



EDITORIAL

Fight the fascist lockdown and repression

The people have suffered enough under the unparalleled ineptness of the US-Duterte regime in handling the Covid-19 pandemic, the economic crisis that it has caused and the relentless terrorist attacks against the people.

Covid-19 infections have soared to almost 8,000 daily with more than 12,900 deaths. After one year of lockdowns, the public health system remains crippled. There is no mass testing, rapid contact tracing or free treatment of Covid-19 patients. There is still no mass vaccination. Again and again, repressive and futile lockdowns are resorted to whenever cases of infection shoot up. Thus, not only does Covid-19 continue to spread, the economy and livelihood are wasted, and millions suppressed.

Due to the unprecedented destruction caused by the lockdowns, Duterte was left with no choice but to lift restrictions on business operations. But since he did nothing to strengthen the health system (even vaccine procurement was snail paced), he is only putting the coun-

try at risk of a worse pandemic.

As before, lockdowns, curfews and checkpoints are the regime's response to renewed rise in Covid-19 cases, if only to make it appear that something is being done. These do not bring anything but suffering to the people. Ordinary people face hardships and danger. They could ill-afford to buy rice and meat, what more if they get sick. Meanwhile, Duterte's officials get themselves tested repeatedly using people's money. Malls, tourist spots and cockpits were opened, but schools remain close. Children and youth remain imprisoned in their homes, causing parents great distress.

Workers, employees and toiling people are the most vulnerable to the spread of infections in fully operational factories, offices, crowded

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NPA seizes 17 firearms in Camarines

THE NEW PEOPLE's Army (NPA) was able to seize 17 firearms, including 10 high-powered rifles, in three successive military actions in Bicol in the past weeks.

On March 19, the NPA-Camarines Norte attacked the outpost of the Philippine National Police (PNP) 2nd Provincial Mobile Force Company at Purok 6, Barangay Dumagmang, Labo, Camarines Norte. Red fighters were able to confiscate a baby M60 machine gun, an R4 carbine, six Galil rifles, and six Glock pistols.

Five were killed during the offensive, including PCpl. Roger Estoy, while two others were wounded. The tactical offensive was the NPA's response to the spate of killings and attacks perpetrated by the police and military against the residents of Camarines Norte.

In Camarines Sur, the NPA ambushed operating elements of the PNP Special Action Force and military in Barangay Tigman, Sipocot on March 4. Two enemy troops were killed and two others were wounded.

On February 1, the NPA was able to confiscate the weapons of the Villafuerte family's goons in Barangay Villazar, Sipocot in the same province. Seized during the offensive were an M16 rifle, two carbines and ammuni-

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public transport and in their small congested shanties. While big capitalists enjoy big profits and revenues, large spaces in their offices and homes, where they could be physical distanced and safe from infections. Bureaucrats pocket the people's money in unmitigated corruption.

The Duterte regime is an epic failure especially when compared to pandemic management in Vietnam, New Zealand and Taiwan. They demonstrated the importance of a strong public health system, mass testing and rapid contact tracing. There are indications that vaccination can help stop the spread of the virus, but this is yet to be proven in the coming months, especially with new variants that are more transmissible and possibly resilient to the vaccines. What has been proven is that the principal factor in successfully controlling the pandemic is a state that is capable and has sufficient resources for public health.

The problem is, in the face of

the raging pandemic, the incompetent Duterte government has other priorities. In its budget this year, funds for Covid-19 vaccines are sorely insufficient, making it borrow left and right just to have the money to buy. No funds were allotted for free mass testing and rapid contact tracing, but money poured for the military, the police the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).

Failing to do anything to strengthen the health system and relying only on military and police solutions, the Duterte regime will surely fail to control the pandemic, and thus, fail to revive the economy. It will lead the country nowhere but to further crisis, worse unemployment, bankruptcies, loss of income, decline in production, rising prices, hardships and hunger.

Amid grave people's sufferings brought about by the pandemic and economic crisis, the fascist regime prioritizes its relentless campaign of suppression. Over the past

months, the attacks of the fascist state have been more vicious and deadly against the democratic forces opposing its anti-people policies and measures.

Under the Anti-Terror Law and Duterte's order to "kill all communists," the NTF-ELCAC, Duterte's military junta, initiated a series of coordinated killings and arrests in Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Panay and the National Capital Region. Duterte and his fascist cabal's hands are dripping in the blood of their victims. In addition to the AFP and PNP, it uses the courts, other agencies and local government units as pawns in its dirty war of state terrorism to silence and suppress the people.

