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Editorial

Resist the mounting burdens being heaped on the shoulders of typhoon Yolanda victims

A full month after supertyphoon Yolanda barreled through a vast portion of the Visayas, the victims of the storm have yet to find relief from their suffering. Instead, more hardships are in store for them as the Aquino regime persists in its criminal negligence and in exploiting their misery for the benefit of foreign and local big capitalists and landlords.

The Aquino government has been cruel and callous to the victims' plight. Corruption and rotten politics are rife in the way the regime has responded to the calamity and addressed the grave disaster. Even the distribution of relief goods by the DSWD is fraught with anomalies.

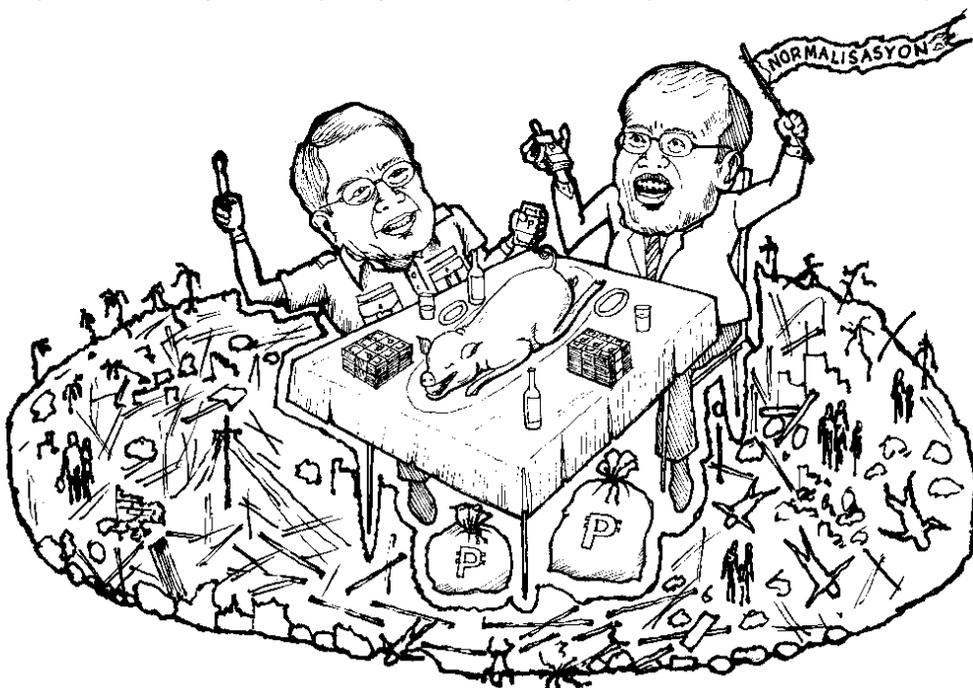
Exploiters have not run out of ways to bleed the victims dry. Aid from private groups is

blocked and confiscated. Instead of distributing these for free to the neediest, the donations are hoarded and later sold at "bargain basement prices" in so-called discount caravans. Rice donations that are of good quality are substituted with old, rotten or smelly NFA rice. Cheap canned sardines take the place of other branded canned goods. Despite the glaring fact that so many

victims remain in desperate straits and have not received an iota of assistance, the DSWD has declared that things are on their way to "normalization." It is set to stop the distribution of relief goods this December and begin the phase of "rehabilitation" and "reconstruction."

With this, one can expect the creation of even more money-making schemes by greedy capitalists and corrupt politicians. Victims of the calamity will be victimized twice over.

Aquino has already announced that people who used to live and work in coastal areas will be prohibited from returning to their communities.



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He has been invoking the devastation caused by the recent supertyphoon and storm surge to declare coastal areas as “no-build zones.” This will deprive small fisherfolk of access to the sea from which they derive their livelihood and pave the way for the entry of big capitalist fishermen. Big capitalist investors will also be able to acquire prime real estate on which to build their businesses.

This is but a glimpse of the hardships that lie in wait for many other victims of typhoon Yolanda. During the rehabilitation phase, hordes of vultures will descend on the victims to feed on their misery. This early, imperialists, compradors and their corrupt bureaucrat cohorts are drooling over the huge reconstruction contracts for the devastated towns and cities. In fact, ₱41 billion has already been allotted for this purpose this year, with another ₱100 billion up for grabs in 2014.

The Aquino regime is currently focused on imposing its

ever more repressive rule in the areas devastated by the supertyphoon. Aquino is hell-bent on using the full force of the military and police to suppress the hundreds of thousands who are disgusted with the ruling regime's criminal negligence. Despite the massive devastation wrought by the supertyphoon and the people's cries for a temporary ceasefire, the majority of military forces in the affected areas remain focused on offensive operations under Oplan Bayanihan.

To further deprive the people of any opportunity for dissent, Aquino appointed in December the fascist Panfilo Lacson to oversee the government's massive rehabilitation projects. Expect Lacson to use a mailed-fist approach to ensure that the “reconstruction” model will be one that hews to the interests of the imperialists and their co-conspirators.

Just days into his appointment, it has become apparent that Lacson's “fast-paced reconstruction” will be marked by

anomalies and his running roughshod on rights and due process. This is a certainty with Lacson's demand for “absolute control” especially in identifying allegedly needed projects and raising funds for them. Add to this his plans of giving a major role to the “private sector” and it becomes clear that “reconstruction” will benefit none other than the big comprador bourgeoisie who are close to the ruling Aquino clique, especially the big Chinese comprador bourgeoisie who are close to Lacson. Lacson has also been tasked to make sure that Aquino's political rivals, such as the Romualdez, will not be able to get their hands on the funds for rehabilitation.

