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Editorial

Drive out the fascists from Talaingod!

For almost two months now, the AFP has been mounting intense military operations and going on a fascist rampage in a cluster of sub-villages in Barangay Palma Gil, Talaingod, Davao del Norte. Since the first week of March, battalions of troops from the Armed Forces of the Philippines have been sowing terror in this area. The 68th and 60th IB and the 4th Special Forces have been concentrating on eight sub-villages in Palma Gil, spurring more than 1,300 Ata-Manobo tribespeople to flee. They are currently seeking refuge with church people and other concerned groups in Davao City.

The Ata-Manobo decided to evacuate because staying in their communities would have meant suffering hunger and repression amid the rampant militarization. For weeks, they have been prevented by soldiers from going to their farms, saying these were owned by the New People's Army (NPA). Their schools have also been branded as "NPA schools." The soldiers have turned the schools into barracks and destroyed a number of farms. Many Lumad leaders and tribespeople have been harassed and subjected to interrogation, including children, women and the elderly. Some have been forcibly used as guides in military operations. On March 20, the area was bombarded by AFP airplanes and two helicopters for more than an hour.

The Ata-Manobo have taken a stand. They have decided not to allow the soldiers to suppress them, occupy their communities, destroy the farms they had worked hard to build and violate

their schools. They clandestinely but organizedly fled their sub-villages to go to the plains to expose to the public how the AFP has been wantonly abusing their rights. They declared that they would not return for as long as their safety could not be guaranteed from the marauding fascist military. And this could only happen if the AFP pulls out of their communities.

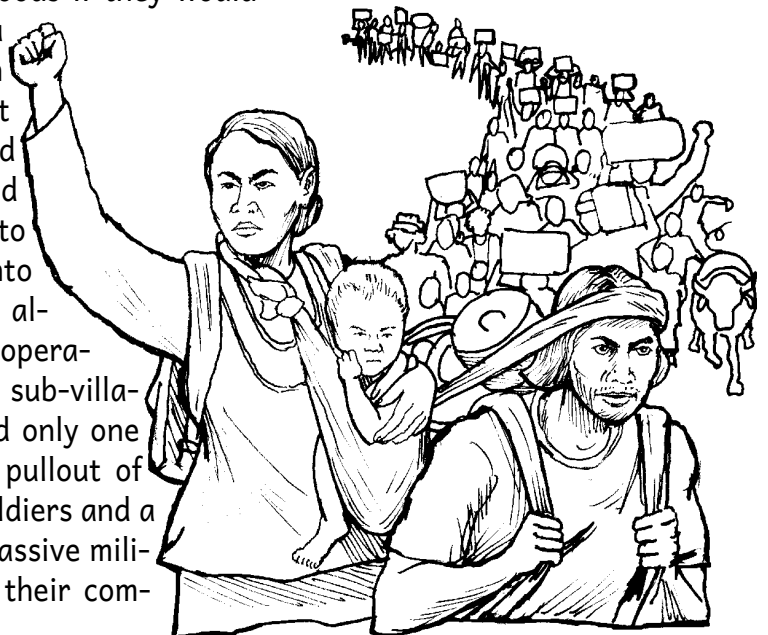
In cahoots with the military, the mayor of Talaingod tried to bribe the evacuees by offering them relief goods if they would return to a "safe area" in Palma Gil. But the Lumad firmly refused this attempt to herd them into a hamlet and allow military operations in their sub-villages. They had only one demand: the pullout of the fascist soldiers and a stop to the massive militarization of their com-

munities.

The Lumad also bared the real reason behind the current military operation—to pave the way for the entry of large-scale mining into the heart of the Ata-Manobo's ancestral land. The mining companies' target is Pantaron Range, one of the few remaining dense forestlands along the Davao del Norte-Bukidnon-Davao City and Agusan provinces boundary.

The sub-villages being scoured by the soldiers lie at the gateway to these resource-rich forests. Since 2008, several mining companies had already filed applications to explore the area. But their attempts have all been thwarted because of the Ata-Manobo's heroic struggle and the fierce opposition of their allies.

Meanwhile, the people



strengthened their unity in order to overcome their neglect by the reactionary government. Three calamities had hit them—a massive rat infestation that destroyed their crops, and disasters resulting from typhoons Pablo and Crising. Just as other hinterland villages had experienced, not a single drop of aid came from the reactionary local and national government. They thus took the initiative to develop production, build their own schools and launch health and other campaigns, with the help of progressive organizations and institutions.

Fascist military troops are now mounting vicious attacks on the area because for the reactionaries, it is a terrible nightmare for genuine people's power to emerge and for the minority peoples to benefit from the fruit of the land. The eradication of hunger and ignorance among the the Lumad masses likewise brings grim forebodings to the reactionaries. For the reactionaries, the minority masses must remain in a state of wretchedness and disunity so they could

easily be bribed by money, terrorized and suppressed and deprived of the natural resources found in their ancestral lands.

The intense militarization of Talaingod and the Ata-Manobo's fierce resistance bring to the fore the sharp contradictions between two opposing forces. On one end is the fascist AFP that serves as the instrument of the reactionary state and its imperialist, big bourgeois comprador and big landlord cohorts in suppressing the people. On the other are the Ata-Manobo and other oppressed and exploited people who are waging fierce resistance and desirous of thoroughgoing social change.


The Communist Party of the Philippines urgently calls on all the people to declare their loathing for, and oppose, the fascist violence being unleashed by the reactionary Aquino regime in Talaingod, whose only objective is to suppress the Ata-Manobo and cede their ancestral land to plundering mining and logging companies.

The AFP's fascist onslaught

in Talaingod mirrors the fascist rampage in other resource-rich areas being coveted by the reactionaries. This fact must be tirelessly exposed and resisted.