The mass killing by the bloodthirsty Duterte deserves all-out condemnation. Unless stopped, his penchant for murder will soon lead to more massacres and mass killings. Duterte has no other aim but to instill fear and disunite the people, to ensure he will remain in power and extend the reign of his corrupt political dynasty beyond 2022.

The people must cast away their fears, strengthen their courage and strive to expose, denounce and fight the campaign of suppression of the US-Duterte regime and its anti-democratic, militarist and failed response to the pandemic. At the same time, they must tirelessly voice out their grievances and demand wage increases, rollback in the prices of oil, food and other necessities, immediate aid for all the impoverished, and other immediate measures to address their welfare.

While some groups are now focused on the 2022 elections, the Filipino masses must exert efforts towards large street demonstrations to manifest their collective indignation and demand an end to the fascist tyranny. At the same time, the New People's Army will strive to defend the masses and punish the fascists with grave crimes against the people.

AB

 <p>Vol. LII No. 6 March 21, 2021</p> <hr/> <p>Ang <i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English. Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p> <p> @prwc_info</p> <p> cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Contents</h2> <table border="0"> <tr><td>Editorial: Fight the fascist lockdown and repression</td><td style="text-align: right;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>NPA seizes 17 firearms in Camarines</td><td style="text-align: right;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Red fighters' common objective</td><td style="text-align: right;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Overworked peasant women</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>Protests</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>1 million women dropped from labor force</td><td style="text-align: right;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Party leader brutally murdered</td><td style="text-align: right;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Oil price manipulation</td><td style="text-align: right;">6</td></tr> <tr><td>Magnetite mining in Cagayan</td><td style="text-align: right;">7</td></tr> <tr><td>In short</td><td style="text-align: right;">8</td></tr> <tr><td>US-China military rivalry set to intensify</td><td style="text-align: right;">9</td></tr> <tr><td>Military and police hit list exposed</td><td style="text-align: right;">10</td></tr> <tr><td>Groups condemn "Bloody Sunday"</td><td style="text-align: right;">10</td></tr> </table>	Editorial: Fight the fascist lockdown and repression	1	NPA seizes 17 firearms in Camarines	3	Red fighters' common objective	3	Overworked peasant women	4	Protests	4	1 million women dropped from labor force	5	Party leader brutally murdered	5	Oil price manipulation	6	Magnetite mining in Cagayan	7	In short	8	US-China military rivalry set to intensify	9	Military and police hit list exposed	10	Groups condemn "Bloody Sunday"	10
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Red fighters' common objective

Red fighters may come from various walks of life but they are linked by a common aspiration for revolutionary change. In the New People's Army (NPA), oppressed classes and sectors unite to serve the masses, consolidate their strength and change the society.

Ka Kiko, 19, now bears the onus of his elderly parents. Due to landlessness, he was left with no other option but to work for a landlord. He works day and night only to sell his corn harvest for a paltry sum. "Buyers always initially refuse to buy my corn saying that it has high moisture content. In the end, they still buy it but at an extremely low price."

He was recruited to the Kabataang Makabayan where he learned how it is possible to change this system and forge a better future. Later on, he decided to join the people's army.

Ka Yoyo was just 14 years old when he first experienced the cruelty of the military. Once, he and his uncle were fetching water when they were mauled by soldiers who

accused them of being members of the people's army.

"I really admire Red fighters. Whenever they meet the masses, Red fighters always ensure the residents' wellbeing and ask them about the prices of corn and fertilizer. Soldiers on the other hand, when meeting the masses, would always ask "where is the NPA?." Ka Yoyo joined the NPA when he reached the proper age.

To convince Ka Yoyo to go back home, the military harassed his parents. They also offered him a new house and a carabao. Ka Yoyo stood firm and refused the offer, prompting the soldiers to evict his family from the barrio. This has furthered his anger against the enemy.

It's been seven years since he was beaten by the soldiers. He be-

lieves that this will not happen again as he is now with the people's army which is defending the oppressed masses and will defeat the enemy.

Ka Laura and Ka Eunice also aspire to change the system where employers exploit the intellect and skills of professionals like them. As a journalist in a big newspaper company, Ka Laura suffered from low wages and benefits. Through her work, she came to discover about the rottenness of politicians who exploit small journalists like her to prettify their notorious reputation as officials.

