among these are projects that are only for show under the Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA), the Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP), and the anomalous 4Ps (Programang Pantawid ng Pamilyang Pilipino) of the Department of

Social Welfare and Development (DSWD.) These programs aim to foster passivity among Red fighters, their families and struggling people in the countryside.

For 2016, the government allots up to P12.8 billion for PAMANA, the AFP's program aimed at appeasing and deceiving people in areas where the people's war is advancing. (See the August 21 issue of *Ang Bayan*). In complicity with the Office of the Presidential Adviser to the Peace Process, the AFP puts up fraudulent organizations to vouch for its grants for livelihood projects.

In 2014, the Department of Interior and Local Government alloted P74 million for CLIP. This program aims to persuade Red fighters to surrender and exchange their firearms for a measly sum. Apart from its use of deceiving families of guerrilla fighters, this program is an immense milking cow for military officials.

Civilians are regularly presented as surrenderees, or even ex-

NPAs who have long left the movement and have "surrendered" several times. The more "surrenderees" the military officials get, the bigger the funds they can share among themselves. This August alone, the media reported more or less P1.5 million given to so-called surrenderees from Surigao del Sur, Catanduanes, and Tagum City.

There is also the "counter-insurgency" program 4Ps which was alloted P62.3 billion by the DSWD in 2015. Seven years of this program's implementation has not made any dent on alleviating poverty despite the government's hype of its purported aim. Its fund allocation was increased to P62.67 billion in the proposed budget for 2016 in order to focus on more areas where the revolutionary movement is strong and to draw the people away from the revolution. Beneficiaries are given cash in exchange for numerous conditions like foregoing rallies and refraining from joining progressive mass organizations. If these conditions are difficult to implement directly, the DSWD schedules its cash distribution to coincide with political meetings or mass actions to preempt the participation of those who have to line up for the fund.

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# US Pacific top brass visits Philippines

When Adm. Harry Harris, newly installed commander of the US Pacific Command, arrived for a three-day visit in the Philippines, regime officials fell over themselves to welcome and serve him.

Accompanied by other military officials and diplomats, Harris called on Aquino and the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) top officials, to discuss the US' latest moves in Asia and ensure their compliance.

Harris spoke with them regarding the US Department of Defense' Asia Pacific Maritime Security Strategy, a document which covers the latest US operations in the region in line with its National Security Strategy and its "pivot to Asia."

In the guise of promoting "interoperability," he and top brass in the Filipino military signed the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) to strengthen US control over different aspects of AFP operations.

Before Harris left in August 8, he toured the AFP's Western Command headquarters in Puerto Prinsesa, Palawan. The said headquarters is a short distance from the Carlito Cunanan Naval Station, one of the locations desig-

nated for US naval use.

Harris remained silent on the Aquino regime's desperate plea for US air protection to Philippine troops doing supply runs to its soldiers in the West Philippine Sea.

## US geopolitical interests

USPACOM's area-of-responsibility (AOR) covers 36 countries in four continents. It encompasses the busiest sea routes for international trade. Eight out of the 10 biggest container ports are in the region. More than 30% of international trade, with a combined cost of \$5 trillion, traverse the South China Sea route. About 2/3 of the world's oil supply transits through the Indian Ocean to the Pacific. In 2014, about 15 million barrels of oil passed through the Malacca Strait

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## Deceptive organizations and activities

While organizing paramilitary groups like the Alamara in Mindanao, the AFP also sets up groups of counterfeit *datus* to spread lies and destroy the unity of the indigenous people. Among these groups is the Office of the Tribal Assembly of Elders of the Langilan Manobo. This was used to make a statement that toed the AFP's line that the Lumads staying at the Haran Compound in Davao City who fled the military operations are victims of human trafficking by *Karpatan*, *UCCP* and other democratic mass organizations.

Last July, the military goaded some *barangay* officials of *Datal Anggas* in *Alabel*, *Sarangani*, to approve a resolution declaring *NPA* members as *persona non grata* in their village.