In the face of the fascist attacks in Talaingod and many other areas, it is very timely to forward the burning issues of destructive foreign mining, the displacement of the minority and peasant masses and the destruction of their livelihoods. These are the issues that lie at the core of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER), the second substantive agenda in the peace negotiations. Also among the issues under CASER are the pathetic state of health care, the widespread demolitions amid the lack of programs for decent housing and other crucial social concerns. The Aquino regime has been thwarting talks on the CASER because these would only shed a garish light on the reactionary state's criminal negligence of the people's social welfare. Only the strength of a united people who love justice and peace can push the regime to resume negotiations.

The Party and all the revolutionary forces and masses hail the Ata-Manobo's courage and firmness of principle as they resist militarization and determinedly drive out the fascist AFP from their ancestral land. They likewise salute all other people waging intense struggle against militarization in their communities. In consonance with their struggle, the New People's Army will go all-out in implementing the revolutionary policy of thwarting and expelling all those who plunderer the nation's natural resources, destroy the environment, seize lands and trample on the rights of the oppressed and exploited masses. AB

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History of resistance in Talaingod

The Ata-Manobo have been waging resistance against those who have been seizing and destroying their ancestral land for the past 20 years.

In November 1993, twenty-five of the tribe's datos gathered to declare a *pangayaw* or tribal war against logging giant C. Alcantara and Sons Inc. or CASI (formerly Alsons). CASI has a 20-hectare logging concession encompassing a huge portion of the Ata-Manobo's ancestral land in Davao del Norte. It acquired the concession on the strength of an Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA) after its old timber license for the same area expired. The datos wanted to put a stop decisively to the denudation of their forest.

They formed the Salugpungan 'Ta Igkanugon (Unity for the Defense of Ancestral Land) led by Datu Guibang Apoga and held dialogues with CASI and its puppet local government to set boundaries on the IFMA's coverage. CASI refused. It was after this that military attacks on

anti-IFMA areas began.

In February 1994, three truckloads of soldiers from the 64th IB swooped down on Talaingod ostensibly to rid the area of the New People's Army. They burned down houses, stole crops and slaughtered the farm animals of Ata-Manobo who were opposed to the IFMA. The brutal military operations led more than 500 Lumad to flee towards the towns centers of Davao del Norte and seek sanctuary in the churches. Meanwhile, Datu Guibang stayed in the mountains to defend the land.

Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte brokered the forging of a Memorandum of Agreement between Salugpungan and CASI calling for limits to the IFMA's coverage and the pullout of the military troops. After this, the evacuees returned to their respective communities.

After a month, however, CA-

SI lumbered in with equipment and military escorts to operate in areas beyond the agreed boundaries. Datu Guibang and his group decided to launch the *pangayaw*.

Bringing with them their indigenous weapons, they warned CASI's guards. But the latter merely laughed at them. After their third warning was ignored, the Ata-Manobo attacked, killing and wounding a number of the guards.

Arrest warrants were issued for the 25 Salugpungan datos. Datu Guibang retreated and went into hiding in the forests, but the Ata-Manobo still look up to him as their leader in their struggle against those who want to seize their ancestral land. Meanwhile, armed Ata-Manobo have been launching sporadic attacks against the military that has been protecting CASI.

The Ata-Manobo's courage in confronting the massive militarization being launched to facilitate the entry of mining companies into their ancestral land is a continuation of their heroic history of resistance. **AB**

Oppose plans to abolish the minimum wage

Officials of the US-Aquino regime and their big capitalist collaborators are currently drumbeating proposals to abolish the minimum wage. Proving the US-Aquino regime's utter lack of concern for the workers and peasants, this proposal has been forwarded in the face of the widespread poverty and suffering of the toiling masses, the relentless rise in the daily cost of living and the deteriorating quality of their lives.

The workers and the entire Filipino people must pull all stops to resist plans to abolish the minimum wage. This has no other objective but to reduce workers' wages to enable capi-

talists to squeeze every last drop of profit from their labor. For the past several years, the gap between workers' wages and daily expenses has grown ever wider. The prevailing mini-

imum wage is less than half of what workers should spend in order for their families to live decently.

It is to the interest of Filipino workers to maintain, strengthen and expand the minimum wage system, including the system of setting a national minimum wage, to serve as a protective shield in the face of the workers' wanton oppression and the relentless blows on their rights.

Aquino experts have come up with twisted justifications claiming that the minimum wage system is detrimental to workers' interests in a sinister attempt to make its abolition acceptable to the workers. As the "logic" goes, capitalists find it hard to comply with the minimum wage and choose instead to reduce the number of workers or close shop to avert "bankruptcy."

The minimum wage system is a defensive shield for all workers against all-out bondage by the capitalists. It is among the rights that the workers' movement fought for in the earlier part of the 20th century. It was enacted in the US after the Second World War, and in other capitalist countries and semicolonies like the Philippines.

Under the reactionary state, the minimum wage law is used to ensure the maintenance of a huge army of cheap labor that capitalists could hire and earn profits from. Capitalists wield their power to set the minimum wage at very low levels and use it to weigh down on wages in general.

Since 1987, the minimum wage system has been further undermined in the Philippines by the enactment of "regionalization" which dismantled the system of setting a national minimum wage. Raising the minimum wage became an even slower process and it became even more difficult for workers to push for a raise.

The minimum wage has not been raised for more than a decade and instead, only increases in the cost of living allowance or COLA have been allowed, keeping low other payments or benefits linked to

the minimum wage.

The minimum wage law in the Philippines has long been violated by capitalists. Using various means, including contractualization, capitalists have been circumventing or violating it outrightly. Worse, the "two-tiered wage system" which sets a "floor wage" that is even lower than the prevailing minimum wage has been in force for over two years.

