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Editorial

## The blood-stained hands of the US-Arroyo regime

**B**lood drips not only from the hands of the Ampatuans and their armed followers for the Maguindanao massacre. It is the US-Arroyo regime and the entire rotten ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system it lords over that bear the greater burden of accountability.

The Maguindanao massacre is a heinous crime committed by a feudal and militarist warlord boosted and coddled by its allied ruling regime as payback for its many debts of gratitude to the Ampatuans. It is the regime that enlarged, armed and fueled the arrogance of this clan's private army in order to use it as an instrument of violence against both their reactionary political rivals and the revolutionary forces and the people.

The public was shocked at the grim aftermath of Gloria Arroyo's systematic and unbridled encouragement of her allies' warlordism. The gruesome massacre has earned intense and widespread condemnation from various sectors here and abroad. It was perpetrated on November 23 by the Ampatuan clan, its private army and cohorts among the government's military, paramilitary and police forces to prevent a strong rival from the Mangudadatus, also a warlord clan, from filing his certificate of candidacy.

Fifty-seven bodies have been recovered so far from the site of the massacre. Among the victims were members of the Mangudadatu clan, 30 journalists, two lawyers and a number of civilian motorists who happened to be in the area. Some of the women victims were raped and the other victims' bodies desecrated.

At the time the massacre was being perpetrated, leaders of the Ampatuan clan were in Malacañang for a meeting with Arroyo.

The Maguindanao massacre starkly brought to the fore the culture of impunity and unbridled violence cultivated by the Arroyo regime and by the country's neocoloni-



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al and semifeudal reactionary politics and ruling system as a whole. This includes the corrupt, evil and antipeople character of reactionary and opportunist political alliances among national warlords vying for leadership over the reactionary state and warlords competing for dominance in their respective local fiefdoms. The warlords' use of military, paramilitary and police forces as well as private goons to promote their own and trample on the people's interests has long been part of decadent reactionary politics in the country.

The greater number of victims of the wanton violence unleashed by the ruling regime and state are those who have been fighting and advancing reforms in the rotten, violent and antipeople ruling system. The ruling regime has long been responsible for the killing of more than a thousand activists, journalists and other harsh critics of its reign of evil. It is also responsible for other serious violations of human rights such as abductions, illegal detention, torture, grave threats and harassment perpetrated against those who wage resistance and even innocent civil-

ians. Military operations, forced evacuations, food blockades, the destruction of entire communities and farms and other fascist atrocities have victimized millions of people.


Even during elections for the reactionary government, the biggest number of victims of murder and other brutalities inflicted by the fascist military, paramilitary, police and private goons of warlords are militant leaders and activists of democratic and progressive mass organizations and parties. The dirty tactics and violence unleashed by reactionary state forces against them are orchestrated from the highest levels. The starkest example is Malacañang's Inter-Agency Legal Action Group which defined the framework of violence and intimidation that was implemented down to the level of the local tyrants embodied by the warlords and their cohorts among the military, paramilitary and police forces.

The Ampatuan clan's leaders and everyone else who ordered and perpetrated the Maguindanao massacre must be decisively held to account. Beyond this, Gloria Arroyo

and her regime must pay for this heinous crime and her other crimes against the people. This is especially since the regime has been concocting various ways of distancing itself from the Ampatuans such as declaring martial law throughout most of Maguindanao in the face of intense and widespread condemnation for the heinous massacre, and exploiting the various resources and instrumentalities of the reactionary state to deceive and further suppress the people, save itself and cling to power.

But no matter what Arroyo and her regime do to save themselves, there is no obscuring the glaring fact that it is she who is behind the Ampatuans and is principally responsible for the latter's crimes. It is she who has cultivated the culture of violence and impunity among the warlords, fascist military, paramilitary and police forces and the national and local terrorist machinery of the puppet reactionary state. It is she and the cunning fascist leaders of her regime who have undeniably ordered the perpetration of dirty and brutal attacks on the revolutionary forces, activists and others who have been tirelessly struggling against her regime and the entire system's corrupt and evil reign. There is no covering up the fact that these attacks are being intensified in their desperate bid to prolong herself in power to avoid being held accountable for her crimes against the people.

This serves as a challenge to the revolutionary forces and the broad masses of the people to ever determinedly work to end and change not only the prevailing regime and its murderous allies and minions, but the entire puppet and reactionary state and the system that props up the corrupt, brutal and antipeople regime. **AB**

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# The warlord-coddling Arroyo regime

The Ampatuans have long been notorious for being fierce warlords. But the ruling Arroyo regime made the clan even more vicious. Before the bloody massacre in Maguindanao, the province and the entire Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) were already under the tight grip of the feudal-military warlords of the Ampatuan clan.

The clan has been ruling this part of Mindanao since the 1930s, during the US colonial period. Its members closely cooperated with the military, paramilitary and police forces of successive puppet reactionary regimes. Its political power was based in a third of the municipalities in Maguindanao province.

The incumbent clan leader, Andal Ampatuan Sr., was one of the local warlords utilized by the Marcos dictatorship in its campaign against the Moro National Liberation Front. When the Arroyo regime took power, Ampatuan Sr., who was then vice mayor of Maganoy (now Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao's capital) was appointed officer-in-charge. In 1988, he was officially elected mayor.

In 2001, the incumbent Arroyo regime picked Ampatuan Sr. to run against the incumbent pro-MILF governor Zacaria Candao. With the AFP's help, Malacañang engineered Ampatuan's victory. Ampatuan Sr. is now serving his third term as Maguindanao governor.