Although Aquino has yet to issue the executive order creating Lacson's office, there are clear indications already that it will be serving as an instrument to further centralize the humongous reconstruction funds under Malacañang. The vast ocean of monies for rehabilitation has now become the latest wading pond of corrupt officials of the rotten state.

The people must be vigilant and strongly oppose every single maneuver by the rotten regime that would enable the imperialists and local exploiters to feast on the devastation wrought by the supertyphoon. They must assert that the only acceptable standard for reconstruction is the people's immediate and long-term interest.

The victims of typhoon Pablo which struck Mindanao in December 2012 have shown that only through the organized assertion of their rights can they effectively advance their interests in the face of state negligence and further exploitation from the govern-

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ment. Like them, the victims of typhoon Yolanda must also organize themselves. Rehabilitation that conforms to the people's interests can be assured only by launching collective action and mass struggle, especially in advancing genuine land and fisheries reform and other democratic demands.

The people must unite—they, who, for centuries, have been devastated by imperialist plunder and exploitation by the local ruling classes. They must create a powerful storm through their protests and revolutionary armed struggle to defeat the Aquino regime for thoroughly opposing the people's welfare and interests. **AB**

Addressing typhoon Yolanda's devastation in Samar

Already victims of the Aquino regime's negligence, residents of the interior villages of Kamaru, a guerrilla front in Samar province are now further mired in poverty after typhoon Yolanda's onslaught. Merchants have seized on the devastation to worsen their opportunism. Prices soared during the emergency. Even those who had some money to spend could not buy anything because goods were in short supply.

The peasant masses had little or nothing left to sell after the storm destroyed their main crops like banana, coconut, ginger, cassava and vegetables. If they had something left over to sell, there were no buyers or trading stations they could bring their produce to after transportation lines to cities like Tacloban and Cebu and neighboring islands in the region had been cut. More farmers became victims of usury.

In their desperation, the peasants have been forced to sell even their food stocks like rice. This means that their food reserves won't last until the next harvest. Alternative food-stuff like cassava, sweet potato, banana and taro have also been destroyed by the storm.

CPP and NPA show solidarity and help the people

After the typhoon, a ceasefire was declared from November 12 to 24 in Eastern Visayas, which

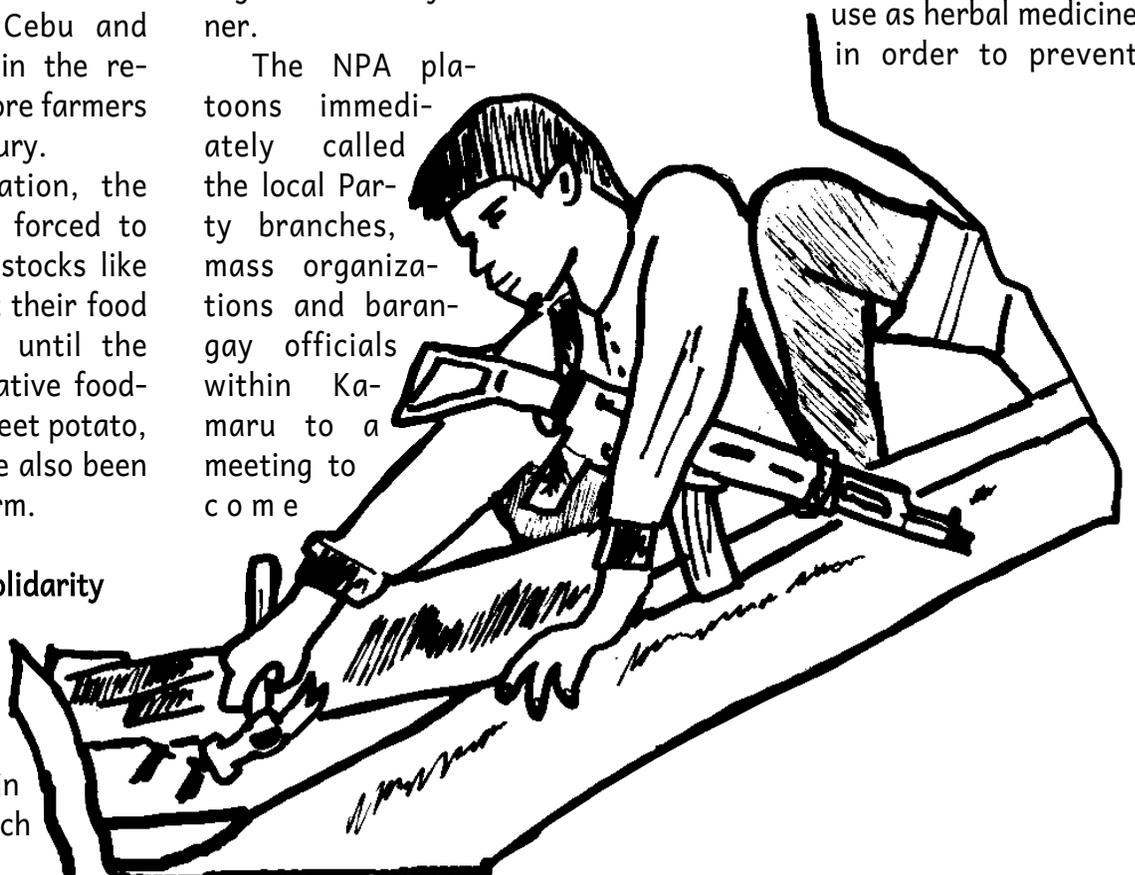
was later extended up to January 15, 2014 to enable the New People's Army (NPA) to focus on relief and rehabilitation. In the 22 barrios in three towns within Kamaru that the NPA platoons were able to work in at once, the people addressed the devastation wrought by the storm in an organized and systematic manner.

