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Editorial

## Hold the US and the Aquino regime accountable for the bloody battle at Mamasapano

All sectors must unite to hold the US government and the Aquino regime accountable for the bloody battle at Mamasapano, Maguindanao on January 25 that resulted in the killing of 44 men of the Philippine National Police-Special Action Force (PNP-SAF), 18 Moro fighters and seven civilians.

The attacks on civilians and the bloody clash formed part of Operation Plan (OPlan) Wolverine, an assassination plot targeting Zulkifli Bin Hir alias Marwan and Abdul Basit Usman, both alleged officers of Jemaah Islamiyah included in the "US terrorist list." The US State Department has offered rewards of up to \$9 million for their capture.

The pursuit operations against Marwan were part and parcel of the Obama regime's program of assassinating or abducting persons branded as terrorists. On many occa-

sions, these operations are conducted overseas without so much as informing or seeking permission from the governments of those countries. Aside from transgressing on those countries' sovereignty, such operations are contrary to the principle of due process and violate International Humanitarian Law.

The US' global war on terrorism has engendered an endless spiral of intensifying violence against those the US perceives as "terrorists." Most of them emerged from the ruins of US wars of occupation, especially in the Middle East, where the US used unbridled violence against entire nations, communities and peoples. Some of them were former personnel or assets trained by the US, such as the founders of the Abu Sayyaf.

The US war on terror involves whipping up racism and religious chauvinism.

The Obama regime has further intensified assassination operations against the US' perceived enemies. It has indiscriminately used



weapons of mass destruction. It does not discriminate between armed forces and civilian communities. In 2012, the US mobilized the AFP to drop "smart bombs" on Jolo, Sulu ostensibly to kill Marwan, even if the targets were civilian communities, and among those killed were several religious leaders in the area.

Oplan Wolverine was formulated and hatched by the US imperialists. US intelligence agencies like the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency led efforts to monitor Marwan using drones and electronic surveillance. Residents saw a number of foreign officers mingling with the PNP-SAF troops on operation, and said that among the dead was a foreign soldier whose body was immediately taken by elements of the US Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines who arrived soon after the fighting ended.

Oplan Wolverine was zealously implemented by Benigno Aquino III, the US' obedient puppet. Aquino has been ser-

vilely turning a blind eye to the trampling of Philippine sovereignty through unbridled US military intervention. Aquino likewise rode roughshod on the PNP chain of command and mobilized his most loyal officer to use the PNP-SAF personnel as cannon fodder in the attack on Mamasapano even if the latter is a bastion of the Aquino government's armed enemies.

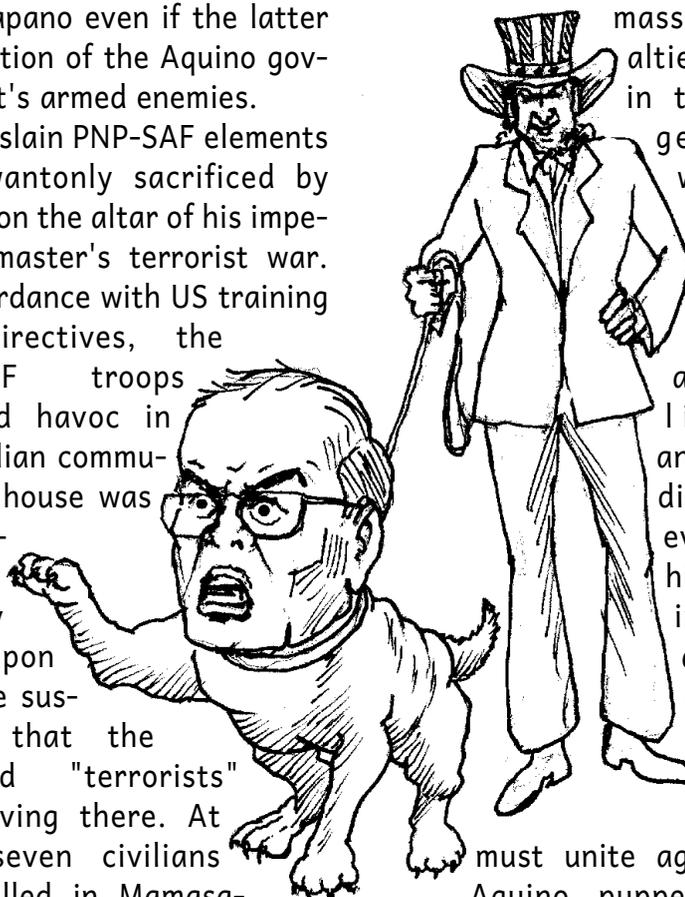
The slain PNP-SAF elements were wantonly sacrificed by Aquino on the altar of his imperialist master's terrorist war. In accordance with US training and directives, the PNP-SAF troops wreaked havoc in the civilian community. A house was indiscriminately fired upon on mere suspicion that the targeted "terrorists" were living there. At least seven civilians were killed in Mamasapano, including an 8-year old

