



EDITORIAL

Fertile conditions for people's war

The Philippine countryside is engulfed in crisis. Millions of peasants, farmworkers and semiproletarians are beset by rising costs of production and prices of commodities, joblessness and lack of income worsened by oppressive pandemic policies, deleterious effects of calamities and fascist state violence. The social status of the rural pettybourgeoisie is also pulled down by the overall deterioration of living standards.

Attacks against the welfare and rights of the peasant masses have been relentless under the anti-peasant and anti-people US-Duterte regime. Duterte's repeated boast of distributing land served only to obscure the various schemes of land grabbing. Contrary to land reform, widespread land-use conversion was implemented under Duterte who ordered policies to facilitate the interests of land grabbers.

This resulted in large numbers of peasants dislocated or denied of their rights to the land they are tilling to pave the way for infrastructure, energy and ecotourism projects, the entry of mining companies and expansion of planta-

tions. This benefited foreign big capitalists in combination with big bourgeois compradors who are cronies or partners of Duterte. On the other hand, 1.1 million agricultural workers lost jobs in 2016-2018.

The suffering of the peasant masses have worsened under the all-out implementation of neoliberal policies, especially the removal of import restrictions on agricultural products. The implementation of the Rice Liberation Law—supposedly to bring down the retail price of rice—has resulted in grave losses for rice farmers as prices of their produce are pulled down by unequal competition from imported rice.

The liberalization policy also

paved the way for large-scale smuggling that is killing local production and the livelihood of small peasants. Small vegetable farmers have expressed grievance over the dumping of foreign surplus agricultural products. This adds to their burden of rising costs of production leading to widespread bankruptcy of small vegetable farmers.

It is not a far possibility that all-out liberalization will kill the capacity of Philippine agriculture to supply local food needs, including palay. After decades of import liberalization, local production of garlic, onions and other products are on the throes of death, leading to increasing dependence on importation to supply the food requirements of Filipinos.

Aggravated by large-scale land use conversion and all-out import liberalization, the crisis of Philippine agricultural production is rooted in the prevalence of small-scale and backward system of pro-

duction under the semicolonial and semifeudal system. The persistent dominance of monopolist landlords, who accumulate wealth mainly through land rent, is the overwhelming factor that prevents the progress of production. Due to the landlessness or extremely small parcel of land tilled by rent-paying peasants, there is no objective basis for mechanization and other improvements in the system of agricultural production.

Largely, large tracts of land of a few landlords continue to be tilled using draft animals and hand-implements. There is limited and sparse use of imported surplus harvesters and threshers machines. Irrigation facilities are limited and most of agricultural land are still dependent on rain. There is low level of mechanization even in capitalist plantations where a large part of production relies on manual labor. Raising production output is achieved not by improving the system of production, but through the expansion of plantation land.

The worsening crisis in the

countryside primarily pounds the peasant masses and farmworkers, in the form of high land rent, skyrocketing costs of production, usurious debts, low prices of their produce, and low wages. There is a rising number of people who have lost all sources of income and are forced to migrate to seek work in the cities. They are dealt with death blows by disasters brought about by typhoons, drought, pests and other calamities.

The peasant masses undergo even worse suffering and brutality in areas placed under military control and rule. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) hamlet and fence off villages to control the movement of people in line with the maniacal policy of "removing the fish from the water" against the New People's Army (NPA). Oppressive policies are imposed such as prohibiting peasants to go to their fields at restricting the purchase of food and commodities. They suffer from various forms of abuse such as armed intimidation, unlawful arrests, abductions, beatings, killings,

bombings and shelling which aim to destroy their organizations and shatter their determination to defend their welfare and rights.

The NPA must further strive to arouse, organize and mobilize the peasant masses in the countryside. Antifeudal struggles must be thoroughly carried forward to lower land rent, eliminate usury, raise farm wages, for fair farmgate prices, against land grabbing in line with the struggle for genuine land reform. Alongside this, the struggles against terrorism perpetrated by the fascist military and police must be carried out with all-out energy.