The Ampatuans' power grew even more after the 2004 presidential elections, when then Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano (who earned notoriety in the "Hello, Garci" scandal) conspired with the clan to deliver almost all of the province's votes to Arroyo. The fake president garnered 200,000 votes in Maguindanao while the popular Fernando Poe Jr. got less than 60,000 votes. The Ampatuans even

made it appear that Poe did not get a single vote in three towns of the province. After this, Arroyo held a grand feast in Malacañang only for the Ampatuans.

Meanwhile, in September 2005, Malacañang granted an additional reward to the Ampatuans for delivering a one million vote lead for Arroyo by installing Ampatuan Sr.'s eldest son Zaldy Ampatuan as ARMM governor.

In the 2007 elections, the clan proved its power once again when candidates under Arroyo's "Team Unity" won 12-0 in Maguindanao and various other areas in the ARMM.

In exchange, the regime paved the way for the ascension of members of the Ampatuan clan to various local government units, in the ARMM, in Congress and even within Arroyo's cabinet. The Arroyo regime also rewarded them with huge subsidies and financial support, including hundreds of millions of funds for big construction projects such as the provincial capitol and sports center. Above all, the reactionary state supplied weapons to the Ampatuans' huge private army and arsenal.

The feudal and militarist clan and Ampatuan Sr. himself have been notorious for using coercion and violence against their enemies. In 1988, the clan patriarch ordered the murder of his strongest opponent in the bid for the mayoralty of Maganoy even before the elections took place. In 2002, a year after the Maguindanao gubernatorial

elections, he masterminded the abduction of two of Candao's relatives, who remain missing to this day.

The clan's private army which started off by collaborating with the reactionary state's military and police forces was further boosted with more firearms by the Arroyo regime when it campaigned for the widespread establishment and arming of paramilitary forces and put them under the control of local executives. For this purpose, Arroyo issued in October 2006 Executive Order (EO) 546 that paved the way and provided funds to local officials and police forces to build and provide firearms to Special Civilian Armed Auxiliaries (SCAA) as multiplier forces against enemies and critics of the state. Through this, the regime effectively gave its allied warlords the license to prevail over their political opponents and perpetrate atrocities against the people.

Its primary objective, however, is to use the paramilitary forces of warlords like the Ampatuans to counter the revolutionary movements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the New People's Army (NPA) and employ them as additional instrumentalities of Oplan Bantay Laya. This is along the US' overall design and scheme to use state terrorism and unbridled human rights violations on different levels against the revolutionary movement and other opponents and critics of the regime. These instruments include the US' own operatives, the puppet state's forces and those of local tyrants such as the Ampatuans.

After three years, the Ampatuans succeeded in bloating their own private army which became 500 to 800 strong, including 200 SCAA forces—all with the Arroyo regime's consent, and through the use of government funds. This was

on top of their ability to utilize and connive with the local military and police forces.

Not content with the old M14 rifles, carbines and Garands used by the SCAA, the Ampatuans bought and acquired modern and high-powered firearms from the military and police. Among the military equipment discovered on December 4 in their arms caches inside and within the vicinity of their extravagant mansions, warehouses, ranches and other secret hiding places were 60 mm mortars, recoilless rifles, M60s, Ultimax, Heckler & Koch light support machine guns, caliber .50 Barrett sniper rifles, Belgian FAL and over 200 other high-powered weapons. There were also more than 500,000 rounds of ammunition found in these areas. The clan had more

than enough firepower to arm two battalions. Most of the equipment was supplied by the reactionary military and even had the "DND Arsenal" labels intact.

The clan also has hidden armored personnel carriers that are legitimately used only by the reactionary state's military and police forces.

Such military hardware and proclivities are not unique to the Ampatuans. Even the Mangudatus who were hit by the Ampatuans belong to an armed warlord clan. They are now being used by the Arroyo regime as temporary replacements for its local fascist minion in Maguindanao and neighboring provinces. This was after the Ampatuans had been totally discredited before the public with so many pieces of evidence against them

that have come to light and with the regime's difficulty in saving them and their evil relationship with the regime.

Among the other feudal and militarist warlords who are current allies of the Arroyo regime is the anti-Bangsamoro and counterrevolutionary warlord Piñol clan of North Cotabato. The Arroyo regime encourages and coddles its private army to fight the MILF, NPA and other "enemies of the state." There are also the Pinedas of Pampanga and the Dys of Isabela.

Despite the striking fact that feudal and militarist warlords in ARMM have more than 114,000 firearms at hand, there are other vicious warlords in other parts of the country, both allied with the Arroyo camp and with various other reactionary politicians. **AB**

## Maguindanao massacre meets widespread condemnation

**W**idespread calls to condemn the Maguindanao massacre and punish the perpetrators are reverberating here and abroad.

**Nationwide condemnation.** If the Arroyo government cannot give to justice to the victims of the Ampatuan massacre, Arroyo should immediately resign.