girl. Thousands of residents have been forced to evacuate.

The exposure of Aquino's puppetry to the US has further isolated him from the Filipino people. His violation of the PNP's chain of command, his abuse of power and erroneous directives have resulted in

massive casualties, which in turn have generated widespread disenchantment among policemen and soldiers, and even some high-ranking PNP and AFP officers. The entire nation must unite against the Aquino puppet regime and its officers who pushed the PNP troopers to their deaths in accordance with US directives. PNP and AFP officers and troops must be encouraged to unite with the Filipino people as they take action to oust Aquino from power. It has become starkly clear that the government they have been defending is corrupt and is an imperialist lackey.

Continuing US military intervention in the Philippines must be relentlessly exposed. Growing US military presence in the country must be resisted, along with all unequal military treaties with the US that trample on Philippine sovereignty and are being used as pretexts for intensifying US military intervention in the country. **AB**



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## Calls for Aquino's resignation further gain ground

There are growing calls for Benigno Aquino III's resignation amid the numerous brickbats regarding the killing of 44 elements of the Philippine National Police-Special Action Force (PNP-SAF). The police commandos were slain in a 12-hour gunbattle with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Barangay Tukanalipao, Mamasapano, Maguindanao on January 25.

The Filipino people were angered no end when Aquino admitted on January 28 that he knew about the PNP-SAF operation and that its commander had been reporting to him. They became even more furious when it became known that the Mamasapano operation was coordinated by suspended PNP chief Dir. Gen. Alan Purisima, who is known to be close to Aquino. It had earlier come to light that the acting PNP chief, Dep. Dir. Gen. Leonardo Espina did not know about the SAF operation, and neither did DILG Sec. Mar Roxas.

Aquino's act of washing his hands of all blame has resulted in widespread disenchantment among the relatives of the policemen who were used as cannon fodder in Mamasapano. They were further disappointed when Aquino failed to attend the arrival ceremonies for the slain troops. Many of them later directly manifested their anger by refusing to accept the plaques offered by Aquino.

Some PNP personnel were even more forthcoming in expressing their ill feelings against Aquino, with many of them questioning his credibility and competence as commander-in-chief. Thousands of police personnel in various cities across the Philippines marched on January 30 in a rare display of discontent.

Malacañang has not relented in its attempts to cover up Aquino's

direct responsibility in the Mamasapano clash in the face of widespread demands to reveal the whole truth. Various groups have been formed to "investigate" the bloody incident, including those established by the PNP, AFP, Senate, Congress, Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the Ombudsman. All of these, however, are controlled by Aquino's men and will surely end up covering up his role.

Reports reveal that the operation was not coordinated with the MILF on purpose, despite an existing ceasefire agreement that states the need for coordination whenever AFP and PNP forces enter MILF-controlled areas. Neither was the operation coordinated with the AFP, resulting in the absence of military support for the besieged SAF forces who had run out of ammunition.