Because they suffer from poverty, oppression and violence, the peasant masses are determined to march along the path of resistance. The countryside is ever more fertile ground for the NPA to strike deeper and wider roots for carrying forward the people's war.

NPA punishes killer of urban poor leader in Leyte

LARAB, REVOLUTIONARY NEWSPAPER in Eastern Visayas (EV), reported on October 2 the punitive action mounted by the New People's Army (NPA)-EV against Jojo "Pekulo" Lucero, the criminal who killed urban poor leader Carlito Badion. He was meted revolutionary justice in Ormoc City on June 25.

The people's court found Lucero guilty of murdering Badion, former secretary general of the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap on May 28, 2020 in Barangay Riverside, Ormoc City. The investigation proved that Lucero was under police protection. He reportedly "surrendered" to the Philippine National Police after killing Badion, but was not slapped with any criminal charge. Instead, he was allowed to go home and was rewarded and given grocery supplies.

It can be recalled that the police accused the NPA of murdering Badion. AB

<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Vol. LII No. 20 October 21, 2021</p> <hr/> <p>Ang <i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray, English and Spanish. 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> @cpp_angbayan</p> <p> fb.com/editorsofAB</p> <p> cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</p> </div>	<h2 style="text-align: center; text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Editorial: Fertile conditions for people's war</td><td style="text-align: right;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>Killer of urban poor leader punished</td><td style="text-align: right;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>Electoral slates are yet to be finalized</td><td style="text-align: right;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Skyrocketing oil prices</td><td style="text-align: right;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Protests</td><td style="text-align: right;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Aerial terrorism</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>6 farmers arrested</td><td style="text-align: right;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>Multinationals rule pineapple production</td><td style="text-align: right;">6</td></tr> <tr><td>Cheap farmgate prices set by Dolefil</td><td style="text-align: right;">6</td></tr> <tr><td>Political awakening of a migrant teacher</td><td style="text-align: right;">7</td></tr> <tr><td>NPA attacks soldiers securing mining roads</td><td style="text-align: right;">7</td></tr> <tr><td>In short</td><td style="text-align: right;">8</td></tr> <tr><td>"Grand conspiracy"</td><td style="text-align: right;">9</td></tr> </table>	Editorial: Fertile conditions for people's war	1	Killer of urban poor leader punished	2	Electoral slates are yet to be finalized	3	Skyrocketing oil prices	3	Protests	3	Aerial terrorism	4	6 farmers arrested	5	Multinationals rule pineapple production	6	Cheap farmgate prices set by Dolefil	6	Political awakening of a migrant teacher	7	NPA attacks soldiers securing mining roads	7	In short	8	"Grand conspiracy"	9
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Electoral slates are yet to be finalized

THE FILING OF certificates of candidacy ended on October 8 but the electoral slates of major political parties are not yet final. During the last day of filing, Rodrigo Duterte's clique made a mockery out of the process when Sen. Ronald de la Rosa filed his certificate of candidacy for president under PDP-Laban. Sen. de la Rosa himself admitted that he filed his certificate of candidacy because Sara Duterte has not yet announced her candidacy.

Based on the latest lineups, six candidates for president and five for vice president will run under the reactionary and conservative political parties. The tandems are as follows: Leni Robredo-Kiko Pangilinan for the Liberal Party, Isko Moreno-Willie Ong for Aksyon Demokratiko, Ping Lacson-Tito Sotto for Partido Reporma, Bato de la Rosa-Bong Go for PDP-Laban (Cusi faction), and Manny Pacquiao-Lito Atienza for Promdi. Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. of the Partido Federal ng Pilipinas, a party established by the Duterte clique, will run without a vice president.

Senatorial slates are also yet to be finalized. This October, the non-inclusion of Neri Colmenares of the Makabayan bloc in the senatorial slate of Robredo and Pangilinan became a burning issue. Instead, they included in their slate Senators Juan Miguel Zubiri, Joel Villanueva and Richard Gordon who were long supportive of Duterte.

Meanwhile, Pacquiao and Atienza included both Colmenares and Elmer Labog, leader of Kilusang Mayo Uno, in their senatorial slate. They were also endorsed by Lakas ng Masa who also filed their own candidates for president and vice president.