The NPA platoons immediately called the local Party branches, mass organizations and barangay officials within Kamaru to a meeting to

come up with a united approach on how to address the devastation and the looming hunger and disease. Leaders of mass organizations in every barangay were called in order to estimate the damage to public infrastructure, transportation and communication, and to houses, huts and crops.

They were immediately able to estimate the extent of damage especially to banana and cassava crops and coconut. The masses responded by launching a campaign to plant vegetables—not just as cash crops but for their nutritional value and

use as herbal medicine in order to prevent



diseases. Meanwhile, the barangay councils were urged not to be content with the measly relief goods (usually comprising 2.5 kilos of rice, a can of sardines and a packet of instant noodles), if any, that the Aquino regime was distributing. They must demand nails, roofing material, petroleum products, seedlings and fertilizer and farming implements, aside from immediate repairs to their irrigation systems, roads, bridges and power and communication lines.

The mass organizations were urged to take to account the inutile and corrupt Aquino regime for its criminal negligence. The people were likewise urged to expose the regime's corruption, hypocrisy and militarist approach in addressing the calamity. The farmers were challenged to rise up in an organized way and depend on their own strength even if aid from the outside was available and immediately distributed. More than ever, this was a time for "bayanihan," or "tiklos" and "aglayon" as the locals called it, joined by both the masses and Red fighters even as a campaign to plant fast-growing crops was underway. The masses' unified strength flowed through the organizations which led various forms of cooperation among the people. Those who were not yet members of mass organizations were encouraged to join.

Collective action was the key to uplifting the masses from their difficult situation.

The NPA's active service to the people

After the mass meeting, the NPA poured its efforts into repairing public infrastructure like schools, churches, waiting sheds, basketball courts, dancing halls, barangay halls, lamp

posts and bridges in the villages within its area of operations. The Red fighters helped repair houses in the villages and huts in farmlands, cleaned the surroundings (called "pintakasi" locally), constructed garbage disposal areas and toilets, provided medical services to the sick and those who sustained injuries from the storm, dried *palay* that had become wet due to the typhoon and pounded rice. At all times, the masses and Red fighters helped each other in these tasks and mobilized the youth as well.

After these activities, mass meetings were called in the villages to discuss the burning issues surrounding the storm and the organized way of confronting the crisis it had brought about. Revolutionary culture was also featured through drama, poetry, song and movement which the masses avidly joined, especially the youth and children.

Masses warmly heap praises on NPA's assistance

The masses of Kamaru admired the strength, number and talents demonstrated by their army, who served as engineers, carpenters, doctors, teachers, artists and farmers. They warmly embraced and nurtured their army, and practically "fought over" the comrades during mealtime. Together, they ate dried fish or sardines, the most delicious vi- and they could serve after the typhoon. The youth energetically mingled with their "Elder Sisters," "Elder Brothers," "Mothers" and "Fathers" in the revolution.

Said a farmer, "There's really a world of difference between the people's army and the fascist soldiers. All the fascists know is to order people around,

while our army is deeply rooted in the masses." News was rife about the hundreds of soldiers that had been sent, especially to Tacloban City, not to help in relief and rehabilitation efforts but to suppress the people as they scrounged around for food, water and other needs that the government failed to deliver in the crucial days after the storm.

Even the teachers in Kamaru who were not yet organized marvelled at the industry, sincerity and rapid response of the people's army in the barrios. They also admired the women comrades who courageously waged revolution. With the platoon-size army that went to the barrios, the masses felt the advance of the armed movement, not only in terms of armed strength but in terms of firm principles under the close guidance of the Communist Party of the Philippines. The villagers reminded each other of the need for clandestine action to protect their army.

The masses thanked the comrades, who they knew braved the rains in the dark of night and hiked through thickets to condole with them and express their solidarity. This experience proved that any task could succeed if it is grounded on the principle of the mass line—advancing the masses' interests at all times.

Seeing them off with firm handshakes and clenched fists raised, some of the villagers could not help but shed tears of sadness at their army's departure. Several times, the masses would run after them to give some rice as send-off gifts. They said: "Come back soon, because it's lonely without you around." The people's army brought along with them not only rice as they left, but new fighters for the revolution. **AB**

Progressive organizations in EV take action to provide immediate relief

Typhoon Yolanda left a wide swath of destruction in impoverished communities in Tacloban City, Ormoc City, Guian, Basey and other towns and cities in Leyte and Samar. After the storm, progressive organizations in Eastern Visayas immediately called meetings to consult the communities and link up with those who were willing to help the typhoon victims.

The Tabang-Eastern Visayas alliance took action on November 16 to conduct relief and rehabilitation activities. The alliance is composed of progressive organizations and parties in the region such as BAYAN, Bayan Muna, GABRIELA, SAGUPA, KADAMAY, ACT and Kabataan Partylist. On November 12, progressive organizations from Manila were the first to deliver assistance to Guian, Eastern Samar. More than a week later, res-

idents were still desperately appealing to the Aquino government to send them help.

Meanwhile, Tabang-Eastern Visayas angrily condemned the Aquino government's snail-paced, chaotic and corrupt distribution of supplies. Benigno Aquino III twice went to Tacloban City itself, but the people failed to discern any effective assistance from the government. No efficient method of distributing relief was in place in the first days after the storm, with goods dumped at the Tacloban City airport and distributed from there. The site was more than ten kilometers from the city center where most of the communities were located.

Other devastated towns of Samar and Leyte were worse off, with trucks loaded with relief goods just rushing past them on the way to Tacloban

where the Aquino government held photo opportunities for the national and international media based in the city.