Ka Laura resigned after realizing that she could no longer serve a hypocritical institution and decided to join an organization for social action which advocates for children's rights. From then on, Ka Laura began to as a full-time activist. She had the opportunity to

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tion. Residents have long been complaining against the threats and harassment perpetrated by the despotic family. They are among the most despotic landlords and local officials in the barangay.

Ozamiz City. The NPA-Misamis Occidental ambushed the troops of the 10th IB in Barangay Guimad last March 6. Eight soldiers were killed and another was killed. They were attacked while conducting combat operations in the area. The Air Force bombed the place after the encounter resulting in the destruction of the environment and farmlands. Quezon. A unit of the NPA-Quezon ambushed operating troops of the 201st IBde at Sitio Colong, Barangay San Francisco B, Lopez on March 5. Three soldiers were killed and another was wounded.

Occidental Mindoro. A unit of the NPA-Mindoro sniped at operating troops of the 4th IB in Barangay Manoot, Rizal on March 3. The said soldiers have been scouring the area and nearby barangays for more a week.

Western Samar. A unit of the BHB-Western Samar foiled the attack mounted by more than 100 troops of the 46th IB in Barangay Canlobo, Pinabacdao on February 8. Two soldiers were reportedly killed. After the encounter, the military dropped eight bombs and shelled the area four times. They also strafed the area for 45 minutes.

Panay. The NPA-Panay launched six offensives against the military and police units responsible for the massacre and arrest of Tumandoks in the past months. Two enemy troopers were killed and five others were wounded.

On March 11, the NPA fired at a unit of the 12th IB conducting Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP) operations in Barangay Panuran, Lambunao. Red fighters also fired at responding military troops in Barangay Agcarope, Janiuay. On the next day, the NPA blasted a police vehicle in Barangay Pughanan, Lambunao. Two police personnel were wounded.

On March 3, the NPA blasted another police vehicle in Barangay Canawili, Janiuay.

In Southern Iloilo, the NPA fired at the soldiers of the 79th IB in Barangay Igilico, San Joaquin on February 18. Two soldiers were reportedly killed and three others were wounded.

In Capiz, the NPA fired at elements of the 12th IB conducting RCSP operations in Barangay Buri, Tapaz on February 26. **AB**

Overworked peasant women

Peasant women are considered an "invisible" part of labor force. Data by the Center for Women's Resources in 2018 indicated that only 644,000 women were counted by the reactionary state in the agricultural sector. This extremely low figure is attributed to the fact that many peasant women do not own land and are categorized as "housewives." This is despite their participation in all aspects of production—from planting, applying fertilizers and weeding, to harvesting, drying, repacking and selling. Aside from farming, they also often perform support roles such as cooking, and preparing seeds and other chores.

The hours they allot to house chores and taking care of their children are neither measured nor compensated. As women are traditionally tasked to manage the family's budget, they are often obliged to borrow money or look for sideline work. Because of this, they are often more indebted than men.

Last year, the participation rate of peasant women in the labor force further shrank despite doubling or tripling their work to make ends meet for their families. They are burdened by the income losses caused by the seemingly endless lockdowns. They could not look for

sideline jobs due to movement restrictions even within barrios.

"Our income in 2020 is equivalent to just nearly half of what usually earned in the past," said Jeni who farms in a small cornfield rented by his husband. They did not have enough pesticides, seeds and fertilizer for production as they failed to procure these prior to the lockdown which ordered the closure of business establishments. Their relatives could not help them in the farm due to lockdown restrictions. They experienced difficulty in selling their produce because there was

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integrate with different people, until one time when she integrated in a peasant community where she first interacted with Red fighters. Later on, she decided to become a full-time member of the people's Army.

Ka Laura continues to write, not for big companies, but for the revolution.

Ka Eunice, on her part, came to

realize the importance of the role of intellectuals in the revolution. In her six months in the people's army, she was able to hold literacy classes and teach both Red fighters and masses. Prior to joining the people's army, she worked as a teacher for six years. She has a bachelor's degree in AB English. In the Red army, she continues to serve as a teacher for comrades and masses. **AB**



Women's day. More than a thousand individuals marched to Mendiola, Manila to commemorate the International Working Women's Day last March 8. Organizations led by Gabriela demanded the immediate distribution of aid, and the people's right to livelihood, wages and employment. Similar protest actions were launched in Baguio City, Bulacan, Naga City, at Iloilo City.