Skyrocketing oil prices

OIL COMPANIES HAVE raised the prices of petroleum products eight times over the past eight weeks. These raised gasoline and diesel prices by ₱19.70 and ₱18 per liter respectively since the start of 2020.

In the coming months, prices of food and other consumer goods will certainly spike because of these increases.

Oil price hikes are being attributed to increases in the price of crude oil in the global market which has soared to \$80 per barrel. Crude oil prices are rising in the face of the refusal of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and its allies to increase production. This is amid rising demand for crude oil in China and Europe.

In the Philippines, oil companies refuse to disclose the formula used in setting prices, and computing price increases concomitant to adjustments in global market prices. In response, the Makabayan bloc filed a bill seeking transparency in the determination of domestic oil prices and to specify details in the process of price increases.

Similarly, the government is being urged to junk the ₱10 per liter tax on oil which the regime levied in May 2020 amid the pandemic which purportedly aims to raise funds for subsidies. They also urged the government to junk the ₱10 per liter excise tax on gasoline, ₱6 on diesel and ₱3 per kilo of LPG, which were levied on top of the 12% value added tax.



World Hunger Day. Peasant activists protested on October 16 in front of the Mega Q-Mart in Quezon City to mark the World Food Day which they dubbed as World Hunger Day. They challenged candidates in the 2022 elections to lay down "concrete solutions to address the chronic food and agricultural crisis based on economic sovereignty and self-sufficiency" as part of their electoral agenda.

Stop reclamation project in Cebu. Fisherfolk and farmers conducted a fluvial protest in Calajoan, Minglanilla, Cebu on October 15 to oppose quarrying and the impending reclamation of the area. They condemned the local government for approving the 100-hectare Ming-Mori Reclamation Project. They expressed apprehension over the possible impact of this project to the environment and their livelihood. They also exposed the continuing quarrying operation in the mountains of Minglanilla.

Electricians' protest. Workers of the Hypervolt Contractor Corporation protested on October 11 in front of the office of the Department of Labor and Employment to condemn their management over delayed wages, illegal deductions, and lack of benefits. Hypervolt is a contracting agency of electricians who are outsourced to install and fix electrical lines.

Aid and vaccine, not demolition. Members of Kadamay converged in front of the office of the Department of the Interior and Local Government in Quezon City on October 9 to demand "zero demolition" as majority of residents are facing severe hardships amid the pandemic and economic crisis. They reported that approximately 50,000 are facing threats of demolition in Metro Manila.

Victory of workers of a electric cooperative in Benguet. Employees of the Benguet Electric Cooperative successfully ousted Malacañang's puppet Ana Marie Rafael who was appointed by the National Electrification Authority as general manager of the said cooperative on July 29. Rafael was ousted after a series of protests mounted by hundreds of employees in Baguio City.

Aerial terrorism

Third part of the series on the inhumane and destructive use of drones and aerial bombing.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)'s aerial bombardment, together with the use of drones and aerial strafing by helicopters, is one of the most brutal tactic in the reactionary state's war of suppression. This is nothing but fascist terrorist from the sky that brings violence, fear and destruction wherever it is used by the AFP.

The use of aerial terrorism has become worse after Rodrigo Duterte ordered the AFP to "flatten the hills" in 2017. He demonstrated to the entire country his boundless brutality by pounding Marawi City to the ground. Since then, hundreds of bombs, thousands of rockets and innumerable machine gun rounds and artillery shells have been used by the AFP in its war to suppress the people and their just armed resistance.

Intensified use of aerial terrorism was started in Mindanao regions in 2018, but was used across the country later on. Intensified aerial bombing continues in the Moro area, where US forces are permanently based. The AFP continues to acquire aerial vehicles, cannons, missiles and bombs with the insidious aim of placing the entire country in the grip of its terrorism.

Aerial bombing and strafing has become a permanent component in the AFP's counter guerrilla arsenal that aims to strike fear among the masses and intimidate the Red fighters of the New People's Army. In violation of the international humanitarian laws, these weapons are superfluous, indiscriminate endangers the lives of civilians and causes destruction of property and the environment.