## Tradition of deception

Deception has long been used to cover up the atrocities by the milit-

ary. This has been so from the "winning the hearts and minds" of the US-Marcos regime, the *CIVAC* and *SOT*, *MSOT*, *RSOT* operations of the succeeding regimes, to the current *Community Organizing for Peace and Development* under *Oplan Bayanihan*. Pretentious medical missions, literacy programs, haircutting services, distribution of notebooks, and all sorts of ruses increase as military violence becomes more brutal.

The AFP also focuses on the youth as particular targets of deception. Youngsters are enticed with cellphone "loads", internet, snacks and other superficial ploys. The AFP also offers college scholarships to those who want to study criminology. This aims to draw them to the *PNP* and military, and eventually make use of them. In *Nueva Ecija*, the AFP held a training inside their camp for youth who wanted to work in the call centers.

The AFP utilizes these methods to cover their violations of human rights and the rules of war. They also seek to lead the people astray,

make it appear that the state serves the people and therefore draw them, especially the youth, away from the people's war.

However, even if they have declared many areas as "insurgency-free" (now called "conflict-manageable areas") the revolutionary movement continue to grow. The youth, in particular, continue to be the well-spring of activism.

As proof of the AFP's failure in its *Oplan Bayanihan*, last August 14, *Voltaire Gazmin* of the *DND*, *Edwin Enrile* of the *DILG*, *Hernando Iriberri* of the AFP and *Ricardo Marquez* of the *PNP* signed the Revised *Joint Implementing Rules and Regulations* to return the main responsibility for "internal security" to the AFP, with the *PNP* playing a supporting role.

This revised and strengthened *Executive Order 546*, an order signed by the previous US-Arroyo regime, legalized the establishment of paramilitary groups or private armies. This was then approved at the height of extra-judicial killings.

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every day.

The region is also a rich source of marine resources. Ten percent of world's fish production comes from the South China Sea. Reports estimate the presence of mineable reserves in the area that can reach up to 11 billion barrels of oil and 180 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

### Command and control in the guise of "interoperability"

In line with its latest marine security strategy, the US plans to increase the "size, frequency and sophistication" of its military exercises in the future. It plans to hold 400 "activities" in the Philippines in 2015 alone. These include the Balikatan 2015, which was conducted in different parts of the country last April. Harris boasted that it was the biggest and most advanced in the history of its kind. Fifteen thousand troopers from the Philippines, US, Australia and Japan took part in the exercise. In August, the US launched the Pacific Partnership 2015 in the communities of Zambales, Pangasinan and Roxas City.

Also in August, the Bilateral Tactical Exercises involving air forces of the Philippines and the US was held, as well as Operation Lupao, an exercise which focused on counter-insurgency tactics at the platoon-level. Prior to this, it was reported that American troops trained police forces in Panay and other areas where officials of APEC member countries hold their meetings.

Alongside these exercises, the US is also using the Philippines as a training ground for other Asian militaries. It has instructed the AFP to enter into military agreements left and right

with neighboring countries. US-initiated and -directed exercises between the AFP and other US-controlled militaries in Asia are conducted non-stop. These include the militaries of Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and Vietnam.

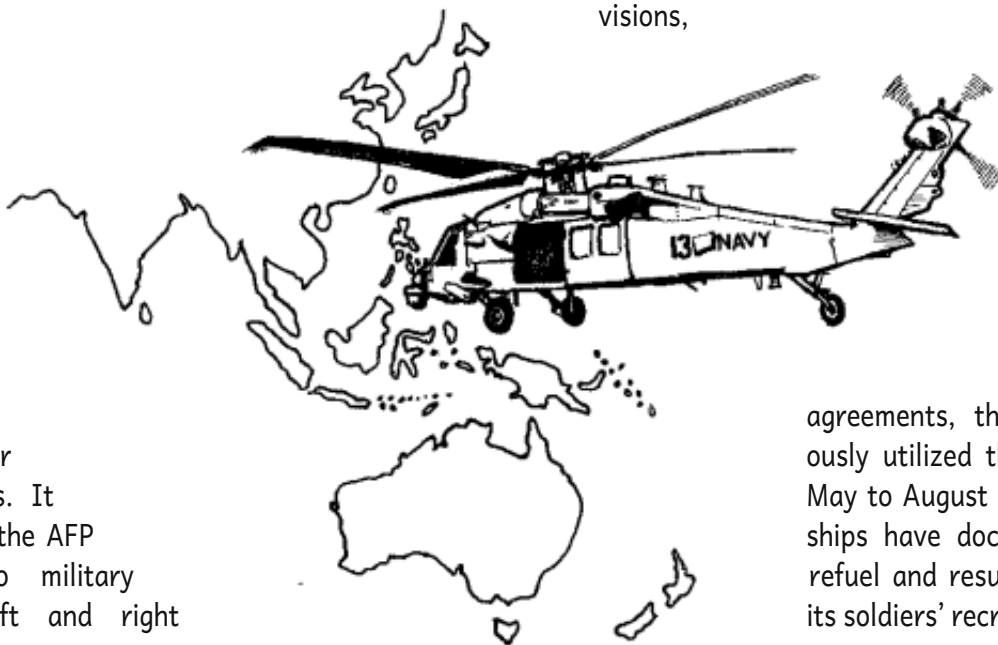
The latest of these is the planned joint counter-insurgency exercises to be held in Capas, Tarlac starting September 9. Indonesian and Malaysian troops will participate, alongside AFP soldiers.