According to Tabang-Eastern Visayas, also showing zero compassion for the people was the Armed Forces of the Philippines which dropped relief goods from helicopters in Tacloban City even if the roads were passable, instead of efficiently delivering supplies to the residents. There were also times when soldiers distributed spoiled rice to the people, who exposed this to the media.

Local and national government agencies relentlessly engaged in corruption. They secretly stole relief goods donated by other countries and replaced them with other supplies. The DSWD also pocketed aid from overseas meant for the "cash for work program," giving only half to the needy beneficiaries. In Leyte, the government has also been centralizing relief goods with its allies—the bogus An Waray partylist and the Pettilla dynasty which controls the provincial government. **AB**

Rising from the devastation of typhoon Pablo

There are many lessons to be learned from the people's experiences in the guerrilla zones of Compostela Valley devastated by typhoon Pablo on December 4, 2012.

The victims of typhoon Pablo were not content with waiting for the snail-paced and anomaly-ridden "relief efforts" of the Aquino regime. They took the initiative to oblige the government to fulfill its duty to the people. They played a major role in the distribution of whatever assistance had arrived.

They assailed a number of

anomalies involving the DSWD regarding the construction of bunkhouses that would serve as evacuation centers. They thus maintained the dignity of the calamity victims and strengthened their organization.

The masses' recovery from the devastation wrought by typhoon Pablo relied more on their organization than on any help

from the outside. Instead of going their own way, they reconstructed their homes and communities in a planned and collective manner.

With the rehabilitation of their livelihoods, the people in various areas of Compostela Valley organizedly launched a production campaign that prioritized the formation of communal farms and plots. Also a part of the production campaign was a reforestation drive. Rehabilitating the forest is important to

the peasants' and Lumad's livelihood in the long-term.

In the entire process of addressing the calamity and rising from the devastation, the people's collective action and initiative were the keys. They used the mass movement as their weapon in confronting the disaster head-on. From planning, to setting up the machinery to the actual implementation of the program for rehabilitation or rebuilding their livelihoods, the masses played an active part.

The roles of the Party, NPA and revolutionary movement

In the vast areas devastated by typhoon Pablo, the peasant masses, Lumad and other toiling masses were accompanied by the Communist Party and the New People's Army (NPA) in efforts to address the disaster and recover from widespread devastation. The actions taken by the revolutionary people served as inspiration and models for the broad masses in other areas.

As the Party and the people's democratic government's main machinery, NPA units played a crucial role in providing guidance and direct assistance to the barrios devastated by the typhoon.

As soon as the storm abated

on December 4, the NPA command immediately took steps to assess the situation based on reports from the various NPA units. They acted at once to gather emergency supplies and aid. The NDF-Mindanao's ceasefire declaration on December 5 stressed to the NPA the need to shift focus and tasks towards addressing the disaster.

The higher organs of the Party and the people's government immediately organized efforts to raise food, water and other supplies and mobilized the NPA for the distribution. People's clinics were conducted in various areas to provide emergency medical services. Teams were formed to build shelters for victims who had lost their houses.

All-sided program for recovery

Aside from its quick response, the Party territorial committee formed Task Force Pablo and tasked it with drafting a program and concrete plans for the area's long-term rehabilitation. It framed an all-sided recovery program which involved a lot more than returning the people to their former houses.

The plans included the rehabilitation of the forests on which

the masses' livelihoods and their safety during disasters depended. Forest renewal was also crucial in establishing encampments for the people's army.

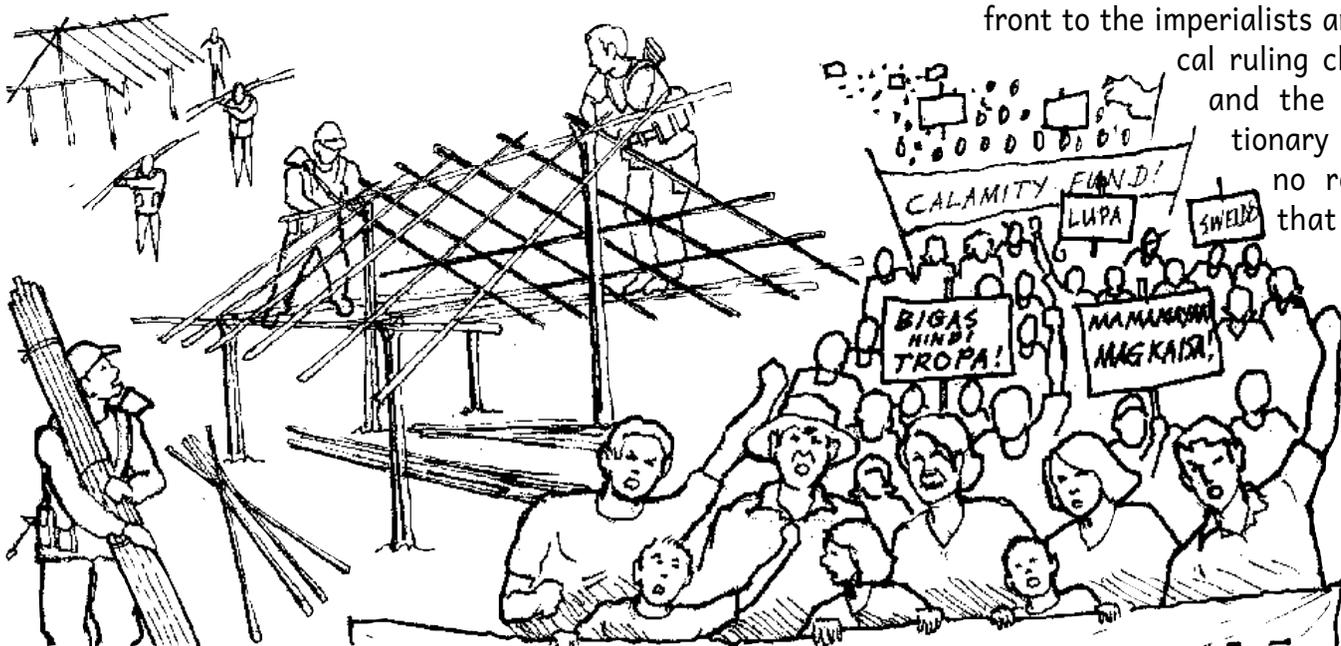
Towards this end, the revolutionary people's government provided strong support, especially in the initial stages, when the victims of disaster had absolutely nothing to build on. The Party and the people's government mobilized all available resources to raise food and production equipment.