One year under lockdown. Around 150 members of national democratic organizations protested in front of the office of the Commission on Human Rights in Quezon City on March 17 the first anniversary of the lockdown imposed by Rodrigo Duterte in Luzon. They demanded the regime to ensure the supply of safe and free vaccines, distribution of a 10,000-aid and an end to the militaristic lockdown. Similar protests were mounted in various parts of Metro Manila, Laguna, Baguio City and Central Luzon. Members of Kadamay, Anakbayan and Piston also protested in Quezon City on March 15.

Defend Southern Tagalog. Mass organizations protested in Calamba, Laguna last March 16 to condemn the the killings in Southern Tagalog in what was called the "Bloody Sunday," and demand the release of those arrested. Protests were also mounted by activists in US, France and Australia.

Protest against privatization of market in Cebu. Three hundred vendors and their supporters protested in front of the office of the mayor of Cebu City last March 17 to oppose the privatization of a local market. This was their third week of protest. The local government targets to award the privatization concession to Megawide Construction Corporation.

"Overworked...", from page 4

no means of transportation.

To get by, Jeni worked as a laundry woman twice a week and received ₱250 per day. Despite this, her income is still not enough.

"I'm stressed out whenever I think of how I will stretch my small income," she said. "Instead of rice, my children now often eat corn rice for breakfast. Also, we often do not eat on time."

Surveys conducted in the Philippines and abroad showed that women experience more stress than men amid the pandemic as they are commonly the ones who take care of their families. As funds dwindle even for daily needs, they become increasingly agitated thinking of how to cover medical expenses should a family member fall sick during the pandemic. The stress is highest among mothers, especially those with children aged 18 and below. This is because they are traditionally tied to responsibilities of caring for and ensuring the health of their children.

In the case of June, three of her children are still in school. Her time is divided into helping her children

with their studies and working. "Assisting my children to answer their modules takes up so much time when I could have worked more to earn extra."

Blended learning also causes tensions between mothers and children. In the case of Thelma, her children could no longer help her in doing house chores as they are also stressed with answering their modules. "I couldn't even send them on errands," she said. Although mainly a housewife, Thelma helps her husband in planting and harvesting.

Like Jeni, Norma's income dropped because of the lockdown. She and her husband earn a living by planting turnips and vegetables. "We weren't able to sell a portion of our produce," she said. "Before, we used to sell to schools, that's why our income dropped."

To earn extra, Norma is raising pigs and other farm animals. Between looking for places to sell turnips and doing house chores, she has almost no energy to assist her grandchildren who are under her care in their studies.



State forces brutally murder Party leader and wife

COUPLE ANTONIO CABANATAN, 74, and Florenda Yap, 65 were abducted, detained and held incommunicado for months, and tortured before being killed through guillotine by state forces. Their lifeless bodies were found inside a house in Barangay Botong, Oton, Iloilo on December 26, 2020. They have already retired from revolutionary work several years ago due to their physical condition and old age.

The Party paid tribute to Cabanatan, also known as Kasamang Manlimbasog (Strive), for his lifelong and stellar service to the revolution. He continuously served the revolution from being a student activist in 1967 until his death. He played a key role in expanding the national democratic propaganda movement in Cebu, Negros Oriental, Bohol, Leyte, Samar up to Northern Mindanao..

He effectively led the revolution in Visayas and Mindanao and took on heavy responsibilities.

The full tribute of the Central Committee can be read in the March 17 special issue of *Ang Bayan*.

More than a million women dropped from the labor force

MORE THAN A million women were dropped from the labor force last year. This is equivalent to almost double of the total number of men (600,000) dropped from the said statistics during the same period.

In sum, 19.7 million women or almost half of the total 37 million women aged 15 and above were not counted in the labor force. Only 17.4 million were counted in the said statistics. Among those dropped are women who are in school, housewives, those who could not work because of the lockdown, sick, and those are still waiting for the result of their work applications. The participation rate of women has long been lower compared that of men. The latest statistics indicate that only 46.9% of women are working, compared to 73.9% of men.

Data from Ibon Foundation indicate that more than 10 million Filipinos, and not just 4 million Filipinos as reported by the reactionary state, are actually unemployed. The unemployment rate is also higher among women (8.8%) compared to men (8.7%). On top of this, a large number of women (13.4%) were also underemployed during the said period.



Oil price manipulation

First of a two-part series on the Philippine oil industry.

Superprofits accumulation by oil companies while the Filipino people undergo extreme hardships amid the grave economic crisis and pandemic invites outrage. Last March 17, the prices of petroleum products once again increased. This was the eighth hike since January 6, two and a half times more frequent than price decreases.