The proposal to do away completely with the minimum wage system in the Philippines is but one of the many antiworker policies being implemented by the US-Aquino regime. The current state of Filipino workers is among the worst in history in the face of unrelenting and brutal attacks on their rights to form unions and to strike.

The US-Aquino regime has no other objective in dismantling the minimum wage but to further thrust the Filipino workers into the mouths of profit-hungry foreign investors. If the minimum wage system is dismantled, big capitalists will be given freer rein to reduce wages to the lowest possible level without being accountable to existing laws.

In the face of the unprecedented suffering and oppression being inflicted on the Filipino workers, now more than ever, they must unite and struggle. They must resist all forms of exploitation and oppression, including various forms of contractualization, wage reduction and suppression of democratic rights. They must forge their broadest possible unity within and outside the factories and launch ever bigger, more frequent and intensifying mass struggles. **AB**

The B'laan's armed resistance

In 2011, B'laan warriors attacked the Tampakan Copper-Gold Mine Project in Kiblawan, Davao del Sur, signaling the resumption of the B'laan people's armed uprising against the plunderous foreign mining company that has been seizing their ancestral land and destroying their forests. The Tampakan mine found at the South Cotabato (Tampakan)-Davao del Sur (Kiblawan)-Sultan Kudarat (Columbio) triboundary was then owned by SMI-Xstrata.

B'laan communities have had a long history of armed resistance to foreign companies encroaching on their land. Even before the Marcos dictatorship, the B'laan people had already been active in resisting big logging companies in South Cotabato and Davao del Sur.

Among the most striking examples is the uprising of big B'laan families based in Salpaong, Bong Mal and Sbanken against the Habaluyas Logging Company during the 1960s. Led by Majon Malid and his sons Gurilmin, Piring and Juanito, the B'laan blocked Habaluyas from expanding into the forestlands surrounding their communities. The intense militarization, however, forced the Malid family to retreat to Mt. Bulol Lumot. From there, they continued attacking Habaluyas' operations until the company was forced to negotiate with them. The Malid family agreed to stop their resistance in exchange for a promise by Habaluyas to spare the forests at Mt. Bulol Lumot and desist from militarizing the area.

Eventually, the forests in South Cotabato and Davao del Sur were denuded, and several logging companies pulled back. By the 1990s, they were replaced by the mining companies. The biggest was Western Mining Corporation (WMC) which was granted by the reactionary state with a permit to explore and mine a vast concession in Tampakan-Kiblawan-Columbio.

In cooperation with various sectors of society, including Red fighters then operating in the area, the B'laan were able to directly put a stop to WMC's operations. SMI tried to bribe some of the *datus* to allow it to operate in the area. Despite the assent of a number of *datus*, some B'laan families continued their armed resistance. The WMC used the 39th, 25th and 27th IB to militarize the area and harass the families fighting the company.

In response, B'laan warriors led by Gurilmin Malid launched a 17-day armed offensive against AFP soldiers serving as WMC guards in Bukay Eli, Columbio, Sultan Kudarat in 1996. With several Lumad communities in Davao del Sur and Sultan Kudarat cooperating in this endeavor, they succeeded in expelling the military troops from the area.

In the succeeding years, the reactionary state stepped up its fascist rampage against the B'laan people. During the US-Arroyo regime, Task Force Gantangan and Task Force KITACO (Kiblawan-Tampakan-Columbio) were formed to arm close to three battalions of SCAA (paramilitaries funded by private companies) to serve as the mining giant's guards.

In spite of this, there was no stopping the B'laan's uprising. From 1996 to 2006, armed clashes continued between

B'laan warriors and AFP troops. Although the military killed Gurilmin Malid in 2002, B'laan warriors were able to resume their organized resistance in 2010.

Led by Daguil Capion and his wife Juvy who hailed from the Malid clan, B'laan warriors launched continued attacks on policemen and soldiers serving as company guards. Capion was a former Xstrata employee who suffered intense oppression and harassment in the hands of the company. Before he resigned from his job, he realized the grave destruction being wrought by the company's operations on the B'laan people's communities and way of life, on their ancestral land and surrounding forests.

Among the B'laan's armed attacks were a series of ambushes on policemen in Davao del Sur guarding SMI-Xstrata machinery on Kiblawan Road and against soldiers of the 1002nd Bde in Sitio Maklak, Kimlawis, also in Kiblawan.

On the other hand, attacks and killings perpetrated by successive regimes simultaneously intensified against antimining B'laan, their families and supporters. The most notorious cases of extrajudicial killing were those of Virgilio Lagro, the Bulane brothers, Atong Pacaide, Boy Billianes, Fr. Fausto "Pops" Tentorio, Ronald and Alex Mallely, Datu Anting Freay and his son Victor. In October 2012, military forces strafed the Capion family's hut, killing Juvy Malid-Capion, her unborn child and two of her sons, and wounding another son. Her daughter, who witnessed the massacre, was traumatized. In January 2013, Daguil Capion's brother Kitari was likewise killed. The entire Capion family is now under fire by the military. **AB**

Shut down the Tampakan Copper-Gold Mine!

The people have long been struggling against the Tampakan Copper-Gold Mine Project. Aside from the B'laan people's armed resistance, various other B'laan organizations and people's sectors, the Catholic Church and even local government units have also been fiercely opposed to it.

In 1995, affected B'laan communities along with the Diocese of Kidapawan filed a case against Western Mining Corp. (WMC) and demanded a stop to what was then the initial stages of its exploration project. In the face of intense resistance to WMC, the Supreme Court sided with the B'laan's demand in 2004 and ordered a stop to WMC's operations. At the instigation of the Arroyo regime, however, the Supreme Court reversed its earlier decision the following year and allowed WMC to resume its operations.