The people's government provided subsidies to enable the masses to immediately resume production, giving priority to communal farms. At the same time, houses and other structures needed by the community were repaired or rebuilt.

Alongside the process of recovery was the strict implementation of the total logging ban and preventing the entry of logging companies hiding behind the cloak of Integrated Forest Management Agreements (IFMA). The people also opposed mining companies who resumed forest clearing operations that would destroy the environment.

Thus, the genuine and comprehensive rehabilitation program being implemented in the guerrilla zones were a direct affront to the imperialists and local ruling classes

and the reactionary Aquino regime that was



protecting their interests. The reactionary state fought the people tooth and nail. The Aquino regime mobilized its armed forces anew to suppress the people and put a stop to their government's implementation of its recovery program. Intensified repression from the military operations under Oplan Bayanihan was thoroughly resisted by the people in the area in their desire to defend their

rights and livelihood.

The Party made sure that every measure taken to rise from the disaster involved the masses' active role. They were involved in the planning and implementation, up to the assessment of the tasks. This experience directly prepares the masses in forming, controlling and running the people's democratic government. **AB**

Failed promises

On the December 4, the first anniversary of typhoon Pablo, the victims protested at the office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Region XI and the headquarters of the Eastern Mindanao Command to confront the Aquino regime on its failed promises. The protesters were led by Barug Katawhan, a broad alliance of victims of typhoon Pablo.

One year since DSWD Sec. Corazon "Dinky" Soliman promised to distribute 10,000 sacks of rice to the victims, only 1,850 sacks have been given so far to the affected communities identified by Barug Katawhan.

Contrary to the livelihood promised to those who had lost their jobs, more than 10,000 farm workers in various banana plantations in Compostela Valley remain unemployed. Neither have debt-ridden banana growers devastated by the storm been provided assistance.

Benigno Aquino III's much-vaunted pledge during his SONA in July to provide housing for 53,000 victims of typhoon Pablo has definitely not been fulfilled. With no funds provided to date for the housing project, 90% of those who lost their homes are still without shelter.

Particularly in the towns of Monkayo, Compostela and New Bataan (all in Compostela Val-

ley), 90% of the victims have not received the free galvanized iron sheets being given away by the DSWD because they have not abandoned their communities which have been declared "hazardous." In a new version of hamletting, they are being forced to leave their farms and evacuate to the town centers where no livelihood awaits them.

In fact, the hypocritical Aquino regime wants the villagers to leave in order to pave the way for the entry of the open-pit mining operations of PACOMINCO and PDMC in Monkayo; Agusan Petroleum and Minerals Corp. (owned by San Miguel Corp.) and Black Stone Mining Corp. in Compostela; and the American-owned Cadan Resources in New Bataan. Open-pit mining is the most environmentally destructive mining method because it involves clearing the forest and removing the topsoil, which is the most fertile part of the soil. Any area that has been subjected to open-pit mining can no longer be used for agriculture.

Despite the Aquino government's pretensions to being pro-environment, large-scale foreign mining operations prevail in the towns of Compostela Valley devastated by typhoon Pablo. Still in the area are the St. Augustine Gold-Copper Ltd

in Pantukan (1,656 hectares); Oz Metals and Mining Corp. in Mawab (6,000 hectares); North Davao Mining in Maco (5,000 hectares); and One Asia Resources in Mabini (7,000 hectares).

Claims by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that its reforestation program has a 99% accomplishment rate in the devastated areas are pure hogwash. If it did plant any seedlings at all, it has done nothing to assess what percentage has grown and survived. In fact, the DENR has not conducted any studies to ascertain the impact of the storm on both land and marine flora and fauna in the devastated areas.

With no reforestation to speak of, the regime still has the gall to allow logging companies to operate, brandishing the IFMA. Sixteen IFMA holders will continue to lord it over in the towns of Boston, Cateel, Manay, Caraga and Baganga in Davao Oriental until 2036.

The huge amounts of money involved in these environmentally destructive businesses has spurred the state to respond with bloody repression against anti-logging and anti-mining activists. Two local mass leaders have already been killed by state agents—Cristina Jose of Barug Katawhan who was slain in March; and Benjie Planos of Kasaka, who was murdered in September. **AB**

US exploits tragedy in the Visayas

The US military is exploiting the widespread tragedy wrought by typhoon Yolanda on November 8 to justify sending warships and armed troops to the Philippines. In the name of providing “assistance,” the US has been able to position more than ten nuclear-capable warships and thousands of armed troops in various parts of the country. The entry of US ships and soldiers is being done under the Pentagon-directed “Operation Damayan.”

In the past weeks, more than ten warships of the 7th Fleet—including the USS George Washington, one of the US’ biggest aircraft carriers—have arrived and docked in various parts of Leyte and Samar. The USS George Washington carries 90 jet fighters and war helicopters and a crew of 6,250. It entered Philippine waters accompanied by its support vessels, the USS Antietam and USS Cowpens. The ships are positioned in the eastern part of Samar island.