### Even without EDCA

Implementation of EDCA has been delayed after the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and other groups filed petitions against it in the Supreme Court. Majority of senators likewise passed a resolution stating that the EDCA should first go through the Senate for approval or rejection. The EDCA was signed in April 2014, a few days before US Pres. Barack Obama's visit to the country.

Despite these obstacles, the Aquino regime identified in October 2014 eight camps and bases for use of US troops and stockpiling of war materiel. These are Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija; Crow Valley and Basa Airbase in Pampanga; San Miguel Naval Station in Zambales; Rafael Ramos Naval Station in Cebu; and Benito Airbase, Carlito Cunanan Naval Station and Bautista Airbase, all in Palawan.

In accordance with EDCA provisions,



these locations will host American facilities, serve as storage for military equipment and bases for American rotating troops.

In the guise of "AFP modernization," the regime has continuously upgraded these facilities. The US has directly funded the "modernization" through foreign military aid and selling the AFP old and obsolete military equipment.

The US aims to utilize facilities in Subic Bay, which previously served as the main base of the USPACOM's 7th Fleet. After the Military Bases Agreement was abrogated in September 17, 1991, Subic Bay has become a civilian facility administered by the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA). Plans to allocate P1 billion for the construction of a naval base in a 500-hectare area in Barangay Cawag was announced last year. This July, the SBMA and AFP signed a lease agreement that gives the AFP access to Subic facilities for 15 years. These moves serve as preparations for its eventual use as an American military base.

Even before EDCA, the US has frequently used Subic Bay as a service port for its ships in the region. In 2012, the US company AMSEC entered into a partnership with Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction, owner of the biggest shipyard in Subic, for the maintenance, repair and logistics of US Navy ships. AMSEC is a subsidiary of Huntington Ingalls Industries, the biggest US Navy ship-maker, while Hanjin is Korea's biggest shipbuilder.

Using previous agreements, the US has continuously utilized the Subic Bay. From May to August alone, four big warships have docked in its ports to refuel and resupply, as well as for its soldiers' recreation. AB



# US aggressiveness towards Russia

(This article is the second in a series of articles discussing the US National Security Strategy. The first article was published in the August 21, 2015 issue.)



The National Security Strategy (NSS) document indicates how the Obama government is training its attention at Russia. Based on the NSS and the actual measures of the US, it is thoroughly and all-sidedly preparing to launch an all-out intervention, subversion or attack against Russia.

Russia is one of the biggest capitalist countries that rivals US imperialist power. Russia is comprised of the largest components of the former Soviet Union. Aside from controlling vast oil resources, Russia also has a vast military machinery and arsenal of nuclear weapons.

The US seeks to wrest control of large sources of oil from Russia including the Black Sea, the Balkans and the Arctic Sea. The US also aims to gain control of the oil routes especially to Europe. The NSS boasts that the US is now the biggest producer of oil and gas and that it will seek to break European reliance on Russian oil. The US aims to remove Vladimir Putin and replace him with a pro-US leader.