In sum, in more or less 50 days, the prices per liter of diesel, regular gasoline, and kerosene already increased by ₱5.70, ₱4.61, ₱4.27, and ₱5.01, respectively.

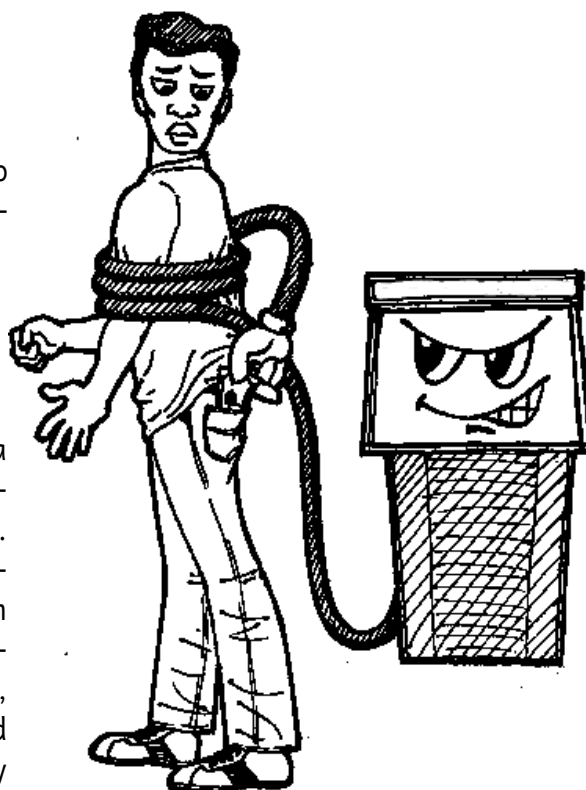
Oil companies are exploiting the increase in demand for diesel and other oil products ever since the economy and public transportation were partially reopened. They want to quickly earn profits to recover their income losses last year. They are rushing as they are worried that the regime might reimpose restrictions amid the pandemic.

They are making it appear that the fluctuations in oil prices are dependent on the prices of crude oil in the global market. However, there is actually no formula on how they impose prices. In truth, local prices are set by cartel arrangements between oil companies.

The fluctuations in the prices of

petroleum products are a result of price manipulation by oil companies. They carry this out in order to exact maximum profit in selling their commodity. In the past, prices have increased more often than they dropped. Since 2017, price increases were 1.2 times higher compared to price decreases. (See Table 1).

Aside from more frequent increases, oil companies also peg the prices of petroleum products for more days after increases compared to after rollbacks. From March 6 to March 11, prices stayed up for 49 days while remained down only for 15 days. This was also true in the past years. (See Table 2). The same happened in 2020 even if sales were very low.



Analyzing data, it can be observed that the claim of local companies that fluctuations are caused by changes in the price of crude oil, is not exactly true. It can be seen that the number of days that domestic prices were up is higher compared to the number of days that the global price of crude oil increased. (See Table 3.)

Price manipulation by oil companies must be denounced. This adds to the plight of the Filipino people, especially the workers, farmers and semiproletariat. The increases in the price of diesel and gasoline further pushes up the price prices of food, transportation and other basic goods and services.

It is only just for the Filipino people to demand a rollback or decrease in the prices of oil products to somehow ease their burden. It is just for them to demand price controls on petroleum products and implement a moratorium on oil price hikes. They must also demand the junking of the 10% additional oil tax levied by Duterte during the pandemic, on top of other increases imposed through the TRAIN law which are all passed on by oil companies to consumers.

Table 1.
Number of oil price hikes and rollbacks in NCR since 2017

Product	Hikes	Rollbacks
SUPER UNLEADED	103	71
PREMIUM UNLEADED	98	74
REGULAR	99	75
DIESEL	95	77
DIESEL PLUS	90	83
KEROSENE	103	71

Source: Department of Energy

Table 3.
Number of days that prices rose in the Brent market

Year	Number of days
2017	136
2018	124
2019	139
2020	135
2021	30

Source: US Energy Information Administration

Table 2.
Average number of days that oil prices are pegged after hikes and rollbacks in NCR

TAON	NAKATAAS	PAGBABA	AGWAT	RASYO
2017	138	134	4	1.03
2018	201	155	46	1.30
2019	202	134	68	1.51
2020	174	171	3	1.02
2021	49	13	36	3.77

Source: Department of Energy

Magnetite mining in Cagayan

The so-called Cagayan River Rehabilitation Project, a program for the extraction of black sand (which contains magnetite) at a portion of the Cagayan River in the town of Gonzaga officially kicked off last month under the pretext of "preventing siltation." Magnetite is one of the primary minerals used in producing steel.