In the face of widespread loathing for the Aquino regime, progressive and democratic forces have stepped up their calls for Aquino to resign. They launched a mass action on February 4 to demand that the US and Aquino be held accountable for the Mamasapano clash. Fifteen bishops and archbishops of the Catholic Church have also expressed solidarity with calls for Aquino's resignation. **AB**

### MILF-GPH agreement in limbo

The peace agreement between the Aquino regime and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) that has been scheduled for finalization in March is currently in limbo.

Aquino's failure to coordinate a police operation in Mamasapano, Maguindanao with the MILF last January 25 sparked a major gunbattle involving MILF personnel. The agreement stipulates the need for coordination whenever security forces of the Government of the Philippines enter MILF areas.

The massive casualties suffered by the PNP in the firefight with the MILF and BIFF in Mamasapano are now being invoked by politicians opposed to a peace accord with the MILF in thwarting the enactment of the Bangsamoro Basic Law. A number of politicians who sponsored the bill have now withdrawn their support. Worse, the Mamasapano incident is being used as a pretext for chauvinistic depictions of the Moro people and calls for all-out war against them. These will only lead to the further militarization of Bangsamoro areas and worsen civilian casualties.

In spite of this, the MILF continued to talk with representatives of the Aquino government on January 30 to forge an agreement for the decommissioning of the MILF and the cantonment of its weapons—which will further weaken the MILF's position. **AB**

## JSOC: US assassins

The bloody SAF operation in Mamasapano is not the first time that the US launched a covert operation using Philippine armed forces against so-called terrorists within the country. The US has launched similar types of operations in other countries.

The US conducts these covert operations, which are in essence, assassinations, through the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). The JSOC, which is directly under the office of US Pres. Barack Obama, controls the Special Mission Unit (SMU).

It has operations in more than 60 countries, including the Philippines, where its main mission is to identify, surveil and crush so-called terrorist groups. Its most well-known operation is the assassination of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in May 2011.

In 2012, the US was reported to be maintaining a list of persons declared to be "terrorists" and targeted for assassination. The list arbitrarily defines who the "terrorists" and their "cohorts" are. Among the latter are males age 17 or older who happen to be near a known terrorist at the time of the assassination.

Such operations have resulted in innumerable casualties and losses to civilian communities. They violate basic processes as defined by international human rights protocols and the rules of war. AB

## The US' heinous crimes in Okinawa

*The following article and sidebar are the last of Ang Bayan's series on crimes committed by US troops.*

One of the places where heinous crimes involving American soldiers have been occurring with great frequency is Okinawa, Japan. Currently, there are 32 US military bases in Okinawa occupying 20% of its land area. It is also host to half of the 50,000 US troops deployed in Japan.