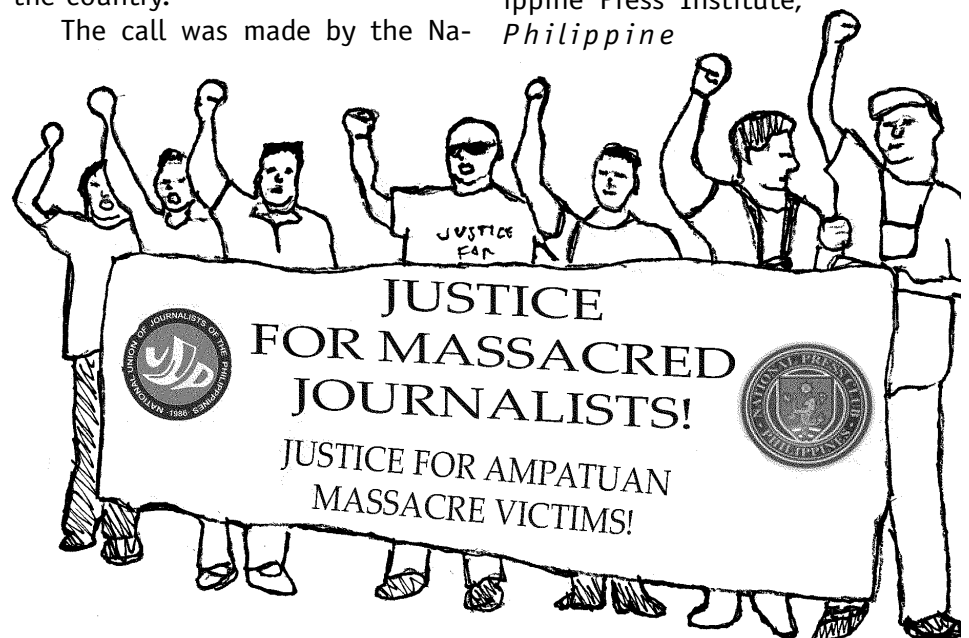
Thus demanded nine media groups in a statement on November 30. They held the regime accountable for the culture of unbridled brutality that culminated in the gruesome massacre whose victims included 30 media workers.

Among the journalists' demands were the arrest and trial of all those involved in the slaughter and the formation of a special court for this purpose. They also demanded all-out protection for the witnesses and the immediate dismantling of all private armies in

the country.

The call was made by the Na-

tional Union of Journalists of the Philippines, Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists, College Editors Guild of the Philippines, Center for Community Journalism and Development, Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, Philippine Human Rights Reporting Project, Philippine Press Institute, *Philippine*



*Daily Inquirer* and *Business World*.

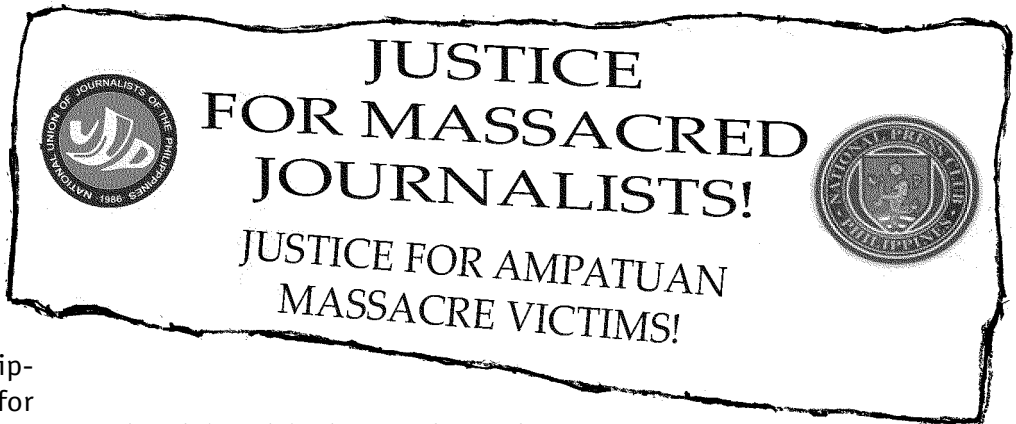
That same day, 3,000 journalists and supporters, along with 2,000 members of progressive organizations marched to Mendiola to condemn the Maguindanao Massacre and demand justice for the victims. Activists led by BAYAN, GABRIELA, Promotion of Church People's Response, Solidarity Philippines, People's Movement for Change and National Union of People's Lawyers brought three black mock coffins—with the first one bearing the words "Justice," the second, "Press Freedom" and the third, "Human Rights." The demonstration was one of the biggest protest actions of journalists in the Philippines.

In the middle of the protest, Press Secretary Cerge Remonde stood in front of the statue of the late journalist and *Manila Times* publisher Joaquin "Chino" Roces in Mendiola and attempted to read Gloria Arroyo's statement on the massacre. But he was met with furious journalists who threw crumpled pieces of paper and bottle caps at him, forcing him to back out.

Before the demonstrators left, they covered Roces' statue with black cloth, and pinned pieces of paper on it bearing the names of the journalists murdered in Maguindanao. They also lit candles tied with black ribbons at the foot of the statue.

The indignation rally was joined by Anbalagan Veerasamy, secretary general of the Confederation of Asean Journalists.

On November 27, over 100 journalists in Cebu launched a protest march. They wore black clothes and armbands to protest the death of their fellow journalists and other victims of the Maguindanao massacre. The Cebu Media



Legal Aid (Cemla) also condemned the massacre of human rights lawyers, journalists and other victims.

In Legazpi City on November 26, more than 300 journalism students wore black clothes and armbands and joined protesters that gathered at the Bicol University College of Arts and Letters to light candles to denounce the massacre.

There were also numerous statements of condemnation in various websites and other venues over the internet.

**Condemnation overseas.** With the death of 30 journalists in the Maguindanao massacre, the Philippines has become the world's most dangerous place for media workers, according to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Committee to Protect Journalists, international organizations advocating press freedom.

The recent massacre represents the single biggest number of deaths in the entire history of the press worldwide. Prior to this, the single biggest number of media casualties were 11 employees of Iraqi television station Al-Shaabia, who were killed in a raid by armed and masked men in 2006.