The mining exploration of various companies in the rivers and seas of the province has been ongoing since 2010. Concessions for largescale mining in the area, however, have not pushed through due to the staunch opposition of residents and environmental groups.

To pass the said project, officials of the regime made it appear that its main objective is to "rehabilitate and restore" the Cagayan River. They railroaded the contract signing for the concession in December 2020, just few weeks after the typhoon Ulysses ravaged the province through massive flooding. The contract was awarded to the JDVC Resources Corp., a subsidiary of Apollo Global which is owned by bourgeois comprador Vittorio Paulo Lim.

The permit states that the company is allowed to extract the mineral resources in 1,902 hectares of rivers and seas that are covered by its Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA). This is currently the largest offshore mining

concession in the country. Approximately 632 metric tons of black sand can be found in the area. The minerals that will be extracted from this area will be directly exported to China.

In January, 78 environmental organizations filed a petition to stop the project. They said that the magnetite mining operations is destructive to the ecosystem and marine life. It will destroy protected aquatic resources such as coral reefs, as well as aquatic plants which serve as food of rare animals such as seacows and whales. Its dredging vessels which process the black sand will dump hazardous chemicals directly to the sea. This will kill not only aquatic resources but also the livelihood of fisherfolk who rely on these waters.

26th year of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995

Last March 3, it has been exactly 26 years since the the reactionary state enacted the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, a law which

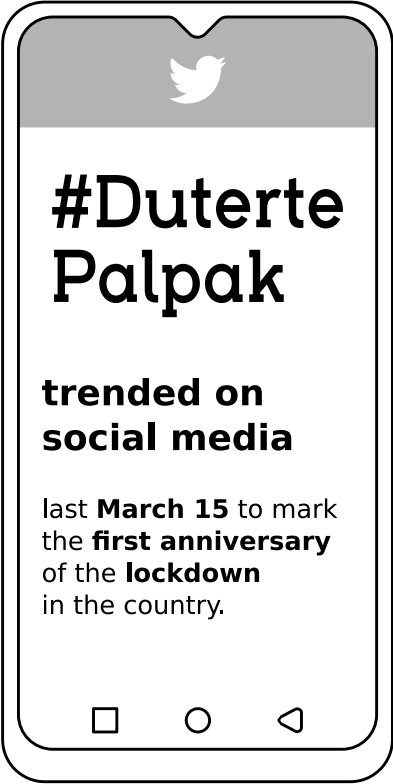
paved the way for the all-out plunder of large mining companies and their local bourgeois comprador counterparts in the country. Latest data by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau indicate that there are around 503 mining and quarrying companies which cover 723,238 hectares of land in various parts of the country.

The biggest among these are the Financial or Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAA) of Sagittarius Mines, Inc. which mines gold and copper in South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Davao del Sur (26,502 hectares); and the Agusan Petroleum and Mineral Corporation which mines gold and silver in the Mindoro island (46,051 hectares). The application for renewal of the FTAA of Oceanagold for gold and copper mining in Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino (9,238 hectares) is still pending after its expiration in 2019.

Among the FTAA and MPSAs that are still effective, the total largest concession areas are for gold (187,671 hectares), nickel (125,748 hectares), magnetite (76,081 tons), silver (70,041 hectares) and copper (55,583 hectares) mining. In 2019, a total of approximately 153 tons of gold was exported by the Philippines. Almost all was (135 tons) was exported to Hong Kong. Most of the copper extracted in the country was exported to to China (294,786 tons).

The contribution of mining companies to the local economy is minuscule despite the massive destruction caused by their operations. Last year, the mining and quarrying sector only contributed 0.7% to the gross domestic product (₱133 billion). The share of the sector is almost the same compared that in 2019 (0.8%) before the pandemic hit the country in 2019. AB





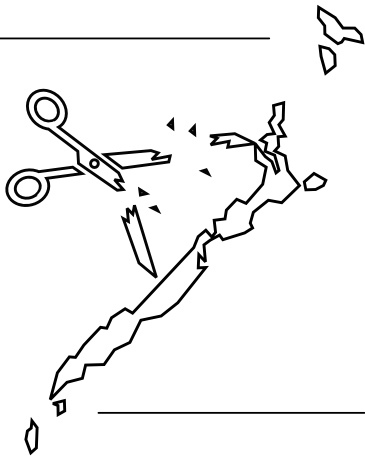
1SAMBAYAN

Its convenors include Ret. Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio.

coalition formed by opposition parties to fight the candidacy of the Duterte clique in 2022.