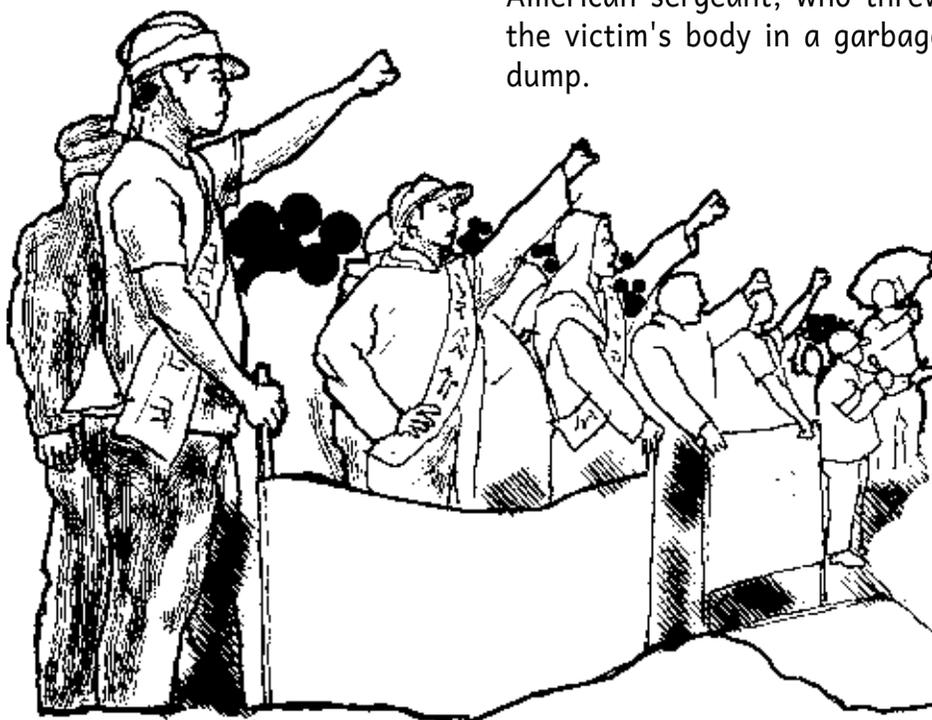
The US military has been occupying Okinawa for seven decades now. It began the occupation in 1945 after Japan's defeat in the hands of the US during the Second World War.

The US occupation of Okinawa and the establishment of its military bases were accomplished through violent means. In 1953, the US imposed a law allowing it to seize the lands and demolish the homes of thousands of Okinawans in order to build its military bases. Some farmers voluntarily left after being promised land in Bolivia and financial assistance. Many of them, however, died in the jungles where they were exiled and never received any assistance.

After the US' seizure of Okinawa, it remained under US military control for 27 years. Okinawa reverted to Japanese control in 1972. But in exchange, the Japanese government had to allow the presence of US military forces in Okinawa. The US military likewise maintained custody and tried erring American soldiers.

From 1945 to 2000 alone, up to 5,000 crimes involving US troops were documented, including 110 rape cases.

In a span of six months in 1949, up to 29 Okinawans were killed by US military troops and 18 women raped, including a nine month old infant girl. In September 1955, a six-year old girl was raped and killed by an American sergeant, who threw the victim's body in a garbage dump.



In almost all cases, the erring soldiers were either acquitted or meted very light penalties by the US courts martial:

**March 1956.** A 28-year old man crossing a street was killed after being run over by an American soldier. The soldier was acquitted.

**October 1959.** A 23-year old woman was strangled to death by a US soldier, who was sentenced to only three years imprisonment.

**December 1959.** A 55-year old woman picking spent bullet shells was gunned down by an American sergeant, who claimed that he mistook her for wild boar. The US court martial acquitted the soldier and the US paid \$2,700 in indemnification to the victim's family.

**September 1961.** An American soldier hit four children with his vehicle, killing two of them. He received a one-rank demotion and was confined to barracks for six months.

**February 1963.** A 12-year old boy was hit by a vehicle driven by an American soldier. His acquittal by a US court martial spurred widespread protests.

**May 1970.** A 16-year old girl was beaten and stabbed by a US soldier. The accused was sentenced to only three years in prison.

**April 1971.** A 23-year old woman was stoned to death by an American soldier, who was acquitted for "lack of evidence."

Okinawa suffers one of the highest rates of rape committed by American troops.

The most horrendous case of the 1990s was the abduction, beating and gang rape by three US Marines of a 12-year old girl in September 1995.

The Okinawans' widespread and intense anger at this crime

forced the US to change the provisions of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) then existing to allow Japanese authorities to sentence and imprison American soldiers guilty of rape and murder.

In spite of this, rape and violence perpetrated by American soldiers against Okinawan women have not been put to a stop. Overweening in their knowledge of belonging to the world's most powerful armed force, the rapist soldiers have not even bothered to conceal their crimes:

**June 2001.** A US Air Force

sergeant raped a 20-year old woman on the hood of a car parked right outside a popular night club.