The IFJ pointed out that of the 74 cases of media killings during the Arroyo regime's eight-year rule, only four have been resolved in court.

Reporters Without Borders, an

international organization fighting for press freedom expressed the "strongest condemnation" for the unprecedented murders in Maguindanao, saying "Never in the history of journalism have the news media suffered such a heavy loss of life in one day."

The Southeast Asian Press Alliance also said that even before the horrific massacre, the Philippines was already one of the leading countries on the issue of media killings.

On December 1, more than 2,000 delegates from 87 countries attending the 62nd congress of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-Ifra) stood up and offered a moment of silence to condemn the massacre and express sympathy for their murdered fellow media workers. In a resolution, the WAN-Ifra board of directors said that the Maguindanao massacre is the "the deadliest single attack on the media in history."

There were also Filipino media organizations abroad that condemned the massacre, including the Filipino Press Club-United Arab Emirates whose members wore black clothes and armbands to symbolize their protest.

The United Nations, the European Commission and other international organizations also condemned the massacre. AB

## A new twist in Arroyo's game

**G**loria Arroyo's Proclamation 1959, which declared martial law in the greater part of Maguindanao, is only the latest twist in her ongoing schemes.

At first, Malacañang's immediate response to the Maguindanao massacre was to protect and save its ally, to which the Arroyo regime is greatly indebted. However, the regime could no longer ignore the sheer quantity of evidence against the Ampatuans and the outright condemnation of the massacre both here and abroad.

Malacañang was left with no choice but to save itself. It is now taking advantage of the people's fury and protests and widespread calls to hold the perpetrators accountable for the gruesome massacre in order to concoct dirty, devious and brutal schemes to ensure that Arroyo clings to power despite the fact that the regime's own accountability for the massacre was self-evident to the public.

Arroyo has been issuing contradictory statements in a vain attempt to justify the martial law declaration. She claimed that the presence of "armed groups in Maguindanao province who are in a position to fight government

troops" already constitutes rebellion. She was, however, referring to areas controlled by traditional, feudal, warlord politicians who are in reality being coddled and armed by her reactionary state, and where no rebellion exists.

To strengthen its claims that there is a rebellion in Maguindanao, the regime even concocted the lie that there were 4,000 armed troops who had already massed up and have been threatening to attack the government. This was even after the Ampatuans' private army had already been dismantled and their firearms confiscated.

On the other hand, Arroyo exempted areas controlled by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front where a real rebellion exists.

The martial law declaration in Maguindanao has reaped strong and wide denunciations and protests from democratic organizations, human rights advocates, lawyers' organizations, opposition forces and other people's sectors, and even from the Commission on

Human Rights and the majority of senators. A number have filed petitions before the Supreme Court challenging the basis for imposing martial law. According to them, aside from the fact that private armies in the province are not actually fighting the government, actual rebellion or invasion are the only bases in the 1987 constitution for a martial law declaration.

Aside from a need to demonstrate the regime's response to widespread demands to hold the Ampatuans accountable for the massacre, Arroyo declared martial law in Maguindanao so she could still ensure the victory of administration candidates through bloc voting in the provinces and the entire region, using her regime's military forces.

This was also done in order to prevent the Ampatuans from making good their threat to expose everything they knew about election rigging by Arroyo, aside from resorting to other forms of retaliation, should the regime clamp down on them.

The move also serves as a trial balloon in the regime's plan to expand the scope of martial law to other areas or the entire nation utilizing the "no election" scheme and pushing for "transition rule" to perpetuate Arroyo's hold on power. **AB**

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## Arroyo's candidacy is part of her scheme to cling to power

**G**loria Arroyo confirmed her plans of holding on to power by formally declaring her intention to represent the second district of Pangasinana in Congress on the deadline for the submission of certificates of candidacy in the Commission on Elections (COMELEC). The Arroyo family and its cohorts have long been pushing for this candidacy despite persistent refusals by Malacañang in the past to discuss the mat-

ter.

Among Arroyo's preparations for her candidacy were some 50 visits to her district where she poured in funds and provided other benefits—which clearly constituted early campaigning. To ensure her victory in the district, her family has been collaborating with notorious jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda to seize the provincial leadership from popular Pangasinana governor Fr. Ed Panlilio.

Some critics miss the main

point when they simply interpret that Arroyo's plan to represent her home district in Pampanga after her term of office as president expires in June 2010 is motivated by a desire to enjoy congressional immunity from potential legal suits for numerous treason, plunder and human rights violations cases she has accumulated in practically a decade of rule.

Arroyo's long-standing scheme actually involves grabbing a congressional seat in her home district as an initial step, maximizing her presidential powers to the hilt up to the last day of her official term to ensure her factotums' continued majority hold on Congress, making the next president merely transitional and using all this as leverage to continue her Cha-cha scheme. The objective of the entire plot is for her to resume at the soonest time possible the top position of the national government,

this time as prime minister under a new parliamentary system.

Many keen observers have been pointing out that Arroyo's power perpetuation scheme is very similar to what Russia's former president Vladimir Putin did when he could no longer legally run for another term as president. Putin ran for parliament and put up a hand-picked successor, Dmitri Medvedev, to replace him as president. Medvedev's presidency was actually transformed into a virtual adjunct of the former president who continues to rule the Russian government, this time officially as prime minister.

Arroyo's initial run for a congressional seat to push the Chacha scheme and eventually gun for the prime ministership is her "Plan A."