172,304 "NO" votes vs

122,223 "YES" votes in the plebiscite for partitioning Palawan into three provinces.



The overall share of the **US** in the **global arms export**



ROSE TO 37% for 2016-2020 from **32%** in 2011-2015.

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)

931 M tons of food wasted



across the globe each year. This is equivalent to 17% of the total volume of food produced globally.

Source: United Nations Environment Programme Food Waste Index Report 2021

Massive protests erupted in London to demand the taking back of streets

to make these safe for women. The protests came after the **abduction** of **Sarah Everard** who is believed to have been **waylaid and killed** by a **policeman** on her way home.

Only **240,000** health workers have been inoculated against Covid-19

since the country received the vaccines during the last week of February. The number of inoculated health workers is **not even a fourth** of the total number of **donated vaccines**.

Source: Department of Health

150 years since the **Paris Commune** was established the **first-ever government established by the working class**. This existed for 72 days (March 18 to May 28) until it was brutally crushed by the bourgeoisie. Its lessons continue to guide proletarian revolutionaries until today.

Biden set to intensify US-China military rivalry

The newly installed Biden administration wasted no time in consolidating US military power in the Asia-Pacific region. It has taken successive measures to intensify its military rivalry with China.

Last March 11, the first Quadri-lateral Security Dialogue or "Quad" with heads of Australia, Japan, India and US was held to push forwards the US' vaccine diplomacy in the region. The meeting ended with the agreement to give India \$1 billion to manufacture and sell vaccines in Asia by the end of 2022. This is to counter China's vaccine diplomacy which covered the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries close to India. This is also an attempt to counter criticisms of the the US hoarding millions of vaccine doses in the midst of widespread shortage.

The Quad is seen as a US military alliance similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Since it was established by the Obama administration in 2004, it has strived to strengthen links with India against China.

To cover India, its nearby countries and seas, the US expanded the

US Pacific Area Command's area of operations last 2018. It established the Indo-Pacific Area Command to dominate both the Indian Ocean and Pacific (which covers 51% of the world) and encircle China from both seas. The Indo-Pacom aimed to launch more frequent patrols in conjunction with China near islands the latter claimed in the South China Sea. It also aimed to dump and sell weapons and hold bigger and more frequent military exercises.

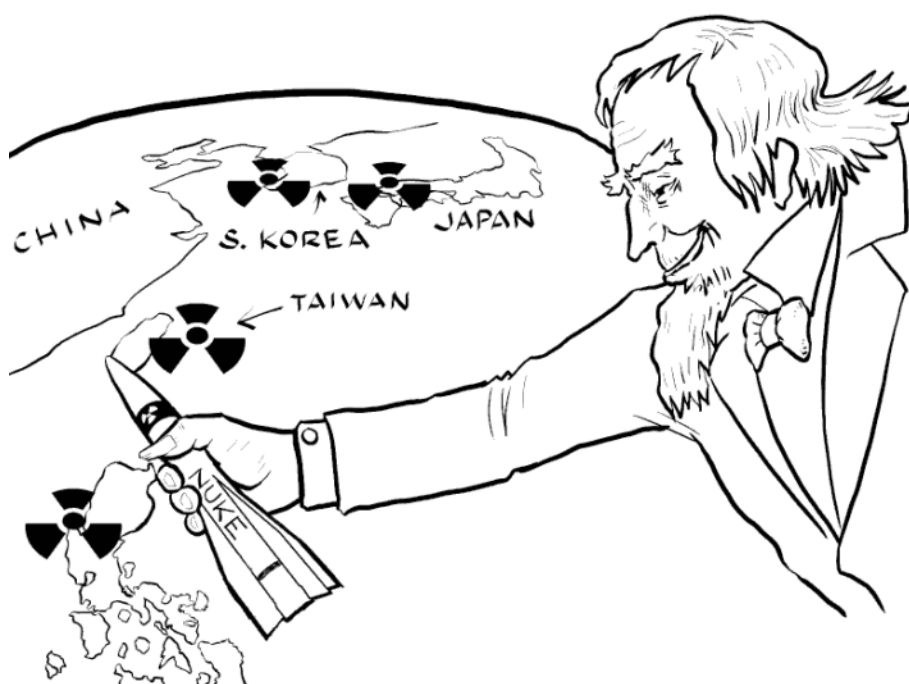
From 2018, US power projection became more frequent in the South China Sea. It launched five sea operations and eight in 2019 in the name of "freedom of navigation." Under the pandemic, it undertook nine such operations and 13 transits across the Taiwan Strait. It flew fighter planes using fake or private identification. Most of its ships and planes passed by, if not stationed, in Philippine seas.