The USNS Charles Drew and the USS Lassen alongside the submarine Emory S. Land are positioned in Tacloban while the third area focused on by the operation is Ormoc where the USS Mustin is docked. The USS Bowditch, on the other hand, is surveying the Leyte Gulf.

Also in the gulf are two other US Navy ships, the USS Ashland and the USS Germantown with 900 Marines from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) based in Okinawa, Japan. The British government has also sent its HMS Daring warship. The US and Australia have likewise lent their C-17 Globemaster airplanes to transport troops and cargo. Japan has also sent its newly built aircraft carrier Izumo.

There are also US troops and

equipment positioned at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City and in Tacloban City. US troops have been allowed to use the airports at Tacloban and Guian, Eastern Samar. They have also been using the airports and seaports in Mactan, Cebu, which the US has wanted to do all along.

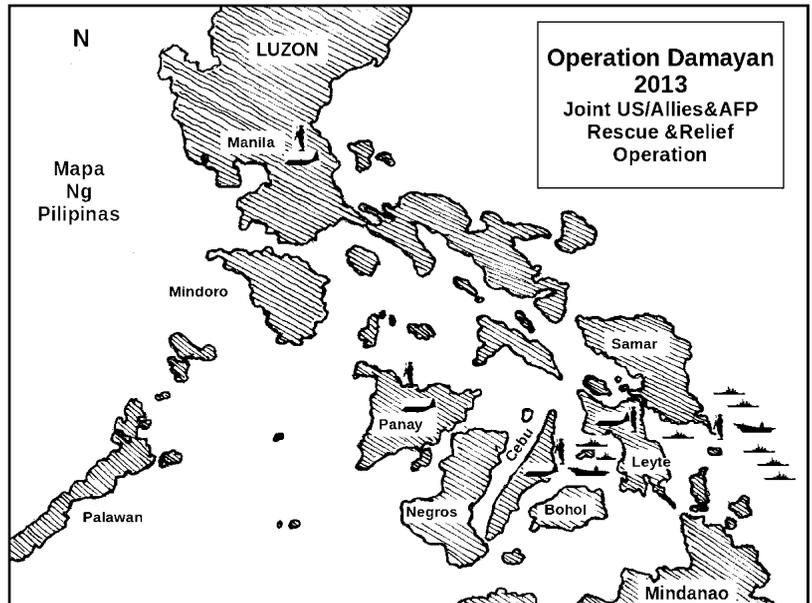
The US Pacific Command has assigned the Japan-based Lt. Gen. John Wissler whose office will be transferred to Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City from where he is supposed to lead military operations in the country. Aside from the US, also in the Philippines are the military forces of other US allies such as Australia, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan while more military forces from Brunei, United Kingdom, Thailand and New Zealand are set to arrive.

The deployment of US 7th Fleet forces in Philippine waters, especially in Eastern Visayas has strategic significance. Historically, US troops led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur entered the country through Palo, Leyte in 1944. American troops were also positioned in Balangiga and Guian in Eastern Samar in 1901. All these areas face the Pacific Ocean, which the US in-

tends to dominate.

This is not the first time US imperialism has taken advantage of a tragedy caused by a disaster in order to intervene. It did so in Haiti in 2010 when the country was hit by a strong earthquake. The US has not withdrawn its military forces from Haiti since then on the pretext that they need to stay to maintain order. Just as what happened in Haiti, the volume of troops and military equipment sent to the devastated areas in the Visayas are comparable to a military invasion, especially since the troops do not directly assist in relief and rehabilitation efforts. Instead, they enforce military measures such as setting up and manning checkpoints and restricting the people’s movements.

The Filipino people welcome international aid and support to facilitate the recovery of the victims of typhoon Yolanda. But they continue to stress that this should not be done at the expense of the nation’s sovereignty. They roundly condemn the use of the tragedy to provide an excuse for foreign military interventionism. **AB**



CPP extends ceasefire in typhoon-devastated areas

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines announced on November 24 a month-long extension of its earlier ceasefire declaration to commands of the New People's Army (NPA) and units of the people's militia in Eastern Visayas, Panay, Central Visayas and Negros Island.

The ceasefire which took effect on November 8 has been extended to 11:59 p.m. of December 24. The extension was announced to give all committees of the people's democratic government, NPA commands and people's militia units in areas devastated by supertyphoon Yolanda to carry on their rehabilitation tasks.

In its own declaration, the NPA Eastern Visayas Regional Command extended the ceasefire within its jurisdiction up to mid-January 2014 based on the

extent of the devastation and the need to focus on the rehabilitation campaign. A similar statement has been issued by the NPA regional command in Central Visayas and Negros Island.

At the same time, the CPP condemned the Aquino regime and its armed forces for refusing to issue a counterpart ceasefire declaration and for their obstinacy in continuing offensive military operations in typhoon-devastated areas. The CPP said that the AFP's disas-

ter-related operations are centered only in the cities and areas near the national highways. It has not relented in its campaigns of suppression under Oplan bayanihan in interior areas. The AFP's offensive operations have made it even more difficult for much-needed aid to reach the people.

The revolutionary forces are currently busy with rehabilitation work to assist hundreds of thousands of people recover from the devastation wrought by the typhoon. NPA Red fighters and members of the people's militia are involved in rebuilding or repairing houses. They have mobilized the people in an organized way to resume their production activities. Calamity victims are also being organized to assert their welfare and advance struggles for land and fisheries reforms especially in the typhoon-devastated areas.