Foreign companies and their local collaborators, then led by Paul Dominguez, Sagittarius Mining Inc. (SMI) president as well as presidential assistant for Mindanao were ecstatic. SMI later replaced WMC as project administrator in 2002.

Since 1996 up to the present, support for the B'laan struggle against the company has continually broadened. Local governments issued resolutions against Xstrata-SMI's operations, including South Cotabato in 1996 and the municipality of Buluan, Maguindanao in 2006. In 2010, the province of South Cotabato approved an ordinance banning open-pit min-

ing. The ordinance remains in effect to date.

The antimining movement has grown and gained strength among minority peoples in various parts of the Philippines, among progressive groups within and outside the country, environmentalist groups and human rights advocates.

The mine was prevented from commencing its operations in 2010 as the B'laan people's antimining movement gained further strength. Their armed resistance erupted at the same time.

The area covered by the Tampakan Copper-Gold Mine Project is said to have the world's largest untapped copper and gold deposits. A 2010 report resulting from years of exploration stated that up to 450,000 tons of copper and 435,000 tons of gold could potentially be extracted in the first five years of operation alone, generating an estimated \$20-30 billion in initial revenues.

SMI, a company founded by the Alcantara family, manages the Tampakan Copper-Gold Mine Project. Its partner is the former Xstrata Plc, now known as Glencore-Xstrata, which has majority control (62.5%). The remaining 37.5% is held by Indophil Resources NL, an Australian company. Indophil was established by WMC executives after the company's takeover by the Anglo-Australian-owned BHB Billiton.

In October 2013, SMI announced the closure of some of its offices, the layoff of 85% of its workers and the sale of most of its vehicles and other company property. This was after Glencore International purchased Xstrata Plc, SMI's foreign partner in the Tampakan Copper-Gold Mine Project.

One of the conditions for Glencore's takeover of Xstrata was the sale of its problematic projects, citing low gold prices in the international market, Glencore-Xstrata's initial decision to sell its part of the company and various security issues. Nonetheless, Indophil has no plans of abandoning the project. Instead of commencing operation in 2016, it has decided to postpone this to 2019.

AB

NPA punishes mining companies in ComVal, Ilocos Sur

The New People's Army (NPA) used command-detonated explosives (CDX) on reinforcements from the 9th IB at the Masara Apex Tenement Complex in Maco, Compostela Valley on the morning of April 12. This came on the heels of tactical offensives launched on April 7 and 10 by Red fighters from the Pulang Bagani Company, Guerrilla Front 72 Operations Command and Guerrilla Front 2 Operations Command against the St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd. and Apex Mining.

Meanwhile, NPA Red fighters in Ilocos Sur also destroyed a huge drilling machine owned by Phelps Dodge in Barangay Patia-can, Quirino town on April 11.

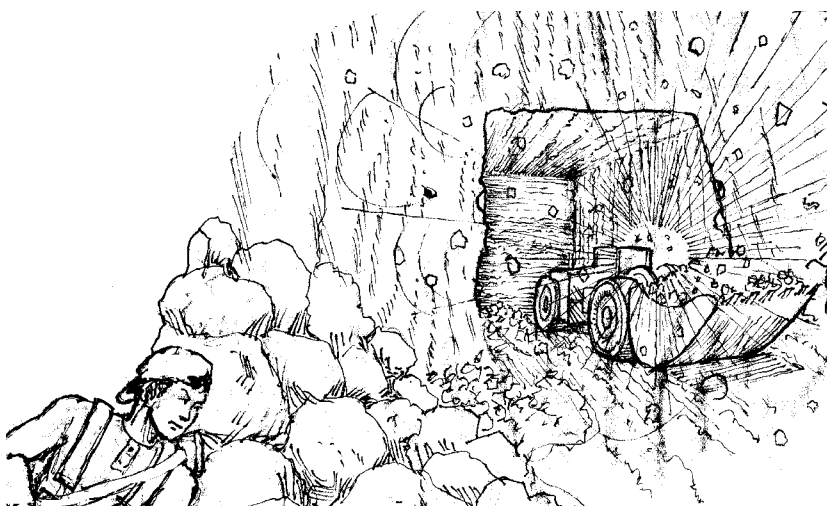
Apex Mining, St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd. St. Augustine Gold and Copper Ltd. is a US-owned company while Apex Mining is jointly owned by Malaysia and Enrique Razon, the fourth richest Filipino and a major contributor to Benigno Aquino III's electoral campaign in 2010.

According to the Comval-Davao Gulf Subregional Command of the NPA-Southern Mindanao, the two biggest mining companies in Southern Mindanao repeatedly violated the policies of the People's Demo-

cratic Government on environmental protection and upholding the people's social and economic welfare.

The NPA destroyed mining equipment in five tunnels owned by Apex Mining in Masara after the company failed to stop expanding its underground and open-pit mining operations despite warnings issued in April and October 2013; expanded its operations towards the forest reserves of Maco; and failed to compensate the casualties of two major landslides in 2012 that resulted from its operations. The landslides obliterated Barangay Mainit, Maco.

The company also pays its mine workers very low wages (P301 per day). Already victimized by re-



trenchment, the workers face another round of layoffs in June.

Apex Mining also reneged on an agreement it signed with 91 families from the villages of Tagbaros, Elizalde, Panibasan, Panangan and Malamodao to rehabilitate a bridge and several streams.

The company likewise actively provides funds and support to the 9th IB's counterrevolutionary operations against the NPA that have resulted in the death of civilian Wilmar Vargas and human rights violations against villagers and small miners.