These operations are set to intensify under the Biden administration. Last March 2, the Indo-Pacom asked the US Congress for a \$27 billion budget in the next five years in what is now called the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, a comprehensive military plan to counter China. This was previously called the Pacific Defense Initiative and was given a budget of \$6 billion in 2020 and initially provided \$4.68 billion for 2021.

Indo-Pacom military officials insist that defense from sea and air is no longer enough. They seek to establish a wider network of ground-based missiles and weapons in what it calls the "first island chain." This pertains to Taiwan, Okinawa (Japan) and the western side of the Philippines.

In particular, the Indo-Pacom asked for \$408 million for ground-based weapons and missiles for 2021 and an additional \$2.9 billion for the next five years. It aims to create an anti-China missile network with the minimum reach of 500 kilometers. The US claims that China has 1,250 such missiles that can reach the first island chain while the US has none due to previous prohibition of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. The US did not reenact the treaty when it lapsed in 2019 and manufacturing of missiles with the reach of 500 to 5,500 kilometers is now in full swing in the country.

Aside from Japan and Korea where the US have military bases, it has traditionally stockpiled weapons and missiles in the Philippines. Its locations include its previous base in Subic, Zambales, bases it has constructed in Pawalan and other AFP military camps which fall under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.



Police and military hit list exposed

The Duterte regime's order to list down the the names of progressive teachers, government employees and lawyers was exposed as a scheme for the systematic "red-tagging" and "neutralization." Last March 10, a memorandum issued by the Department of Interior and Local Government was publicized ordering all government agencies to list down the names of teachers and employees affiliated to the Alliance of Concerned Teachers and Courage and submit these to the police and military.

Earlier, the Calbayog City intelligence chief PLt. Fernando Calabria, Jr. was exposed for having asked the local court to list down the names of lawyers providing legal support to those accused of having links with the armed movement. The list included a column for the "mode of neutralization" for the lawyers.

At least 61 lawyers have al-

ready been killed under the Duterte regime.

Arrest. Renalyn Tejero, a paralegal of Karapatan-Caraga, was arrested by the police last March 21 in Barangay Lapasan, Cagayan De Oro City. She was a former student of Alcadev. Her whereabouts are yet to be known.

Last March 17, the police arrested Rosanilla Consad, secretary

general of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers-Caraga and assistant principal of the San Vicente National High School in Barangay Humabon, Butuan City. Prior to the arrest, she was red-tagged and subjected to surveillance. She was released after posting bail on March 20.

In Iloilo, the military arrested Julie Lago, member of the Katilingban sang mga Mangunguma nga Imol sa Janiuay at her house in Mañacabac, Janiuay on March 16. She was accused of being an NPA member. As in other cases, the soldiers planted weapons and "subversive" documents inside her house to justify the arrest.

Groups condemn "Bloody Sunday"

THE "BLOODY SUNDAY" last March 7, in which nine activists were killed and six others were arrested in four provinces across Southern Tagalog, was met with widespread condemnation by individuals, organizations and even agencies of the reactionary government.

On top of the five victims initially reported in Ang Bayan last March 7, four others were were killed by state agents under COPLAN ASVAL. They were identified as Dumagat siblings Puroy and Randy dela Cruz who were killed at Sitio Mina, Barangay Sta. Inez, Tanay, Rizal; and Abner and Edward Mendoza, members of San

Isidro Kasiglahan, Kapatiran at Damayan para sa Kabuhayan, Katarungan at Kapayapaan at Sitio Macaingalan, Barangay Puray, Rodriguez, Rizal.

The killings were called a "massacre" perpetrated by a "murderous regime" by Vice Pres. Leni Robredo. The United Nations, other international human rights groups, aca-

demics, the religious and the Commission on Human Rights also expressed their alarm over the killings.

On March 10, the relatives of two of the victims were harassed and threatened with arrest by the police when they claimed the cadavers of their family members. They only managed to retrieve the bodies with the help of their supporters.

Bayan-Laguna spokesperson Elizabeth Camoral, one of the arrested was already released last March 15, while the 5 other activists remain detained.