Double whammy

A double whammy struck the people in the first week of December even as they had hardly recovered from the disasters wrought by typhoon Yolanda and a powerful earthquake that shook Cebu and Bohol.

The price per kilo of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) rose by ₱14.30 on December 2, adding a whopping ₱157.30 to the cost of an 11-kilogram LPG tank. Each tank now costs up to ₱900.00. Petron also hiked the price per liter of auto LPG by ₱7.99.

The fuel price hike—the biggest in history—was implemented despite a declaration by Benigno Aquino III of a “state of national calamity” which prohibits price increases in basic goods and services. Earthquake- and typhoon-devastated areas had the dubious consolation of being hit by the LPG price hike in two install-

ments—₱8.00 on December 2 and ₱6.30 on December 15.

On top of this, the highest power rate hike in history likewise looms this month. Monopoly power distributor Meralco plans to foist an increase of up to ₱3 per kilowatt-hour, claiming that it has been forced to buy electricity at higher prices from power plants forced to use more expensive fuel due to the temporary shutdown of the Malampaya natural gas plant.

Meanwhile, Malacañang has refused to step in and has even defended Meralco's alleged right to implement such a huge price hike.

The big increase in power rates is being imposed even if the Meralco has been proven to have overcharged its consumers twice. The courts have ordered it to refund its consumers but Meralco has yet to fully comply. **AB**

NPA seizes 5 firearms in Rizal raids

The New People's Army (NPA) seized five firearms in a raid on a fighting cock farm owned by Engr. Benjamin Flor and Bobby Lingan in Barangay Macabud, Rodriguez, Rizal on the afternoon of November 20. The Red fighters confiscated three shotguns, a cal .45 pistol, a cal .22 revolver and rounds of ammunition.

According to Macario "Ka Karyo" Liwanag, spokesperson of the Narciso Antazo Aramil Command (NAAC) of NPA-Rizal, this punitive action was taken to implement the decision of the People's Democratic Government (PDG) to sanction the owners for beating up residents, and for their widespread landgrabbing activities and indiscriminate firing.

The people rejoiced upon hearing of the NPA's punitive action. At last, they said, they have been given justice for their long-term oppression and their demand that these land-grabbers and rampant violators of the PDG's policies be meted punishment.

The NPA carried out this military action after close to two weeks of combat operations by a composite force of the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines in the Rizal countryside. AB

NPA punishes 5th ID in Mountain Province

The Leonardo Pacsi Command (NPA-Mountain Province) successfully mounted two military actions against a commando unit under the 50th IB and 503rd Infantry Brigade (both under the Philippine Army 5th ID) along the tri-boundary of Besao and Sagada towns in Mountain Province and Tubo town in Abra on November 15-16. Three soldiers were seriously wounded in this firefight.

The military troops had secretly entered Mount Tabbak on November 14. But the soldiers were unaware that the NPA Red fighters were watching their every move. The guerrillas sniped the advancing military troops on November 16 while the latter were resting in Mount Amtinangad.

A composite force comprising the 5th ID, Philippine National Police, Special Action Force and the Regional Public Safety Battalion of Cordillera has been conducting military operations since the second week of November. The operations cover the towns of Sagada, Besao, Bontoc, Tadian and Sadanga in Mountain Province; Tubo and Boliney municipalities in Abra; and Quirino, Cervantes and other towns of Ilocos Sur. AB

Bloody demolition in Misamis Oriental

A resident was shot dead and three others were wounded in a violent demolition of houses near the national highway in Barangay Calangahan, Lugait, Misamis Oriental on December 4. Nixon Tungao, 35, died even before reaching a hospital when policemen opened fire at a picket line manned by urban poor residents. Wounded were Jenny Arcadio, 45; Leonara Tungao, 41; and 12-month old Julius Oclarit.

According to the Alyansa ng mga Biktima ng Demolisyon sa Calangahan (Albidec), they pleaded with authorities to put off the demolition and negotiate. But the 200 urban poor residents manning the picket line were met with tear gas bombs. The urban poor threw stones to defend their homes. But some 100 policemen assigned to assist the demolition team followed up the tear gas attack with gunfire.

The land where the houses slated for demolition are located is being claimed by the Achondoa Agro-Industrial Company owned by Emma Anora and has long been the subject of a court case. The court has decided in favor of the company.

Meanwhile, a Lumad leader was killed by a local politician in Opol town, Misamis Oriental. Rolen Langala, 35, was shot dead by Nestor Bahian, a village councilor of Barangay Bagojoboc on December 1 while the victim was on his way home after celebrating the town fiesta. Bahian belongs to a group of warlords and paramilitaries in the area serving as protectors of foreign mining companies and oil palm plantations such as A. Brown Company.

A. Brown Company is likewise believed to have masterminded the killing of Pangalasag leader Gilbert Paborada in October 2012 in Cagayan de Oro City. Pangalasag is a local anti-mining group. AB

Detained NDFP consultants stage hunger strike

Detained peace talks consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) began on December 1 a ten-day hunger strike to protest their continued incarceration, the relentless violations of their human rights, unabated government corruption and the US-Aquino regime's incompetence in addressing the miserable conditions of typhoon Yolanda victims. Aside from the consultants, other political detainees are set to join the hunger strike up to December 10.

The 13 NDFP consultants are Renante Gamara, Eduardo Sarmiento, Eduardo Serrano, Alan Jazmines, Tirso Alcantara, Emeterio Antalan, Leopoldo Caluza, Edgardo Friginal, Alfredo Mapano, Pedro Codaste, Jaime Soledad, Ramon Patriarca and Loida Magpatoc. They have all been slapped with trumped-up criminal cases in violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) signed by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) and the NDFP in 1995. Aquino continues to disregard his previous pledge of releasing most or all of the country's political detainees.