But in case all this becomes too difficult for her and her power perpetration apparatus, Arroyo also has a "Plan B" to extend her rule as

"president" with the use "emergency powers." And that is precisely the reason for appointing as Defense Secretary in the person of the diehard clerico-fascist Norberto Gonzales, a perpetrator of the culture of impunity and outspoken advocate of Arroyo's continuation in power under a "transition regime."

All this means that the fight to oust Gloria Arroyo and her regime will not be over after her present term as bogus president ends in June 2010. Whether her scheme to initially run for Congress and end up being prime minister pulls through or a "failure of elections" scenario is resorted to as an excuse to force the extension of Arroyo's reign under "emergency transition rule," the Filipino people will have to continue their fight against the rotten, brutal and power-hungry ruling regime until it is finally ousted and made to pay for all its heinous crimes against the people. **AB**

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## Lessons from the antifascist campaign in west Cagayan

**I**t was in 2006 when the Philippine Army 5th ID launched Task Force Amiya, a counterrevolutionary campaign in Cagayan Valley under the framework of the Arroyo regime's Oplan Bantay Laya 2 (OBL2). Its objective was to crush the New People's Army (NPA) units and drive the revolutionary movement in east and west Cagayan into retreat.

The regime deployed two companies each from the 21st IB, 17th IB and 53rd Reconnaissance Company in west Cagayan. They were further reinforced with the Separate Rifle Company, the 77th Civilian Armed Auxiliary and Regional Mobile Group of the Philippine National Police (RMG-PNP). These forces launched large-scale and relentless combat operations along with perpetrating atrocities such as assassinations of mass leaders, forced surrenders, abductions, tor-

ture and grave threats.

After several years of OBL2's rampage, not only did the revolutionary movement and the people overcome the fascist campaign, they were able to defend their victories in various arenas of struggle and preserve their forces. The Party territorial committee was able to draw on the people's long history of struggle and their wealth of experience in waging its political and military campaign.

**The importance of Party unity**

**and decisiveness.** One of the most significant lessons drawn by west Cagayan in facing the brutal and deceptive enemy was the importance of strong unity from the guerrilla front down to the local Party branch level.

Raising the fighting spirit of the people's army and the people was very important. To achieve this, the Party worked to raise further the ideological knowledge of the people's army and the masses. This boosted their confidence and provided the entire revolutionary forces in the area strength in their conviction. This also effectively strengthened the Party's unity from the planning stage to the implementation of tasks.

The Party made sure that sessions for planning, assessment and appropriate criticism and self-criticism among the local Party branch levels were held. In these meetings,

positive results gained through the unity and cooperation of the collective were stressed. Problems that cropped up among members and within the collective were addressed and resolved. The branch's role in recruitment and in planning the antifascist campaign in west Cagayan was underscored. As part of the preparation for the campaign, important documents on AFP military operations were reviewed by the mass organizations.

The victories they attained served as the basis for mobilizing the people in their broadest numbers to join the antifascist campaign. They acted in concert to gain the support of local officials in their areas, the middle forces, the mass media and other personalities who helped in filing charges against the military. The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and even the PNP were left with no choice but to investigate and eventually declare that the military was behind the killings and forced disappearances in the area.

They continued to denounce military abuses and repression. The people used various ways like continued exposés over radio programs of the most notorious military abuses in the barrios. Among these were the forced recruitment into the CAFGU of barangay officials, the ransacking of the Agay peasants' homes, robbery and extortion. The people continuously sent text messages and wrote statements for radio and print and made numerous fliers using cartons of cigarette packs and the backs of old calendars. They asked victims of military violence to speak about their ordeal over the radio.

The peasants acted as one even when the enemy had abducted or killed someone from their ranks. For example, about a hundred elderly peasants, women, youth and children went from one camp of

the 17th IB to another and to various Bombo Radyo stations to demand the release of a mass leader the enemy had captured.

Neighboring villages also had a support network that proved effective even in the midst of enemy attack. For instance, when one village was occupied by the enemy, other villages that were as yet unaffected would mobilize. They agreed to help each other in the event that the military also attacked other nearby towns.

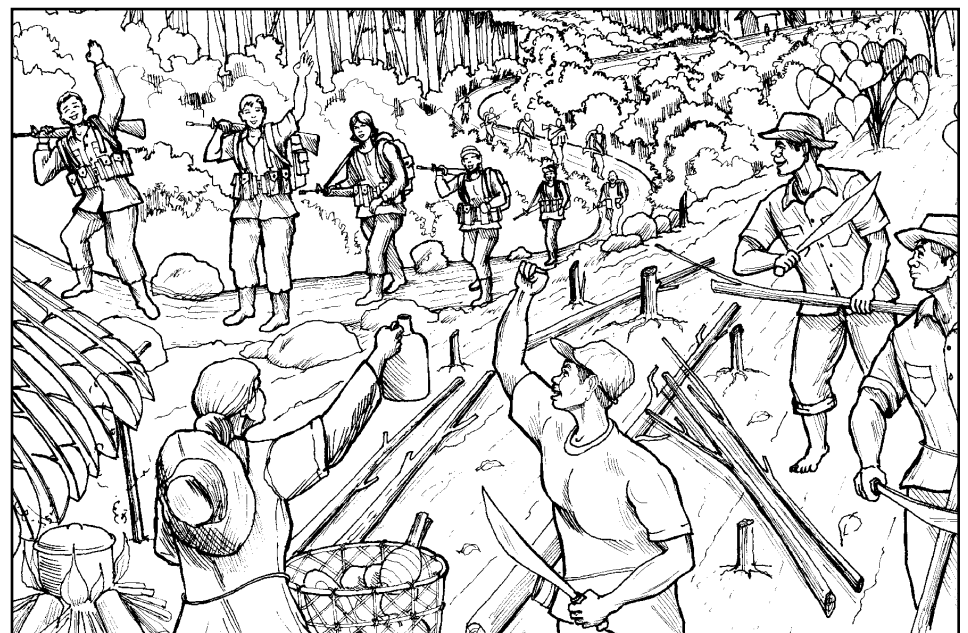
**Correct conduct of the platoon.** Another important lesson gained by the Party is the importance of ensuring that the NPA platoon always conducts itself correctly to enable it to perform mass work and military work in the midst of enemy attacks.