Just last month, the AFP dropped 69 bombs and 18 rockets, shelled 15 times and repeatedly strafed the Lumad communities and farms in Talaingod, Davao del Norte and the surrounding Pantaron mountains within 35 days since September 15. This aim to make the Manobo people to bow and "surrender" to the AFP.

Lumad communities have long been been bombed by the AFP. In 2017, an AFP bomb dropped in the proximity of the Fr. Pops Tentorio Memorial School, a Lumad school in Magpet, North Cotabato. In December 31, 2018, the AFP dropped six bombs in Barangay Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur, hit an area just 150 meters away from Sitio Panukmoan and Sitio Decoy. On March 24, 2020, artillery shells hit the ground 330 meters from the center of Barangay Mandahikan, Cabanglasan, Bukidnon. On January, aerial bombs hit pasture land, farms and hunting grounds of the minority people in Abra and Mt. Province. In Visayas, a rocket shrapnel pierced through the roof of a house in Dolores, Eastern Samar on August 16

Aerial bombing operations are often carried out in the early morning and lasts for a few hours. On April 19, 2020, the AFP dropped five bombs at around 5 a.m. near the homes of Sitio Kapanal, Barangay Gasi, Kiamba, Sarangani, while some Lumad peasants (from the T'boli tribe) were already in their farms. On April 26, 2018, the bombing in Mati, Davao Oriental started at 5 in the afternoon and lasted for two hours, and resumed at 9 p.m. lasting until midnight. On the same night, 38 bombs were dropped in the towns of Sinacaban and Jimenez in Misamis Occidental at nine in the evening and lasted until four the following morning. The artillery shelling in Barangay Osmeña, Palapag, Northern Samar, started at 11 p.m. and lasted until



two the following morning.

Relentless aerial bombing and strafing bring about extreme trauma to the people in the countryside. Not less than 1,000 families evacuated their community in Barangay Monteclaro, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro and Barangay Lisap, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro after their village was subjected to four days of bombing and strafing starting on April 29, 2019. Around 1,000 families evacuated their communities on February 11, 2017 after the AFP bombed barangays Macopa, Kibagyo and Bullucan in Laak, Compostela Valley (Davao de Oro). More than 190 families (including 660 children) evacuated Barangay Buhawen, San Marcelino, Zambales on August 21, 2020 after their community was bombed; and more than 200 families evacuated adjacent barangays after AFP aerial bombing and strafing in the mountainous portion of Barangay Lidong, Caramoan, Camarines Sur on August 13, 2020.

The AFP exploits the fear caused by the bombing and uses this to make residents kneel and follow the dictates of the AFP, including "surrendering" to the military. There is also the case of 2,000 families forced by the military to evacuate after the AFP dropped 15 bombs on their communities damaging their corn fields. In November 2, 2018, residents of Barangay Luayon, Makilala, North Cotabato were threatened with bombing, a day after they were forced to evacuate due to earthquakes.

(Refer to the list of cases of brutal bombing at cpp.ph).

AB

Multinationals rule Philippine pineapple production

Pineapple is among the top agricultural products in the Philippines. The country is the second biggest pineapple exporter in the world. Last year, the country produced 2.7 million metric tons (MT) of pineapples valued at ₱26.1 billion. Majority (85%) of local production is controlled by two multinational companies Del Monte Philippines Incorporated and Dole Philippines (Dolefil), both established by US companies in the 1920s. Del Monte Philippines is currently owned by the big bourgeois comprador Campos family, while Dolefil was bought by Japanese company Itochu Corporation.



Pineapples are sold fresh or canned as beverage or mixed in other food products. A small portion is also processed into fabric. Based on latest data by the regime, the average retail price of fresh pineapples is ₱53.07 per kilo. It claims that average farmgate price is ₱19.37 per kilo when, in fact, farmers are forced to sell their produce for as low as ₱5 per kilo.