The NDFP consultants called for the release of all the 440 political detainees, especially 48 detainees who are ailing and 28 who are elderly. They demanded the immediate release of Ramon Argente, who had recently undergone heart surgery; Vanessa de los Reyes and Alvin Langlang, who are both paralyzed; and Jesus Alegre, 68, and his wife Moreta, 66.

In support of their struggle, more than a hundred activists rallied at Mendiola on December 3 to call for the release of all political detainees in the country.

The consultants likewise condemned the US-Aquino regime's continued refusal to resume formal negotiations with the NDFP. They clarified anew that in principle, the NDFP is open to continuing the peace talks, especially after the devastation wrought by typhoon Yolanda and the US-Aquino government's failure to address the victims' needs. **AB**

Aquino branded as "Impunity King"

The media has branded Benigno Aquino III as the "Impunity King" as victims of the Maguindanao Massacre continue to be denied justice with the current regime's failure to push the trial of the accused. Journalists and students belonging to the End Impunity Alliance and other organizations gave him the monicker during the commemoration of the fourth year of the Maguindanao Massacre.

On November 23, 2009, up to 58 people, including 32 journalists were killed with impunity and buried in Barangay Salman, Ampatuan, Maguindanao. They were murdered by men hired by the Ampatuan family in a violent attack on the rival Mangudadatu family. The relatives and friends of the victims and even media personalities have assailed the trial for moving at a snail's pace. To date, only eight of the suspects have been arrested, with 88 still at large. Some, who are known to have played a central role in the massacre, like Datu Saudi Ampatuan Jr. and Datu Bahnarin Ampatuan remain free.

BAYAN-NCR, the Burgos Media Center, Kilusang Mayo Uno, COURAGE and employees of UNTV also rallied in Mendiola to assail continuing injustice under the Aquino regime. Rallies were likewise held in Negros, General Santos, Kidapawan and elsewhere. The journalists slammed Aquino for being the Impunity King, not only for the Maguindanao Massacre trial's extremely slow pace, but for the relentless media killings.

On November 22, two motorcycle-riding gunmen killed Joas Dignos, a commentator on DxGT Radyo Abante 92.1 FM based in Maramag, Bukidnon. Dignos was the 24th media man killed under the Aquino regime.

Said the Burgos Media Center, "With injustice still rife and the murder of journalists and other critics of the government still being reported on the fourth year of the Ampatuan massacre and three years after Pres. Aquino was elected, it is crystal clear that the 'Culture of Impunity' is still very much alive even under the so-called "matuwid na landas" of this administration." **AB**

NDFP pays tribute to proletarian revolutionaries

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) honored revolutionary internationalists Comrade Francisca C. Fanggaldaej of Indonesia and Igor Urrutikoetxea Bilbao of the nationalist movement for the liberation of the Basque country.

Comrade Francisca died in Utrecht, The Netherlands on November 13 at the age of 88. She became active in the armed struggle for Indonesian independence after the Second World War and joined youth and women's organizations in the 1950s. She was likewise a noted journalist and represented the sector in the Indonesian parliament. In 1960 and 1963, she held several meetings with Cuban President Fidel Castro. She became an adviser of the then-anti-imperialist Sukarno government. In 1965, she lived as an exile in China after the US-supported coup led by General Suharto. She has lived in The Netherlands since 1985.

Through many years, Comrade Francisca supported the Filipino people's revolutionary struggle against US imperialism and a succession of reactionary regimes. She would also attend political gatherings and educational sessions organized by the NDFP. She was able to go to Indonesia only in 2003, after almost 40 years in exile.



Francisca Fanggaldaej



Igor Urrutikoetxea

Ka Igor, on the other hand, died in Brazil on November 28 at the age of 38. He was the International Relations Secretary of the Basque trade union center Langile Abertzaleen Batzordeak (LAB, or the Nationalist Workers' Committees). He also served as the Secretary General of the Trade Union International Metal & Mining and was an officer of the World Federation of Trade Unions. The NDFP saluted Comrade Igor for his proletarian internationalism and hailed his contributions as a firm fighter for the nationalist movement in Basque and the class conscious trade union movement. AB

Progressives ardently celebrate Bonifacio's 150th birth anniversary

Progressive organizations marked the 150th birth anniversary of Gat Andres Bonifacio, with thousands marching from the Welcome Rotonda and Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila before proceeding to Mendiola. A mass action was likewise held in Davao City where activists gathered at the Magsaysay Park and held a program at the Rizal Park.

According to the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), the people must continue the revolutionary struggle begun by Bonifacio. They must be patriotic, militant and anticolonial especially with the intensifying exploitation by the ruling classes of the broad masses of the people. The KMU added that Bonifacio's spirit will serve as an inspiration for as long as genuine freedom and democracy have not been achieved.

On the other hand, the KMU-Southern Mindanao Region called on the people to oppose the Aquino regime's attacks on the people's rights and liveli-

hoods. The regime has been proven incompetent not only on the issue of corruption, but with the disasters that have struck the country in the past few months. Aquino must be battered with protests and taken to account for his negligence, said KMU-SMR.

A cultural presentation entitled "Maghimagsik" (Wage revolution) has also been scheduled for December 7 at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City to commemorate Bonifacio's anniversary. At the Lower House of Congress, progressive parties have filed a bill calling for Bonifacio's recognition as a national hero.

Meanwhile, members of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) launched a lightning rally along Recto Avenue in Manila to celebrate their 49th anniversary. KM urged the youth to join the armed revolution that was Bonifacio's legacy. They also called for the overthrow of the rotten system through a people's democratic revolution. AB