The NPA studied the military situation in west Cagayan and from there determined how the platoon could best exercise caution and move clandestinely. The Red fighters also mobilized the local militia squads. The local militia assessed their work and conducted education along with reviewing their responsibilities and plans. They participated in the preparation and actual launching of tactical offensives.

Whenever the military situation was tense, the Red fighters maintained high morale. They stood watch for 24 hours to ensure security, and adjusted accordingly whenever supplies were limited. It was the local militia that reconnoitered the enemy's position, promptly relayed information on its movements and took care of supplies. They also temporarily joined the NPA platoon. This way, the basic needs of the people's army were met despite the difficult situation.

The platoon was also effective in concentration and dispersal. There were comrades who worked with the masses in consolidation work such as providing education and supervising the mass organizations. Other comrades formed teams and squads to deal with finance work and military work. There were also times when squads were dispatched to take care of expansion work in other nearby villages.

Consolidation work within the platoon was not neglected. In between the conduct of mass work and military work, they studied and planned. They made sure that the squads were in order to ensure that tasks were accomplished. The Party





Groups within the squads planned and assessed their work monthly. Everyday, each Red fighter was assigned tasks so that each comrade could be effective and the platoon's entire work fruitful.

**Tactical offensives.** In a period of four months (from August until December 2008), the NPA platoon carried out three tactical offensives and military actions. This entailed preparing the local militia as well as the masses. The Red fighters ambushed a platoon of the 17th IB, disarmed one of the men of a notorious politician and meted out revolutionary punishment to an intelligence agent of the 17th IB.

The NPA seized an M16, a shotgun, a .45 caliber pistol and three .38 caliber pistols in these tactical offensives. The local militia also launched their own military actions.

Through unity and the Party's leadership, mass support and the NPA platoon's correct conduct, the people's army and the people were able to achieve a level of consolidation in the midst of attacks by the 501st Bde. Along with the NPA, the people courageously confronted the enemy and learned from experience.

Human rights violations have been reduced and cases have been filed against AFP officers like Lt. Johnny Calub, CO of Charlie Coy of the 17th IB who doubles as the battalion's intelligence officer. The military now seldom enters the area and forced recruitment into the CAFGU has eased up.

Meanwhile, militarization continues in west Cagayan. But the entire Party organization in this area is confident that OBL2 will be thoroughly defeated, the way the counterrevolutionary schemes of the past were thwarted. **AB**



## NPA seizes 10 firearms

**R**ed fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) confiscated ten firearms in a series of firefights from the second half of November to the first week of December. The military suffered nine soldiers killed and another 15 wounded. No casualties were incurred by the Red fighters.

**December 3.** Three soldiers of the Philippine Army were killed and four were wounded, based on the latest battle report from Compostela Valley.

The firefight began when Red fighters from the NPA's Front 20 ambushed troops from the Philippine Army 28th IB who were on combat patrol in Sitio Calaberahan, Diwata Complex, Monkayo town. The NPA seized three M16s.

**November 29.** Two M16s and a .45 caliber pistol were taken by NPA Red fighters in a raid on the police headquarters in Divilacan town, Isabela. They also seized a hand grenade and a rifle grenade, 44 fully packed magazines, a base radio, a typewriter and seven police uniforms.

**November 23.** Four elements of the 69th IB were wounded when command-detonated explosives were set off by Red fighters of the 1st Pulang Bagani Company-NPA while the soldiers were on combat patrol in Barangay Fatima, Paquibato District, Davao City.

Meanwhile, in Catanduanes, the armed revolutionary movement on the island continues to defeat the enemy's military campaigns. According to the latest reports

from the Nerissa San Juan Command (NSJC)-NPA, two soldiers of the 83rd IB were killed and seven were wounded in an ambush by Red fighters in Barangay Guiamlong, Caramoran. The gov-

ernment soldiers were returning home to their camp after conducting an intense military operation in the area when they were ambushed.

Also on November 17, Lt. Rodel Balatbat, 83rd IB Bravo Coy commander was among four soldiers killed in an ambush by a team of four from the NSJC in Barangay Ali-nawan, Panganiban town. The enemy troopers were aboard two motorcycles when they were fired upon by the guerrillas.

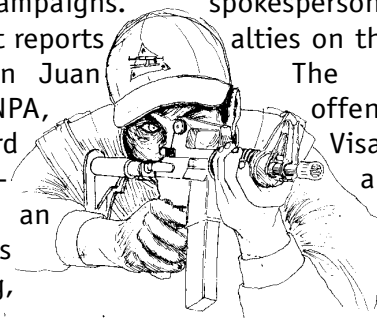
Due to their great embarrassment, the military did not report the death of the 83rd IB's commanding officer on the radio or in the newspapers.

**November 16.** In Samar, fighters of the Nida Cantong Command seized an M16, an M14, a Garand and a carbine in an ambush against elements of the 52nd IB in Barangay Dawo, Oquendo District, Calbayog City, according to the latest field reports.

Two CAFGU elements were killed and a sergeant of the 52nd IB was seriously wounded.