The US is antagonizing Russia by describing it in the NSS as an "aggressor" and "violation of sovereignty". The NSS adds "We will deter Russian aggression, remain alert to its strategic capabilities, and help our allies and partners resist Russian coercion over the long term, if necessary."

The US is aggressively encircling Russia. In February 2014, the US provoked, directly meddled and supported a coup d'etat in Ukraine which overthrew the elected pro-Russia Viktor Yanukovich and installed an anti-Russia and pro-US government. The US worked with neo-Nazi forces behind the coup. Ukraine borders Russia to its south.

With a pro-US government, Ukraine has left the pro-Russia bloc and started cooperation with the European Union. It immediately received a \$27 billion loan from the

IMF and World Bank. It has imposed onerous conditions. The US has strengthened military control by arming and training the Ukrainian Armed Forces and ultra-nationalist paramilitary groups.

The US and NATO are strengthening their military presence in the guise of "war games" and military exercises. To establish its presence near the Russian borders, the US is provoking the armed forces of Ukraine to resume all-out bombing of Donbass, the eastern region of Ukraine that has declared autonomy after the installation of a pro-US government. Donbass shares a border with Russia.

The US and NATO have also set up a center for "command and control" composed of several hundred quick reaction troops in Poland. Poland shares borders with Russia and Ukraine. Last March, the US opposed a peace settlement between Russia and Georgia because this will deny the US a base to position military bases just outside the Russian border.

While strengthening military presence in the west of Russia, the US is also aggressively establishing itself in Central Asian countries that are to Russia's east. Currently, it is interfering in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, all belonging to the pro-Russian bloc of countries. Top officials of the US have visited these countries to

entice their leaders or twist their arms to side with the US, or as in the case of Ukraine, provoke political turmoil and instigate a coup to install pro-US forces to power.

The US asserts that "we will continue to impose significant costs on Russia through sanctions and other means." To justify the imposition of economic sanctions, the US condemns as "occupation" the entry of Russian troops into Crimea in March 2014 after the majority of Crimeans voted to break from Ukraine and join the Russian federation.

To further press Russia, the US has collaborated with Saudi Arabia to increase oil production in order to pull down prices in the international market. The fall in oil prices is calculated to reduce Russian profits and bring down its economy. Half of Russia's budget comes from oil earnings.

There is no letup in US diplomatic pressure against Russia. The US and its allies are accusing pro-Russian armed forces for shooting down the civilian flight MH17 in July 17, 2014 in eastern Ukraine.

It insists on circulating speculations that pro-Russian forces were behind the shooting even without any basis and conclusive investigation. Recently, they used this accusation to submit to the UN Security Council a proposal to form an international tribunal to try those behind the crime.

Russia is also the principal target of the \$1 trillion modernization of US nuclear capability. The US aims to raise its capability to detect Russian nuclear missile launch within a minute to gain advantage in the event of a nuclear war and use this as additional leverage against Russia. 





# NPA in Panay launches nine offensives

Red fighters from the New People's Army (NPA)-Central Panay (Jose Percival Estocada Jr Command) launched nine offensives from June to August. Six soldiers were killed and three wounded in NPA harassment operations and ambushes.

Five offensives were launched in Tapaz, Capiz. These include harassment operations against a military and CAFGU detachment in Barangay Daan Sur on August 20 and two ambushes against troopers from the 69th IB in Barangay Aglinab on August 1. Three soldiers were killed in the said ambush. Red fighters ambushed the same troopers in Sitio Tobi, Abangay on August 15. Three soldiers were also killed. Prior to this, the NPA harassed 61st IB troopers stationed at a small market at Barangay Katipunan on August 11.

Three offensives were launched in Calinog, Iloilo. On August 16, an NPA team attacked the detachment of the 6th Regional Public Safety Battalion in Barangay Agcalaga. The

NPA first launched harassment operations against the said detachment on July 31. Three policemen were wounded in the operations.

The NPA carried out the operation as punishment against the police unit which has served as protectors of the destructive Jalaur megadam project which the Tumandok people have long opposed.

On July 5, the NPA harassed military troopers who were acting as a security unit for a road construction project in Barangay Binolusan Grande. The road project is part of the megadam.