Meanwhile, the NPA destroyed portable drilling machinery owned by St. Augustine Mining in Pantukan. The company was punished for establishing military outposts, regularly searching and confiscating belongings from small miners who

enter and leave the area, controlling the movements of civilians and conducting aggressive psychological warfare among tribal leaders through doleout projects.

Phelps Dodge. In solidarity with the widespread opposition of residents of Quirino, Ilocos Sur to big foreign mining companies, the NPA destroyed a big drilling machine owned by Freeport McMoran-Phelps Dodge Mining Company in Barangay Patiacaan in the said town.

According to Ka Armando Silva, spokesperson of the Alfredo Cesar Command (NPA-Ilocos Sur), the mining company was punished after four years of destructive exploration activities conducted despite the people's opposition. The community had roundly repudiated the referendum held on the ex-

tension of the exploration project on April 2.

Phelps Dodge, through its partner Northern Horizon, is conducting exploration activities on a 5,878-hectare concession covering Quirino and Barangay Laylaya in the neighboring town of Besao, Mountain Province. Its operations began in Patiacaan in July 2010 after four years of maneuvering to overturn the people's refusal to allow it to operate, as shown by the results of previous referenda in 2006 and 2009. Phelps Dodge finally connived with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to conduct an anomalous referendum in May 2010 to acquire "Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)" despite the people's repeated repudiations. **AB**

AFP troops expelled from Sagada

Residents of Barangays Fidelisan and Aguid in Sagada, Mountain Province successfully boot-ed out military forces under the 50th IB that tried to build a camp in their area. The AFP plan was hatched after an ambush by the New People's Army (NPA) on the morning of March 29 on elements of the Regional Police Security Battalion and Provincial Police Security Battalion in Barangay Dalican, Sagada. Two policemen were killed and two others wounded in the ambush.

Residents of Fidelisan village led by Barangay Captain Jojo Briones firmly stood their ground against the AFP's basing in their barrio. The armed troops led by Lt. Brian Arcinilla had insisted on camping at the barrio center on April 10 ostensibly to provide security to the area against the NPA. The plan is also in line with the military's implementation of Oplan Bayanihan.

The residents asserted that they would be endangered by the presence of armed soldiers in the village. The military transferred to the adjacent barrio, staying at the Barangay Aguid gymnasium before finally leaving on April 12.

Meanwhile, residents of Baay-Licuan, Abra demanded the pullout of the 41st IB from their community to placate the family of the victims of a heinous

massacre that occurred in the municipality, and pave the way for an independent investigation of the murders, which they consider to be a crime against their tribe. On March 7, the bodies of Licuben Ligiw and his sons Fermin and Eddie were found buried in a shallow grave in Sitio Sukaw, Barangay Dumenglaw, Baay-Licuan. The victims were members of progressive organizations in their town.

In a tribute to the Ligiws on March 31, the Bunagan-Ayagan-Matanao (BAM) clan to which the victims belonged issued a resolution demanding the immediate withdrawal of the 41st IB from their village. The also aired an urgent call to the local government, church people, non-government organizations, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the councils of tribal elders, and especially Benigno Aquino III to support their demand.

They added that the presence of military forces who are suspected of having perpetrated the massacre has terrorized the populace and severely disrupted the people's economic activities.

The resolution was signed by the villagers who attended the tribute, which formed part of the National Solidarity Mission conducted by representatives of various progressive organizations. **AB**

NPA arrests sergeant in ComVal

Red fighters under the Comval-North Davao-South Agusan Subregional Command of the New People's Army (NPA) arrested Sgt. Jeric Bucio Curay at a checkpoint set up by the NPA in Barangay Andap, Laak, Compostela Valley on April 4. The soldier detailed with the 72nd IB had just come from his unit's detachment in Barangay Panuramin, also in Laak. He is currently being held by an NPA custodial unit and is being treated well as a prisoner of war.

Curay's arrest coincides with a renewed campaign by the revolutionary movement in the region against military units like the 72nd IB that protect big loggers like Laak Mayor Reynaldo Navarro; SPO3 Eduardo Bajalia of the PNP Regional Intelligence Office; Diosdado Wamilda, a retired policeman; Loreto, Agusan del Sur Mayor Dario Otaza; and Agusan del Sur Gov. Edward Plaza.

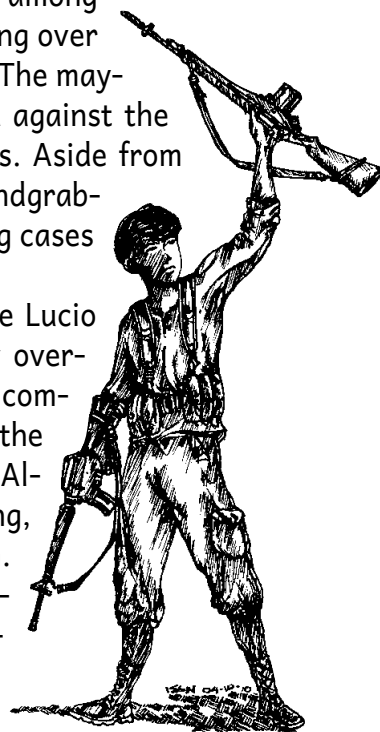
Large-scale logging, mining and plantations destroy the area's remaining forests, deprive the Lumad and peasants masses of their livelihood and endanger the people during times of calamity and climate change. AB

Red fighters seize 11 firearms in Davao Occidental

Red fighters under the Alex Ababa Command-Front 71 of the New People's Army confiscated eleven firearms in a raid on the house of Jose Abad Santos, Davao Occidental mayor James Joyce on April 13. The arms haul consisted of an M203 grenade launcher, an M16, two M14s, two cal .30 carbines, four 12-gauge shotguns, a cal .38 pistol and rounds of ammunition.