Pineapple is planted across 66,048 hectares of agricultural land across the country. A huge part of this is concentrated in the Northern Mindanao Region (26,507 hectares)

and Soccsksargen (24,561 hectares). Dolefil's pineapple plantations cover approximately 32,000 hectares of agricultural land, while Del Monte covers 20,000 hectares. These were originally ancestral lands grabbed from Lumads. Smaller pineapple farms are mostly controlled by these companies under leaseback and contract growing arrangements. Outside these companies, Lapanday Foods Corporation of the Lorenzo landlord family also contracts out smaller farmers to produce pineapples.

These companies aggressively

expand their plantations to accumulate more profit from pineapple production. In 2014, Dolefil announced plans to expand its plantations by 12,000 hectares. This will cover agricultural and ancestral lands in Soccsksargen which have long been cultivated by settlers and Lumads.

These companies make use of contract growing and leaseback schemes for pineapple production to directly control lands owned by farmers. Under contract growing, the entire cost of production is shouldered by the farmer, while the price, quota and quality of products is solely determined by the corporation. The leaseback system, on the other hand, involves long-term leasing out of lands (owned by "cooperatives") to corporations at extremely low rates. Farmers are prohibited from planting other crops, including those for consumption, in lands covered by these arrangements.

Exploitation of farmworkers

During harvest season, big plantations commonly employ *sacadas* to further minimize production costs. These workers are denied their rights to organize, unionize, and receive decent wages and benefits. The *pakyawan* (quota) scheme is also commonly implemented in plantations to accumulate more profit in the production of pineapples.

"Multinationals...", continued on page 6

Cheap farmgate price set by Dolefil

THE UNYON NG mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA) criticized the report of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) on October 4 which claimed that pineapple is the "most profitable agricultural product for Filipino farmers." The group belied this statement saying that thousands of farmers in Polomolok and Tupi in South Cotabato who are under contract growing agreements with Dole Philippines (Dolefil) are obliged to sell their produce to the company at an extremely low rate.

UMA exposed that Dolefil buys pineapples from farmers for as low as ₱5 per kilo, and not ₱19.37 per kilo as claimed by PSA. At this rate, PSA's claim that farmers earned an average net income of ₱658,097 per hectare of pineapple farm in 2020 is only an illusion.

In real terms, farmers only earned an average gross income of ₱202,100 per hectare. Each hectare of land yields around 40,422 kilos pineapples per year.

Their actual gross income is only ₱404,220 for a three-year crop cycle as pineapples bear fruit after 18 months from planting. This means that their gross income is only ₱134,740 per hectare annually. But minus the production cost of ₱124,881, their net income for three years is only ₱154,458 or only ₱4,290.50 per month.

On the other hand, Dolefil posted a net income of ₱284,273 per hectare for a three-year period or ₱94,757 per hectare per year, or almost twice higher compared to the income of farmers.

Political awakening of a migrant teacher

The hardships suffered by migrant workers doubled when the Covid-19 pandemic raged across the world. These migrants include Julie, a migrant teacher from Mindanao who has been working for several years in another Asian country, where the number of Filipino migrants is relatively low.

She admitted she decided to leave her family and country to apply for a job abroad and receive a higher salary. Her starting salary abroad was roughly equivalent to a principal's pay in the Philippines. There is a high demand for Filipino teachers who are proficient in English in the country where she works.

Classrooms closed, eyes opened

When the government in the coun-



try where she works closed schools from March to April 2020, Julie experienced firsthand the vulnerable situation of many migrant Filipino teachers like her. Although she was able to find a part-time job and benefit from the material and medical support extended by her part-time employer during the lockdown, she couldn't turn a blind eye on the plight of several Filipino teachers in other schools who worked on a "no work, no pay" basis and lost

their jobs and were not able to find work. "These teachers already earn lower salaries. They also worked under a 10-month contract which meant they didn't earn a living when the lockdown was announced," she said sadly.

"I was also supposed to go home for a vacation in May 2020 but was advised against it because it was difficult to come back due to the lockdown," she said. Many teachers who went back to the Philippines prior to the lockdown were not able to return. They are now jobless, she added.