Meanwhile, an NPA team attacked a military and CAFGU detachment in Barangay Agloloway,



Jamindan, Capiz, on July 29. The said detachment served as the 3rd ID camp perimeter defense. Agloloway is one of the 24 barrios in the 33,310-hectare ancestral domain that the Philippine Army converted into a military reservation.

The NPA supports the struggle of the Tumandok people against the construction of a megadam in Jalaur River in Calinog, Iloilo and the planned construction of another in Pan-ay River in Tapaz, Capiz. Both projects will submerge hundreds of hectares of ancestral land and dislocate thousands of indigenous peoples.

According to Ka Jurie Guerrero, NPA-Central Panay spokesperson: "The military actions serve as a warning against government agencies...government officials under the Aquino regime and all those who are pretending to be tribal leaders and elders who are rabid supporters of the project to stop all deception and intimidation against the Tumandok people."

These victories belie the AFP boast that Capiz and Iloilo are already "conflict manageable areas" since December last year. **AB**

## Workers oppose contractualization in Davao factory

WORKERS in Nakayama Technology Corporation, a Japanese firm in Barangay Cogon, Digos, Davao del sur, began protest actions last August 5. The protesters blasted the illegal dismissal of more than 100 workers who refused to sign contracts placing them under a contractual agency.

The Nakayama Organization of Workers-Southern Philippines Federation of Labor supported the dismissed employees. According to the workers, the company management declared last June 30 that 157 project-based workers would become regular employees. But instead of regularizing them on July 1, they were forced to sign new contracts that will make them employees of Workstation and Fat Manpower Services. Since this meant they will no longer be treated as regular workers of Nakayama, 122 workers refused to sign the contract.

Kilusang Mayo Uno-Southern Mindanao Region (KMU-SMR) spokesperson Carlo Olalo said "these 157

workers should already be considered regular workers since they have been working with the company for one to six years."

Olalo lambasted Department of Labor and Employment Department Order No. 18-A implemented since 2011 for "permitting companies to convert "overstaying" workers (shopfloor terminology for workers who by law, should have been declared as regulars but remain contractual workers) into agency hires capriciously."

The KMU-SMR condemned the Aquino regime for "its espousal of neoliberal policies in labor, particularly the legalization of contractual employment through the passage of labor laws and policies that normalize the continuous and sustained attack on the workers' right to life, human rights, and freedom of association."

Nakayama started in 2001 and manufactures building and housing construction materials for export. It has 2,000 workers. **AB**

# Anti-contractualization struggle in Southern Tagalog

Workers in the Southern Tagalog region are steadily advancing their struggles against labor contractualization. Starting some years back, these continue to rise in the past months. While still initial, their victories have unquestionable significance and value especially since these were achieved in the midst of intensified repression by capitalists and the reactionary government.

Among these victories are the Coca-Cola workers strike in 2013 and similar actions by workers in Tanduay Distillers Inc. last May. This year, struggles were also launched by contractual workers of Karzai Corporation in Cabuyao, Laguna and of Sagara Metro Plastic Industrial Corporation in Calamba City. Associations and unions of contractual workers in Manco Synthetic, Manila Cordage and Asia Brewery Inc. were also formed.

These struggles broke out as Southern Tagalog workers could no longer contain their anger against contractualization and low wages. An estimated 65-70% of the 265,000 total number of workers in the industrial enclaves of the region are contractual. There are cases where as much as 90% of workers are contractuales, as in Tanduay and Karzai.

Like these two companies, there is the prevalent practice of hiring workers through “agencies” by capitalists under the “labor only contracting” scheme. There are two agencies in Tanduay, four in Takata Philippines and six in Asia Brewery. Most of the time, contractual workers have been employed for several years already in these factories.