The raid was a punitive measure against the warlord mayor and active counterrevolutionary, said Ka Efren Aksasato, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front (NDF)-Far South Mindanao Region. The Joyces are among the biggest despotic landlords, ruling over the area for over a hundred years. The mayor's private armies are being used against the people with the military's blessings. Aside from being a warlord, he has pending landgrabbing, murder, rape and drug dealing cases at the people's court.

Meanwhile, a platoon under the Lucio de Guzman Command successfully overcame an offensive launched by combined forces of the 4th IB and the Philippine National Police in Sitio Almayos, Barangay Tawas, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro at around 10 a.m. of April 1, killing two enemy elements. The Red fighters safely retreated. AB



Crisis in Zamboanga continues to worsen

Moro evacuees have stopped counting the number of deaths within the severely cramped evacuation centers at F. Joaquin Enriquez Memorial Sports Complex and Cawa-Cawa Boulevard in Zamboanga City.

At last count on April 6, there have been 106 deaths among the evacuees since tens of thousands of civilians were forced to leave their communities after the AFP attacked Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) forces who had gathered in the city to stage a rally.

More than 700 Moros who launched a protest action on April 6 assailed both the local and national governments for their continued suffering in the evacuation centers. They said that more than 200 days of misery was too much for the 120,000 evacuees and demanded that they be allowed to return to their communities.

According to Al-Mu'Minat, a Moro women's group, even residents of areas such as Rio Hondo and Mariki that were unaffected by the fighting or where no actual clashes had taken place were forced to evacuate.

Poverty has given rise to prostitution in the evacuation centers. Prices in the flesh trade range from ₱25 to a high of ₱300. The victims are usually forced to sell themselves because they need money for food and medicine. AB

3 peasants brutally killed in Cagayan

The fascist military vented its ire on three unarmed civilians after a soldier was killed in an ambush by the New People's Army (NPA) in Rizal, Cagayan on March 22. The three victims are from the Malaweg tribe.

Soldiers of the 21st IB conducting military operations mercilessly gunned down Ronald Beran in Sitio Calawegan, Barangay Mazi, Rizal on March 26. They also hacked the left side of his head, exposing brain matter. He was identified by his fellow villagers only by the clothes he wore.

A day after barangay officials retrieved his body, the military planted a gun on him and accused him of being an NPA member. Soldiers also menacingly stood watch during his wake until March 30.

Prior to this, the same troops also killed Rey and Jaylene Regalado. The Regalado couple were hacked to death at their hut in their farm in Sitio Lucban, Barangay Mazi on March 24. Beran had just come from the Regalados' wake when he was killed.

The three victims were members of the Malaweg Farmers Association.

Peasant leaders arrested in Batangas

Combined police and military forces illegally arrested and mauled a family of peasant leaders and activists in their house in Batangas in April.

About a hundred elements of the Regional Mobile Group-Philippine National Police (RMG-PNP) and the 733rd Squadron of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) raided the compound of the Lemita family in Hacienda Looc, Nasugbu, Batangas on April 15 and forced their way into the houses of Armando "Ka Mandy" Lemita, Natividad Lemita (Ka Mandy's mother) and barangay councilor Randy Flores (Ka Mandy's nephew) ostensibly to search for firearms and ammunition.

No firearms were found in Ka Mandy and Flores' houses but a gun and some bullets were allegedly found in Natividad's house, which the raiding party claimed belonged to Anatalio Lemita (Ka Mandy's brother), who did not reside in the house.

Even if the search on their house yielded negative results, Ka Mandy, his wife Rosenda and daughter Alaiza Mari Lemita were handcuffed and arrested, along with Anatalio.

Ka Mandy is the spokesperson of the Ugnayan ng mga Mamayan Laban sa Pangwawasak ng Kalupaan ng Asyenda Looc (UMALPAS-KA). His daughter Alaiza is the vice chairperson of Anakbayan-Timog Katagalugan.

Meanwhile, in Barangay Mapalacsiao, Tarlac City, policemen arbitrarily arrested farmers George Gatus, Gerry Catalan, Jaime Quiambao, Alvin Gratil and Leoncio Suarez after they approached two men placing markers on their farmland. The two men were workers of FF Cruz, a company contracted by the Department of Agrarian Reform to survey the land at Hacienda Luisita. AB

On the GPH-MILF peace process

The leaders of the MILF themselves have confirmed the fact by their own words and deeds that they have surrendered to the Philippine state and opted for regional autonomy under it. The Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) and all the agreements and annexes covered by the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB) and Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) are subject to the 1987 Constitution and constitutional processes of the Philippine state. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GPH) has publicly assured the MILF that the Philippine constitution can accommodate the Bangsamoro Basic Law and the Bangsamoro political entity without resorting to constitutional amendment.

The Aquino administration is determined to push the enactment of the Bangsamoro Basic Law and the establishment of the Bangsamoro political entity because behind him are the US, the European Commu-

nity, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, and other countries which are interested in the exploitation of the natural resources of the Bangsamoro areas. The administration has enough time and numbers in both houses of Congress to ram through the BBL, not to mention the pork barrel for persuading possible oppositionists. It is a bit of balderdash that Aquino wants to have a legacy of making peace in the Bangsamoro areas.

It is reasonable to estimate that the Aquino regime is taking the MILF for a ride, if only to cause the dissolution of the MILF as a revolutionary organization. But most likely, the ride is not shorter than going all the way to the establishment of the Bangsamoro political entity. The US and GPH strategists are known to calculate that the MILF will go the way of the MNLF.

The MILF has already declared and agreed that it will decommission its weapons and dismantle its army only after the implementation of all the agreements. The implication of this is that the MILF can withdraw from the deal if it is swindled. But in the first place, it has already submitted itself to the constitution and constitutional processes of the GPH. The MILF leaders seem to be satisfied with prospective appointments to the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, with elections to the Bangsamoro political organs, and with the absorption of most of the MILF fighters in the Bangsamoro police.