Despite having no income, Julie says that not one of the Filipino teachers or workers who stayed in or near the residential compound where she lived received any financial or

"Political..." continued on page 7

"Multinationals..." from page 5

Farmers are further burdened and put under hazardous conditions due to systematic and long-term exposure to toxic chemicals (pesticides, herbicides and fertilizer) used by multinationals to accelerate the growth and extend the shelf-life of pineapples.

Export product

In 2020, the Philippines exported 990,780 MT of fresh and processed pineapples valued at ₱674.54 million. This comprises more than a third of total pineapple production in the country. The biggest volume of pineapples (71%) were exported by the country to the US (236,810 MT), China (231,340 MT) and Japan (231,080 MT). Under the Duterte regime, exports to China increased by five times from 44,360 MT in 2016 to 231,340 MT in 2020.

In the US, the average retail price of fresh pineapple is \$1.44 (₱72) per kilo or four times higher than the farmgate price (₱19.37) in the Philippines. Meanwhile, pineapple juice costs \$2.8 (₱140) per liter.

State forces illegally arrest 6 farmers

Six farmers were arrested by armed state agents these past weeks. The victims were arrested while the military were combing peasant communities, and forcing residents to surrender.

On October 17, the police arrested Cristina Magistrado, former organizer of Amihan-Cagayan, at her house in Binangonan, Rizal based on trumped-up charges. She was brought to a police station in Tuguegarao City where she is currently detained and being interrogated.

In Sorsogon, state forces arrested Sonny G. Nace. He was accused of being a member of the New People's Army (NPA) on the basis of firearms planted as evidence. Nace, a resident of Barangay Tulatula Sur, Magallanes, works as a small-town lottery agent.

In the same province, the 31st IB and police have been terrorizing at least nine barangays in Donsol and seven in Pilar for two months now. The NPA-Sorsogon reported on October 14 that more than 20 residents were subjected to intimidation and coerced to surrender as NPA members.

On September 27, the 85th IB arrested couple Leonina Ilag and Poli Naval at Sitio Hagakhak, Barangay Malaya, General Luna, Quezon after an encounter between an NPA unit and the 85th IB near their house.

Two residents of Barangay Maraiging, Jabonga, Agusan del Sur were also arrested by the 29th IB after an NPA raid in the said area on September 28. The victims were identified as Andre Pinao and Tungan Lauro.

AB

material aid from the Philippine government during the lockdown.

As the lockdown went on, seeing empty classrooms made her feel more homesick. She worried about living in isolation, short on funds and resources, and unable to come home. She found solace in sharing stories with other migrant Filipino workers.

This period opened her eyes to the prevailing social ills that, prior to the health crisis and the socio-economic hardships that came with it, seemed to linger only in the periphery of her daily life as a migrant worker. Her understanding of the underlying reasons why millions of Filipinos were pushed to become migrant workers deepened.

Reading political writings published by progressive and revolutionary Filipinos helped her understand the current situation. She came across the website of the Philippine revolution, including the Ang Bayan newspaper, and other accounts of revolutionary organizations in social media, and followed current events more closely. This period also made her understand her brother better, and the life he chose for himself.

Unbeknown to her fellow migrants, Julie is the sister of Ka Elmo, a Red fighter of the New People's Army in Mindanao.

Ka Elmo regularly engages Julie in "remote organizing and consoli-

dation," giving her reading assignments on the national democratic revolution and recommending Marxist-Leninist resource materials to raise her political and ideological consciousness.

Stark contrast

In their online exchanges, Ka Elmo updated Julie on the state of the country and Rodrigo Duterte's failed response to the Covid-19 public health crisis, especially its impact to the Philippine education system. Ka Elmo himself worked as a teacher for a year before joining the NPA, while their mother is a public school teacher.

Although far from home, Julie is aware of the hardships suffered by Filipino teachers and students

"It seems that the Duterte government basically just abandoned the teachers and the students," Julie said, citing their mother's experience of having to provide for materials and resources such as modules or internet connection from her own pocket because the subsidies and allowances for these are either non-existent or insufficient.