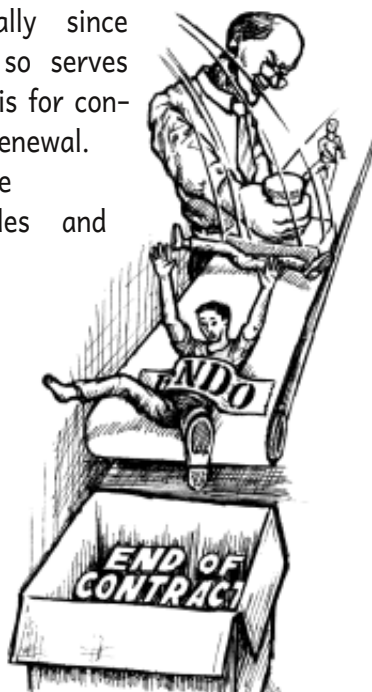
Workers in Coca-Cola have been working for several years as regulars before they were “transferred” to contractual agencies to dismantle their status and rights. While contractual, those in Tanduay worked for years before they were compelled to sign under a contractual agency. Capitalists often connive with these agencies, if not directly operate them. In most cases

contracts last less than six months. Workers are constantly threatened by “endo” (end of contract).

Some also practice “on the job training” or “apprenticeship”, wherein students are taken to be “trained” without payment. In the EMI-Yazaki firm, for example, more than half of its 8,000 workforce are contractuales, mostly students from technical schools. There are also those who employ “relievers”, “emergency workers” and the like.

In utilizing various forms of contractual labor, capitalists intensify workers' exploitation and oppression. Wages are pulled down further, benefits set by law are denied and democratic rights are suppressed, including requiring workers to sign contracts prohibiting unions. Contractual workers perform the same work as regulars, with the same working hours and degree of work, but with far lower wages. They are also compelled to work overtime, especially since doing so serves as basis for contract renewal.

The struggles and



initial victories against contractualization in the Southern Tagalog region were achieved through the heightened determination of the working masses against contractualization. Their solid strength was forged through unions and various forms of organizations. In 2011 workers in the region formed the Liga ng mga Manggagawa Para sa Regular na Hanapbuhay (League of Workers for Regular Employment or Liga) to support and assist the struggle against contractualization in various factories.

In some case, workers took advantage of the Labor Code prohibition of contracting work that are “core and essential” to production. In Tanduay, they insisted that the Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) inspect and declare as “core and essential” the work undertaken by workers, thus making their contractual status illegal. Tanduay did not renew their contracts (“endo”) after six to 15 years of work in the company, sparking off their strike. Similarly, the Coca-Cola strike was sparked off by making formerly regular workers subsume themselves to agencies.


Contractual workers used the strength of concerted action and strike to assert their rights to regular employment. They were able to stop or derail production and thereby use collective action against capitalists. In addition, these actions brought to focus their struggles and served as centers to gather political support. The value of the support of students, church workers, lawyers and other sectors in advancing these struggles cannot be deprecated.

In some cases, the unity and determination to fight exhibited by the workers forced the capitalists to respond to their demands and pushed the reactionary government to issue rulings that favor the workers. In the Coca-Cola strike, the company was required to recognize the workers as regular em-

ployees. In the case of Tanduay, the DOLE ordered the regularization of 103 workers, although the company still refuses to comply.

The advances in the struggle of the workers in ST against contractualization are preliminary. The movement against contractualization must gain much greater momentum in the face of this widespread problem. However, valuable lessons and inspiration can be drawn from these initial victories to help intensify the workers'

struggles in the coming years.

The struggles launched in the region inspire the entire Filipino working class. These provide lessons and heighten their fighting spirit to oppose contractualization and advance the struggle for higher wages and for the promotion and defense of their democratic rights. These are investments in the effort to thwart the relentless offensive of neoliberal policies against the working class. 

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## Migrants Hold Zero Remittance Day

Some 140 migrant Filipino groups from the US, Europe and the Middle East led by Migrante International held a Zero Remittance Day last August 28. On that day, they concertedly boycotted the sending of remittance to their families in the Philippines.

At the same time, Migrante held a picket in front of the Bureau of Customs (BoC) in Manila. Last August 30, a protest action was also held in Hong Kong. The protesters lambasted the additional fees imposed on balikbayan boxes being sent to their loved ones in the country. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas estimates that some \$67 million or P3.1 billion would be lost for a day of zero remittance.