The MILF itself has indicated that it shall liquidate itself, become an Islamic movement and form a political party for electoral purposes. The highest MILF official Brother Ebrahim Murad is expected to become the Chief Minister. I presume that the other MILF officials will also assume high offices in the Bangsamoro political organs.

If we go by the historical example of the MNLF, the MILF has to be vigilant against ceaseless attempts of the Manila-based bureaucrats and the military officers of the reactionary government to subordinate, corrupt and split the MILF officials. The electoral process will also be a way to weaken the former cohesiveness of the MILF and will allow the traditional ruling families and favorites of any

current president to take over the Bangsamoro political entity. Remember how the MNLF split and the ARMM eventually fell into the hands of the Ampatuan family.

The GPH-MILF peace agreement and establishment of the Bangsamoro political entity will not necessarily result in a just and lasting peace. There are armed clans and armed political forces like the MNLF of Misuari and the BIFF. It remains to be seen how they can be appeased or outraged.

The exploited masses of workers and peasants have a high potential for waging an armed revolution against their exploiters and oppressors in the Bangsamoro areas. The agreements made by the GPH and MILF are not concerned about national independence vis a vis the imperialist powers, democracy for the workers and peasants, social justice and development through land reform and national industrialization.

The Moro people will continue to wage various forms of struggle in order to assert and realize their right to national self-determination and ancestral domain. The Moro Resistance and Liberation Organization (MRLO), the revolutionary masses and allies can take more initiative in carrying forward the people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. The imperialists and the Manila puppet government will not satisfy the basic demands of the Moro people. The MRLO is in a position more than ever to arouse, organize and mobilize the Moro people to fight for national and social liberation.

Excerpted from an interview by Liberation International with Prof. Jose Maria Sison on April 17, 2014

Tiamzons respond to kidnapping case with protest

Benito Tiamzon and Wilma Austria-Tiamzon refused to enter a plea when they were arraigned for kidnapping and serious illegal detention on April 8 at the Quezon City Regional Trial Court. Their refusal was a form of protest against the trumped-up case calculated to justify their illegal arrest and detention and that of their five companions.

The accused comrades and their lawyers were informed about the manufactured charges only on April 6 and did not have enough time to study the thick pile of case documents prior to the arraignment.

The incident on which the case is based allegedly happened in 1988 or 26 years ago. The case has since been recycled over and over to entrap and criminalize revolutionaries and justify their prolonged detention.

Meanwhile, the Tiamzons bared that the authorities failed to include in the inventory of items seized from them a backpack contain-

ing P1.5 million. The bulk of the amount was intended for victims of typhoon Yolanda.

The two comrades said that P1 million was contributed by South Mindanao for the rehabilitation being undertaken by the New People's Army in areas devastated by typhoon Yolanda. The remainder of P500,000 was for their operational expenses and medical allowance. The money is now in the hands of the AFP Central Command.

Aside from the P1.5 million,

the arresting parties also failed to return ₱200,000 out of ₱223,000 in personal money belonging to Rex Villafior. Wristwatches belonging to two of the arrestees were likewise missing.

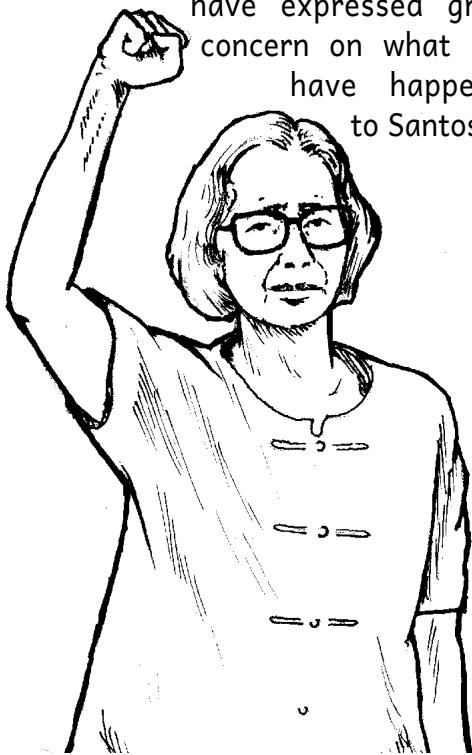
"Officers of the CIDG, CENTCOM and AFP must answer to the victims of Yolanda and to donors in the country and abroad for the loss of the funds," said the two comrades.

Meanwhile, in a teleconference on the peace negotiations organized by BAYAN at Trinity University on April 5, the Tiamzons called on the youth to go en masse to Samar and Leyte to find out first-hand about the conditions of the masses in the area.

In related news, KARAPATAN called on the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines to surface Gary Aguilar Santos, 48, a gardener employed by the Villafior couple at the house where Tiamzon and Austria had been residing before they were arrested.

Santos was left behind at the house on March 22. According to Lorraine Villafior, who was among those arrested with the Tiamzons, she was last able to talk to Santos over the phone a few hours after the arrest. They alerted KARAPATAN when they failed to receive news about Santos' whereabouts.

Tiamzon, Austria and the Villafiors have expressed grave concern on what may have happened to Santos. **AB**



The RH Law and the Filipino women's liberation movement

After petitions were filed on the Reproductive Health Law (RH Law), the Supreme Court ruled on April 8 that the law was not violative of the reactionary constitution of 1987. The RH law has been much vaunted by the Aquino regime as a major triumph for women. In fact, the law is all for show and is meant to cover up the continuing privatization of health services and the severe lack of affordable services for women and children. The following statement by Comrade Wilma Tiamzon, one of the NDFP peace talks consultants, asserts that the RH Law is far from being a major victory.