Contrary to the claims made by Lt. Col. Armando Rico, 8th ID spokesperson, there were no casualties on the NPA side.

The successive tactical offensives in Eastern Visayas, said NPA regional spokesperson Ka Karlos Manuel show that Oplan Bantay Laya has failed in the region. **AB**





## Two lawyers among victims of Maguindanao massacre

Two human rights lawyers were among the 57 victims of the massacre in Maguindanao on November 23. Atty. Concepcion “Connie” Brizuela, 56, and Atty. Cynthia Oquendo, 35, were among those killed by the private army of the Ampatuan clan.

Brizuela and Oquendo were both members of the Union of People’s Lawyers in Mindanao (UPLM). Brizuela was also a member of the Gabriela Network of Professionals in North Cotabato.

Members of the Gabriela Women’s Party, Karapatan and Tanggol Bai paid tribute to Brizuela and Oquendo during the commemoration of the International Day of Women Human Rights Defenders. The participants who assembled at the Mendiola Bridge vehemently denounced the nefarious massacre committed by Gloria Arroyo’s allies.

Under the Arroyo regime, 50 out of the 1,115 victims of extrajudicial killings were women human rights advocates.

Following are other reports of human rights violations gathered by *Ang Bayan*:

**November 27.** Three men strafed the house of Edgar Cadagat, president of the Negros Press Club and former national chairperson of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP). The perpetrators were aboard a multicab and a motorcycle.

The attack on Cadagat did not stop the march of members of the mass media in Negros on November 30 demanding justice for victims of the Maguindanao massacre. Two of the journalists killed—Bart Maravilla of Bombo Radyo-Koronadal and Henry Araneta of dzRH-Cotabato—are residents of Negros Occidental. The marchers wore black

and red T-shirts and massed up in front of the Negros Press Club office in Bacolod City.

**November 28-29.** Elements of the 25th IB, 7th Special Forces-AFP and CAFGU abducted and killed Conrado Cañete, 57, a peasant and father of Ka Jinggoy, a Red commander. Cañete was last seen alive attending a fiesta in Barangay Banlag, Monkayo, Compostela Valley on November 28. According to witnesses, some military men joined Cañete who was drinking with a group of friends. That night Cañete failed to return to his house in nearby Barangay Gabanan. Early morning the following day, Cañete was seen being dumped from a car that passed through Sitio Highlander, Barangay Gabanan. Cañete was shot several times from within the vehicle. He sustained 12 bullet wounds.

The military has long been surveilling the Cañete family. The military took revenge on him due after a series of victorious tactical offensives launched by the NPA unit led by his son. In a statement, Ka Nadem, spokesperson of the 4th Pulang Bagani Company of the Merardo Arce Command of the NPA in Southern Mindanao said that it is characteristic of the AFP to kill family members of known comrades in order to take revenge on and harass the NPA members being targeted. He cited the case of Ka Parago’s daughter Rebelyn who was abducted, raped and killed in

March.

**November 23-24.** Danilo Benalo, 57, a member of the Center for Filipino Seafarers and organizer of MIGRANTE International died from a stroke after elements of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP) threatened and attempted to recruit him.

It was around noontime on November 23 when ISAFP agents accosted Benalo and showed him his dossier. They told Benalo that they had been monitoring him for more than a year and that he had nowhere to hide. They said that his children will be abducted and hurt if he did not help the ISAFP. They wanted Benalo to disclose the names and whereabouts of key leaders and organizers of progressive organizations.

Fearing for his children’s lives, Benalo agreed to meet with the ISAFP elements at around 5 p.m. near the Cultural Center of the Philippines in Pasay City. He told a lawyer friend that he would be informing him of the results of his meeting with the ISAFP, but he never got around to doing this. At around 7 p.m., his friend called Benalo on his cellphone. Someone who introduced himself as Jason answered and said that they had brought Benalo to a hospital because he had suffered a stroke. Doctors told Benalo’s family that four men brought him to the hospital. Benalo died the morning of November 24.

The ISAFP still continued to terrorize his family by monitoring his condition at the hospital and casing his funeral after Benalo died.

**November 23.** Three members of the Samahang Magbubukid ng Batangas (SAMBAT) were abducted by joint police and military forces in Talisay, Batangas. They were

identified as Billy Bateria, Sonny Rogelio and Charity Denio. The three victims are accused of being members of the New People's Army (NPA).

**November 23.** Farmers Mateo Molato, 57, and his sons Jimboy, 21, and Richard, 18, were beaten up and accused of being members of the NPA. The victims were working on their farm in Sitio Salagunting, Barangay Fatima, Paquibato District, Davao City when they were seized by elements of the 69th IB. The soldiers shoved a gun barrel into the mouth of one of Molato's sons. The military accused them of having something to do with the detonation of an explosive near their farm that injured four soldiers. **AB**

## Activists celebrate KM's 45th year

**M**embers of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) launched a lightning rally to celebrate the 45th anniversary of its organization on November 30.

The activists marched from Morayta to Carriedo Street in Manila on November 27. They demanded justice for the victims of the Maguindanao Massacre. They also called on the youth to head to the countryside and join the New People's Army.

Prof. Jose Ma. Sison, KM founding chair, also issued a statement to mark the anniversary. He said that the youth have had a great role in the advancement of the people's struggle, especially in the fight against the US-Marcos dictatorship. Many KM cadres and activists gave their lives and held huge responsibilities in the revolution. Many were deployed to the countryside to perform political, military, cultural and other work.