**May 2003.** A 19-year old girl was brutally beaten and raped by a US Marine by the roadside.

**July 2005.** Another US Air Force sergeant raped a 10-year old girl as she was on her way to school.

**February 2008.** Another US Marine raped a 14-year old girl inside his car that was parked near a military base.

Other reports state that almost half of all female students at an Okinawan high school re-

## Other US crimes

Wherever US military bases and troops are found in great numbers, the people suffer from widespread crime and other harm inflicted on them.

In South Korea, some 100,000 criminal cases involving US soldiers have been documented in the 50 years the US military bases have existed in this country. Not a single US soldier has been convicted under Korean law.

Rampant prostitution in communities around the bases has led to high rates of sex-related crimes. In 2001, a woman and six girls age 12 to 16 years were gang-raped by American soldiers in the towns of Darwin, Hobart and Perth in Australia, all of them host to docking US warships.

US military bases wantonly destroy the environment. In South Korea, the Ministry of Environment discovered that the soil and water in 14 out of 15 former US military camps were contaminated by various kinds of nuclear waste.

Pollution is commonplace in all US military facilities in the Asia-Pacific region. Even if the US military admits to causing the pollution, it insists that clean-ups are no longer its responsibility, and deprives most victims of compensation and medical care.

In the island of Vieques in Puerto Rico, where more than 60% of the land area was seized by the US Navy as far back as the 1940s for use in target practice, frequent explosions caused massive fish kills, adversely affecting the local residents' livelihoods. The US military occupation of Vieques ended only in 2003 after intense opposition by local and foreign activists. AB

counted having "scary experiences" involving US troops while they were on their way to or from school.

Aside from the killings and rapes, many accidents related to the military bases' operations have also resulted in deaths and other harm to Okinawans. Following are among the most striking cases:

**August 1948.** Bombs being loaded by the US Navy on a ship exploded, killing up to 106 passengers alighting from a nearby ferry boat and wounding 76 others.

**June 1959.** Seventeen students and teachers were killed and more than a hundred wounded when a US Air Force combat plane crashed on an elementary school.

**December 1962.** Seven civilians were killed and eight others wounded when a US transport aircraft crashed on a house.

**May 1967.** The US Army disposed of reject oil supplies by throwing it in four wells being used by residents.

**April 1975.** Five people were killed when sexivalent chromium, a toxic chemical, escaped from the Makiminato US Base.

**October 1988.** Four people were killed after a US helicopter crashed near a training field.

**November 1994.** Five people were killed or wounded after a US military helicopter crash. **AB**

## Anomalies reek after Papal visit

The Aquino regime was only able to conceal its rottenness temporarily during Pope Francis' visit to the Philippines on January 15-19. As soon as the Pope left, its shenanigans were exposed.