Before the protest, migrant groups successfully forced back an earlier Customs order to open and inspect balikbayan boxes. The BoC alleged that these were being used for smuggling, resulting in the loss of P600 million uncollected import duties.

Balikbayan boxes are care packages from migrant workers for their families which contain personal effects. Current regulations allow contents of up to P15,000 per box.

The scheme to inspect the boxes earned the ire of the public left and right. Customs chief Albert Lina was eventually forced to terminate the scheme and apologize to the migrant workers. The migrant groups assailed the BoC for treating them as smugglers. This scheme is believed to be part of a blatant fund-

raising campaign by the US-Aquino regime to fund the Liberal Party expenses in the coming election. Lina is known to be one of the biggest contributors to Aquino's campaign kitty in 2010.

After thwarting the plan to subject balikbayan boxes to inspection, Migrante continued to castigate Lina due to the planned increase of duties of up to P120,000 for each container van containing balikbayan boxes. This would result in an additional P325 fee for each balikbayan box. Some P2.34 billion is estimated to be collected by the Aquino regime from 7.2 million boxes sent by migrant workers annually.


Migrants were extremely angered at being considered "smugglers". Progressive partylist representatives also condemned this. They stated that since the BoC continues to fail in eradicating widespread smuggling, it now is now going after balikbayan boxes of OFWs to cover up its failure to curb massive corruption in the agency.

Customs has been traditionally the milking cow of the ruling powerpower, and this is especially true for the Aquino clique. Despite Aquino's "Straight Path" preten-

sions, his regime has registered the biggest smuggling anomalies. During his first three years alone, some 2,000 container vans "vanished" and surely went to the business associates of his clique. Almost US\$19 billion (P874 billion at the exchange rate of P46-US\$1) worth of imported goods were not taxed from 2010 to 2013. This is six times compared to the US\$3 billion under the Arroyo regime.

The anomalies and corruption in the BoC continue and intensify further as Aquino's term is set to end and presidential election approaches. This includes the anomaly of appointing Lina to the agency.

Last April, John Sevilla was forced to resign as Customs chief amid pressure for him to raise P3 billion for the Liberal Party. He was replaced by Lina, owner of Air 21, a cargo forwarding company, and other firms with direct transactions to the BoC.

Among Lina's first moves upon taking over was to cancel a P650 million modernization contract of the BoC that was awarded to Omniprime Marketing Incorporated and Intrasoftware International group last April 13. These two companies replaced E-Konek, a company owned by Lina, after it lost the bidding. Lina's E-konek stood to lose its P200 million a year business if it was replaced. Since the planned modernization did not take place, the old BoC system run by E-Konek was restored. The Manila court stopped the cancellation of the contract by Lina. 

## Aquino turns his back on education

VARIOUS youth organizations, alliances and student councils from universities led by the Kabataan Partylist staged a walk-out and march last August 27.

They voiced out their objection to the pending budget reduction in 59 state universities and colleges (SUCs) in 2016, and called for additional funds for education in the country.

Simultaneously, protests were held by students from Southern Tagalog, Western Visayas and Davao. Some P4.1 billion will be cut from the Capital Outlay of 40 SUCs while P477.8 million will be deducted from the Maintenance and Other Operational Expenses (MOOE) of 59 SUCs. A total of P2.46 billion will be withdrawn from 10 SUCs.

Aquino's priorities clearly do not include public education. Only P504 billion will be allocated to the education budget next year. This is 27.03% smaller than the P740 billion allocation for debt payment.

The past five years have been a

disaster for public education. Budget allocation was so insufficient that universities were forced to raise tuition fees or impose various fees to fill up the deficit.

In 2015, SUCs needed a budget of P122.7 billion to cover their needs. But the Aquino regime only allocated P42.2 billion or only a third of what was required.

The abandonment of education is in accord with

the implementation of the regime's neoliberal policies to further dry up and raise profits from the pockets of the poor parents. They are virtually shoving the poor out of the SUCs and castigating them with "if you have no cash then don't go to college!"

Progressive youth organizations challenged lawmakers to respond to the needs of the education sector. They called on students, teachers, parents and all citizens to unite and assert the right to additional funds for education and to fight for a nationalist, scientific and mass-oriented system of education. 