To the masses of Filipino women, the so-called constitutional version of the Reproductive Health Law and even the versions containing provisions rejected by the Supreme Court provide very minor and even uncertain benefits to boot.

According to the law's provisions, the government may, but is not obliged, to completely subsidize family planning, medical services that would guarantee the reproductive health of Filipino women and support services to protect neonates and other young children.

The RH Law cannot be hailed as a major victory for the masses of Filipino women if it is not based on, and does not advocate raising the low status of Filipino women, especially women workers and peasants in semicolonial and semifeudal society.

Women's liberation and reproductive rights can only attain significance by addressing the aspirations of the masses of Filipino women to

1) have decent livelihood within the country to enable them and their families to live well;

2) put an end to wage slavery in the cities and countryside along with the eradication of women's discrimination regarding equal pay for equal work and all forms of sexual harassment and abuse;

3) have their own land to till in the countryside, in order for them to become economically independent within the family;

4) enjoy free education from the primary to the tertiary level;

5) enjoy free health services; and

6) enjoy free state services for child care and child rearing.

Only then can the masses of Filipino women raise their heads high, have a strong voice in the country's political life and contribute their talents and strength to the best of their ability for people's liberation and development. **AB**

COMPATRIOTS, the newest NDFP allied organization

THE National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) welcomed COMPATRIOTS as its newest allied organization.

COMPATRIOTS is the national-democratic underground mass organization of migrant workers and their families. It has members both here and abroad. It works to unite migrant Filipinos and their families to join, and advance, the people's democratic revolution. It is one of the leading forces in the struggle against

imperialism and is at the forefront of contributing to the advance of proletarian internationalism overseas.

Like the other NDFP allied organizations, it recognizes the class leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the role of the New People's Army in advancing armed struggle in the countryside.

According to the NDFP, COMPATRIOT's formation is significant because it comes at a

time of worsening conditions for Filipino migrants abroad. They are victims of Philippine semicolonial and semifeudal society through the labor export policy. Abroad, they are victimized by the system of wage slavery and by human and drug traffickers and face many other issues and concerns.

The NDFP expressed hopes that COMPATRIOTS, its 17th allied organization, would further expand and gain strength.

Military harasses Tagum City radio station

THE military has repeatedly harassed the staff of Radyo ni Juan (RnJ) Tagum City 100.7 FM, to the extent of branding it as pro-communist.

On April 8, RnJ reporters Jojo Gales and Erwin Batucan were held and subjected to interrogation by the Intelligence Section of the Davao del Norte Police.

The RnJ reporters had gone to the PNP headquarters to obtain blotter reports on which to base their news articles. They were given the runaround until they ended up with an intelligence officer who interrogated them about their personal information for 40 minutes.

Earlier, Eastern Mindanao Command spokesperson Lt. Col. Lyndon Paniza had branded RnJ as "pro-communist" after he was interviewed by the station. During the interview conducted on March 28, Paniza was asked about the evacuation of Ata-Manobo tribespeople in Talaingod, Davao del Norte and the ongoing military operations in the area.

Paniza disliked the questions being thrown at him by the radio station reporters and refused to continue the interview, accusing the station of "siding with the NPA."

Yolanda victims keep up protests

VICTIMS of typhoon Yolanda continue to launch protest actions to air their grievances. On April 8, five months after the super typhoon's onslaught, some 1,000 people held a protest march anew at Benigno Aquino III's house in Quezon City and in Malacañang, Roxas City and Kalibo, Aklan.

As the Yolanda victims marched, they presented a Lenten play they called "Calvary of Yolanda survivors." An activist playing the role of Jesus Christ bore a yellow cross on his shoulder while being flogged by another man in an Aquino mask and others belonging to the so-called "Gang of Five"—DILG Sec. Mar Roxas, DSWD Sec. Corazon "Dinky" Soliman, Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery Panfilo Lacson and Energy Sec. Jericho Petilla.

The cross, which symbolized their burdens, bore the inscriptions "lack of concern, corruption, incompetence and gross criminal negligence"—all attributed to the Aquino government.

On the same day in Roxas City, Buylog sa Pagbangan Capiz, BAYAN and GABRIELA led a protest march of 1,000 Yolanda victims from three separate areas that converged at the Roxas City Plaza Bandstand. The assailed the lack of housing assistance and government threats regarding the "no dwelling zone" (NDZ) policy. The NDZ bars victims from building houses near coastal areas which are vulnerable to storm surges and flooding. But it allows the construction of tourism and livelihood infrastructure in the same areas.

In Kalibo, Task Force Tabang-Aklan and BAYAN led a march of 400 people from Pastrana Park to Crossing Banga that culminated in a rally in front of the provincial capitol.

INUTIL NGA
GOBYERNO
PADASIGON ANG
BULIG NYO



Cuba thwarts US electronic intervention

This April, the Cuban government began investigating a massive effort by the US to gather private information from the Cuban people through a social media website known as ZunZuneo.

ZunZuneo, which particularly targeted Cubans as subscribers, was recently bared as a project clandestinely established and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as an instrument to foment social unrest and undermine the Castro government.

Among the data gathered by ZunZuneo are tel-

ephone numbers and basic information such as age, sex, political inclinations and receptivity to US propaganda. At the height of its operations in Cuba, ZunZuneo had as many as 40,000 users. The gathered data could be used by the US to launch a destabilization campaign in Cuba.

Cuban authorities had already zeroed in on ZunZuneo and cancelled its services as far back as 2012. Its true character was discovered with the arrest of Alan Gross, an agent posing as an advocate of "freedom" and "democracy" on the internet.