Julie shares her brother's view of the stark contrast of Duterte's pandemic response compared to that of other leaders in neighboring countries. Julie could not help but compare the more prompt response and

more developed health system in the country where she works.

The situation of Filipino citizens are comparable with the situation of citizens where Julie works, but their

government's response to the pandemic is relatively better. Julie is already fed up with the Duterte government's response, especially as schools remain closed unlike in the country where she works.

"Duterte keeps on insisting that Filipinos should adjust to the 'new normal,' but it turns out that the new normal is

actually just an attempt to normalize his regime's failures and inutile policies, corruption and misprioritization in the government budget," said Julie in one of her conversations with Elmo. She also scoffed at the government's aid program, aware how this is corruption-ridden.

"Peasants and Lumads who belong to the most neglected sectors of society should have been taken into consideration for planning the blended learning system," she said. The Duterte government did not take into consideration hundreds of students with no access to internet and electricity especially teachers and students in provinces and far flung areas. "They have to walk hours just to procure the modules on their own," said Elmo.

She is infuriated with the fascist regime's brazen attacks on Lumad schools and bakwit centers. "It is no wonder that many peasants and Lumad turn to the armed revolution as a means to end their oppression."

"When the health crisis subsides and I am able to go back to the Philippines, I'll come visit you in the countryside," Julie promised Ka Elmo. In the meantime, she said that she will continue learning more about the Filipino people's protracted war and, "if she can," start an organizing group in the country where she is based "to support the struggle back home."



NPA attacks soldiers securing mining roads in Agusan

EIGHT FIREARMS WERE seized by the New People's Army during a raid against the 29th IB in Barangay Maraiging, Jabonga, Agusan del Norte on September 28. Two R4 rifles, two M16-A1 rifles, an M14 rifle and three .45 calibre pistols were seized from the soldiers. Four soldiers were killed and two others were wounded.

The soldiers were serving as security forces to a road construction project of private company Z'Charles Construction. The project is touted as a "farm to market road" project but will actually serve as access roads by trucks and equipment of mining companies which plan to operate in the area.

In Rizal province, the NPA ambushed elements of the 80th IB operating at Sitio Ilas, Barangay Puray, Rodriguez on September 30. Two soldiers were killed.



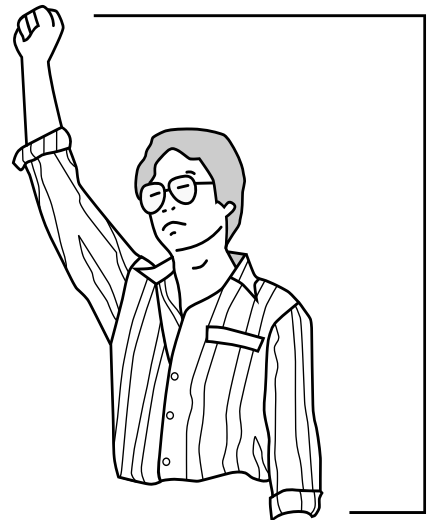
P4 BILLION

NTF-ELCAC additional budget inserted in the **operational funds** of the AFP, DILG and other government agencies.



35 YEARS

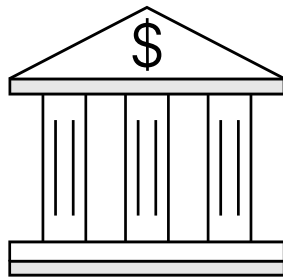
before three soldiers were convicted for the **murder** of labor leader **Rolando "Ka Lando" Olalia** and his driver and trade unionist **Leonor Alay-ay**. Olalia and Alay-ay were abducted by the military in November 1986. The sentence was issued on October 12.



The Philippines is the **World Bank's**

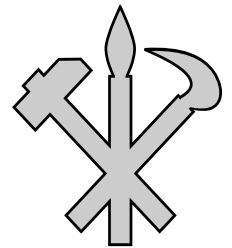
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debtor country. The Duterte regime borrowed up to **₱153.5 billion** from the bank **in the name of pandemic response**.



OCTOBER 10, 1945

founding day of the **Workers' Party of Korea**, which currently leads the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** (North Korea).