Meanwhile, the University of the Philippines presented the play *Ang Makata'y Mandirigma, Mandirigma'y Makata* on November 30 also as part of the celebration. The play which was based on the poem "The Guerilla is Like a Poet" by Sison, was written by Bienvenido Lumera and directed by Romel Linatoc. **AB**

## Protests block Arroyo visit to UP

**A** protest action by students, teachers and employees of the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman, Quezon City succeeded in preventing Gloria Arroyo from arriving as guest of honor at the inauguration of the GT-Toyota Asian Cultural Center on December 2.

The demonstrators declared that Arroyo was not welcome to set foot in UP. They criticized her failure to immediately resolve the massacre in Maguindanao on November 23. They also condemned Arroyo's decision to run for congress representing her district in Pampanga.

They also said that Arroyo worsened the situation of education at UP by gradually reducing the university's budget and intensifying its commercialization.

The PNP-Quezon City, UP Diliman Police and UP Special Service Brigade attempted to disperse the protest action. Nine students were injured when they were manhandled and handcuffed. Some journalists were likewise injured. The activists said that the university charter strictly prohibits the entry of police on campus. They also lambasted UP Diliman Chancellor Sergio Cao who requested for the police's presence at the campus.

The picket was led by the Student Alliance for the Advancement of Democratic Rights in UP (STAND-UP), Contend-UP and All-UP Workers Union. UP System Faculty Regent Judy Taguiwalo and Student Regent Charisse Banez, as well as students from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines also joined the protest.

## Ocampo, Maza to run as independents

REP. Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna and Rep. Liza Maza of Gabriela Women's Party will run for senator in 2010 as independents.

The decision was made by the eight progressive organizations that make up the Koalisyon ng Makabayang Mamamayan (Makabayan), said Ocampo when he and Maza filed their certificates of candidacy at the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) on November 29.

Makabayan's hoped-for alliance with the Nacionalista Party (NP) of Manuel Villar fell through when the NP allied with Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos, Jr. of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan party.

Makabayan said that Ocampo and Maza cannot be in the same alliance with Marcos, as Makabayan has a firm stand on the recovery of the Marcos' ill-gotten wealth and justice for the thousands of victims of human rights violations during the Marcos dictatorship. Before becoming lawmakers, Ocampo, 70, and Maza, 52, were known anti-Marcos activists who experienced the brutality of the fascist dictatorship.

Even so, Ocampo and Maza are open to the possibility of supporting candidates for president and vice president. They are also open to being guest candidates of opposition parties.

## Economy on a downward spiral

PHILIPPINE imports fell by 22.8% since last year, according to the latest reports from the National Statistics Office. The decline is due to a 20.3% reduction in the importation of electronic spare parts which comprise 33.8% of the country's imports.

This has resulted in an automatic decrease in exports because imported electronic spare parts are used in the semi-manufacture of electronic products which make up more than 60% of the country's exports. Electronics exports have plummeted by 26% since last year. Thus, exports as of June amounted to only \$3.42 billion compared to \$4.52 billion in the same month in 2008. This represents a 24.7% decrease.

Meanwhile, production volumes fell by 12.4% in September compared to the same month last year, marking a decline in manufacturing for eleven months straight. Registering the largest reductions in factory output are petroleum products, leather products, beverages, footwear and wearing apparel, paper and paper products, tobacco products, textiles, chemical products, wood and wood products and electrical machinery.

## US allies oppose troop buildup in Afghanistan

A number of US allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are opposed to supplying the 10,000 troops requested by the US for deployment to Afghanistan. The troops represent the allies' counterpart in US-led plans to pour in an additional 40,000 troops to the occupied country. The allies' opposition comes amid mounting criticism in their homelands over their involvement in the US interventionist war. The deployment of an additional 40,000 soldiers is part of the US' overall strategy to suppress the struggle of the Afghan people. The US will be providing the remaining 30,000 soldiers.

One of the countries opposed to deploying additional troops is France. In Britain, more than 70% of the people are in favor of an early troop withdrawal. It has committed to sending only 500 troops amid growing condemnation of the country's involvement from the British public. In Germany, any additional troop deployment would have to be approved by parliament. The Netherlands and Canada also plan on a gradual troop withdrawal. Defense officials in Canada have said that their government has no intention of sending additional soldiers and will withdraw their troops by the end of 2011.

Germany has 4,300 troops in Afghanistan while France has 3,750. Britain sustained 98 casualties this year, the highest since it joined the war in Afghanistan. The US has 298 casualties and other countries suffered 87 losses. The occupation troops have suffered a total of 1,530 casualties since 2001.

## Dubai hit by crisis

AN announcement from the Dubai government asking for a six-month reprieve on its debt payments has sent shockwaves throughout the world of international banking and finance. Its neighbor, oil-rich Abu Dhabi has refused to guarantee Dubai's enormous debt burden. Dubai and Abu Dhabi are member-states of the United Arab Emirates.

Dubai is estimated to owe up to \$80 billion to various banks, \$59 billion of which was spent on expensive real estate projects like

hotels and condominiums.

The economic and financial crisis inflicted a severe blow on the real estate sector, whose high-end projects are managed by the giant company Nakheel. The real estate development giant is now saddled with \$3.52 billion in unpaid debts.

The Dubai government's announcement that it would be defaulting on its debts sent stock values plummeting at the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Cor-

poration (HSBC) and Standard Chartered which had big exposures to Dubai.

An estimated 250,000 Filipino migrant workers are set to lose their jobs because of the financial crisis in Dubai.

Economists are worried that after Dubai, other countries will follow suit, especially with the international recession expected to worsen and with projections of a further plunge in the international capitalist system.