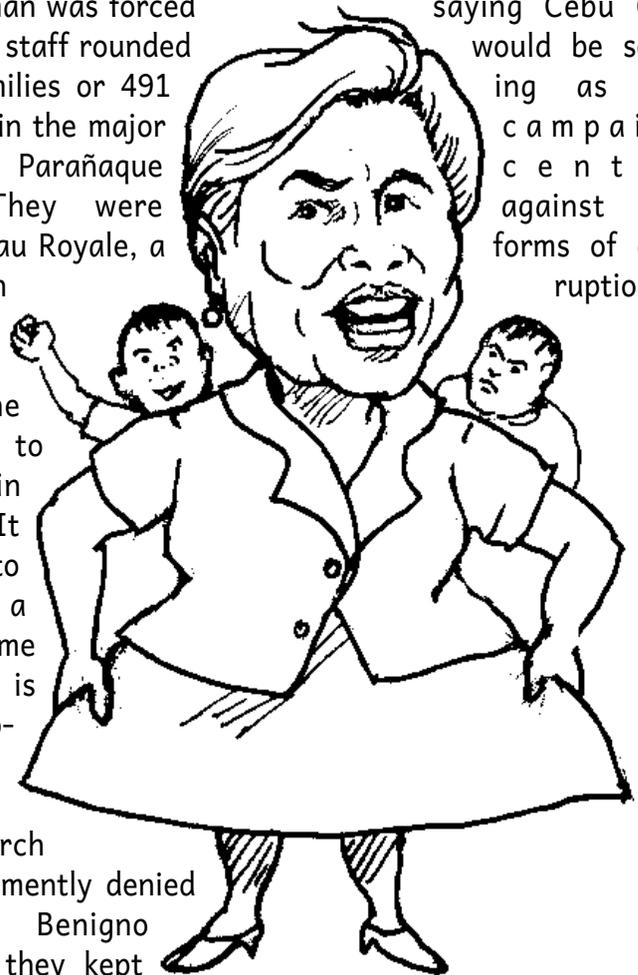
The first to complain were the thousands of police personnel who stood guard in the streets during Pope Francis' arrival. They disclosed that they received only a portion of their meal allowances after police officials pocketed the rest. Instead of the promised ₱2,400, the 25,000 police forces deployed along the routes taken by Pope Francis in Manila and Leyte only received ₱700. The PNP brass had no choice but to fire the police official in charge of the meal allowance budget.

Soon after, the truth emerged about the "miraculous" disappearance of homeless people along Roxas Boulevard and other thoroughfares on Pope Francis' route. DSWD Sec. Corazon "Dinky" Soliman was forced to admit that her staff rounded up some 100 families or 491 individuals living in the major streets of Pasay, Parañaque and Manila. They were brought to Chateau Royale, a high-end resort in Nasugbu, Batangas from January 14 to 19. The DSWD spent up to ₱4.75 million in Nasugbu alone. It also owned up to engaging in such a practice every time a major activity is held in the Philippines attended by foreign visitors.

Catholic church leaders also vehemently denied accusations by Benigno Aquino III that they kept

silent in the face of former Pres. Gloria Arroyo's corruption. They mentioned the names of Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, Archbishop Oscar Cruz, Bishop Vicente Navarra and Archbishop Socrates Villages as among those who assailed the anomalies of the former Estrada and Arroyo regimes. They also pointed out that church people provided sanctuary to Rodolfo "Jun" Lozada, the first whistleblower of the scandalous NBN-ZTE project under the Arroyo regime.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church and other religious groups announced that they would continue the signature campaign on the People's Initiative Against Pork Barrel, saying Cebu City would be serving as the campaign center against all forms of corruption. **AB**



# 1,000 Lumad evacuate in Agusan del Sur

Up to 1,515 members of the Banwaon tribe evacuated from Barangay Balit, San Luis, Agusan del Sur due to the 26th IB's relentless military operations. The evacuees have been temporarily taking shelter at the Urios Elementary School in Barangay Balit since the last week of January.

They were forced to flee their homes out of fear for paramilitaries and elements of the 26th IB led by Lt. Col. Rolando Dumawa.

There have been documented human rights violations victimizing 969 individuals in four villages of San Luis. According to KARAPATAN-Caraga Region, the military operations are aimed at paving the way for the entry of mining corporations, among them Tambuli Mining Company Inc. and Malampay Mining Inc. which will be engaging in open-pit mining to extract gold.

Up to 22 individuals were victims of harassment and intimidation. Ten civilians were forced to serve as guides in military operations, seven forced to surrender as alleged members of the New People's Army and 11 were victimized by indiscriminate firing. Three families were robbed.

And lately, a pregnant woman and two children were reported to have died at the evacuation center.

Earlier, Balit village chief Nicasio Precioso Sr. was gunned down on December 22, 2014 after a heated argument with Sgt. Andres Villaganas of the 26th IB.