58,000

trading posts in the **Cordilleras** are affected by the vegetable price fall due to the smuggling of cheap Chinese vegetables



Source: Apit Tako

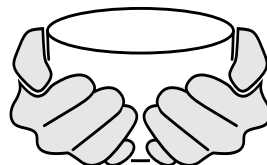
₱14,368

per month was needed by a family of five during the first half of 2020 for a balanced diet and to meet nutritional requirements as recommended by the state's "Pinggang Pinoy."

Source: Foodlink Advocacy Cooperative

46.1 million

Filipinos **experienced moderate to extreme hunger in the past three years** (2018-2020). This is higher by **42.1 million** compared to the 2014-2016 figures.



The number of individuals who suffered **extreme hunger** increased from **3.3 million** to **4.3 million** during the same period.

Source: The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World. UNFAO 2021

Senate reports on Duterte, DBM and Pharmally's "grand conspiracy"

It is impossible that Rodrigo Duterte has nothing to do with the "grand conspiracy" to defraud the government of billions of pesos during the height of the pandemic last year. He is in the center of the swindle perpetrated mainly by his Chinese businessman friend and economic adviser Michael Yang, officials of the Pharmally Pharmaceutical Corporation and previous and current officers of the Procurement Service ng Department of Budget and Management (PS-DBM).

This and more details are contained in the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee's (BRC) initial report made public by Sen. Richard Gordon last October 19. The Senate released the report despite Duterte's threats, ridicule and intimidation in his effort to hamper senate hearings which started on August 18. The investigation pushed through even after Duterte threatened the senators with jail time and banned his cabinet members from attending the hearings.

Duterte allowed his friends to rob the government coffers, according to the senator. Among the anomalies the BRC unearthed are the following:

1) The anomalous transfer of ₱47.7 billion from the Department of Health to the PS-DBM last April 2020 which was without proper documentation. The PS-DBM was then headed by Christopher Lao, who served in Duterte's offices and his campaign machinery in 2016.

2) From the DOH funds, Lao granted Pharmally at least eight contracts with a combined worth of ₱11.486 billion even as it did not have sufficient capital.

3) The PS-BDM bought personal protective equipment from Pharmally at ₱1,910 per set when there were PPEs priced at ₱945 per set at that time.

4) The PS-DBM bought tests kits

from Pharmally at more than double the price at ₱1,720 each when there were test kits available at ₱925 each from other companies

5) Three Pharmally officials listed fake office and residential addresses and, due to this, were not immediately contacted and were unable to attend the first few weeks of the hearings.

6) Pharmally owner Huang Tzu Yen and financier Yang are facing swindling cases in Taiwan. In the course of the hearings, it was divulged that Yang "loaned" millions of pesos to Pharmally to pay its Chinese suppliers. This belied Yang's claim that he only introduced the company's officials to suppliers in China.

7) Pharmally sold expired face shields by tampering expiration dates in its boxes.

8) The PS-DBM signed for ghost deliveries.

9) Pharmally used AFP planes to transport supplies from China.

10) Pharmally did not pay taxes to the Philippines despite earning billions of pesos in profits from government contracts.

In this connection, the BRC recommended the filing of criminal cases, including perjury, against Yang. Graft, corruption and deception charges are recommended



against Lao, previous PS-DBM's officer-in-charge and current director Warren Liong. PS-DBM officials who signed for the ghost deliveries will be charged with falsification of public documents.

Criminal charges of perjury, providing false information, estafa and violations to the Bayanihan to Heal As One Act are recommended against Pharmally directors and officials.

One of Pharmally's officials, Linconn Ong, is still under Senate custody due to his refusal to divulge how much Yang loaned to the company.

According to reports, Yang and Pharmally officials were already in hiding even before the report was published. The Senate's sergeant-at-arms believe that they may already out of the country.

Last October 19, progressive organizations launched a protest in front of the Senate demanding that the Duterte regime be held accountable for corruption and squandering pandemic funds. Prior to this, more than 300 doctors came out with a statement to condemn the regime's officials who are "inept, shameless and greedy."