The military and Lumad bandits are conniving to enable the mining companies' entry, said KALUMARAN, an alliance of Lumad organizations in Mindanao. The AFP has been training Lumad bandits to join the Investment Defense Force (IDF) which focuses on providing security to mines, plantations and other big businesses.

The IDF is being used to terrorize the datus of Barangay Binicalan who have refused to sign the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) document which would allow the entry of the mining companies. The latter want to seize the Banwaon's ancestral lands through a unified Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT), according to Datu Bagala Mauro Mansilyohan, a Banwaon leader in Sitio Tabon-Tabon, Mahagsay, San Luis. AB



## Military arrests another NDFP consultant

Elements of the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the AFP arrested Reynaldo Hugo, a consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), last January 27 in Cabuyao, Laguna. In a statement, NDFP negotiating panel chair Luis Jalandoni roundly assailed the arrest, saying it was a serious violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG).

Hugo holds NDFP Document of Identification ND978239 under the assumed name of Orgel Dimaano. A Letter of Acknowledgment has also been issued and duly signed by Silvestre H. Bello III, chair of the GPH negotiating panel under the Ramos regime.

He was undergoing medical treatment for nerve and kidney ailments when he was arrested by the military. He was subjected to intense surveillance, also in violation of the JASIG. Hugo faces ten trumped-up murder and frustrated murder cases.

The Aquino regime's continued disrespect for the JASIG, the GPH-NDFP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) of 1998 and other bilateral agreements are adversely affecting the peace negotiations between the GPH and NDFP.

Meanwhile, suspected military operatives abducted Edwin Anuran, a former Red fighter, along with an unidentified civilian in Barangay Sta. Cruz, Casiguran, Sorsogon on the night of January 30. AB

# Significant advances in Southern Tagalog

The revolutionary armed movement in Southern Tagalog has significantly recovered its strength in the last two years. It continues to overcome internal organizational problems and weaknesses and address problems attendant to the advance of guerrilla war and the difficulties borne out of relentless enemy attacks.

Outside of Mindanao, Southern Tagalog comes in second in terms of the biggest concentrations of AFP, PNP and CAFGU combat battalions which number about 6,000 troops.

In spite of this, the forces of the people's army in the guerrilla fronts have grown on the whole since 2012. This was one of the factors in the 37% growth in the number of towns where NPA units operate, which is equivalent to a 42% increase in the number of barrios in the NPA's areas of operation, and a 59% increase in the number of villages where the NPA is able to

operate effectively. In the same period, the number of organized masses rose by 45% and the number of basic people's organizations in the countryside by 51%.

The most striking victory involves thwarting the enemy's scheme to de-

stroy a guerrilla front. Not only did Southern Tagalog revolutionaries succeed in preserving the front's remaining forces, they were also able to enhance the strength of the people's army severalfold. This is the main factor behind the recovery of areas that had been abandoned and the reexpansion of the guerrilla front's area of operation.

The revolu-



## Visiting rights of political prisoners curtailed

The jail warden at Camp Bagong Diwa persists in barring visitors of 37 political prisoners who fasted during Pope Francis' visit. The political prisoners sought the court's intervention on Jail Warden Michelle Ng Bonto's continuing violation of their human rights. The case was filed on January 28 at the Taguig Regional Trial Court Branch 271 and Branch 266 by complainants led by Tirso Alcantara, Alan Jazmines, Rolando Laylo, Edward Lanzanas and Alex Arias.

They said that upon Bonto's orders, visitors continue to be banned from the Special Intensive Care Area (SICA) 1 in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City where they are currently detained. They cited RA No. 7438 which states that any person arrested or imprisoned or under "custodial investigation" is allowed to receive visitors or consult any close family member or any lawyer, doctor or priest.

According to the political detainees, Bonto violated these rights on January 13, 14 and 15 when she refused to allow visits from certain individuals, including Dr. Julie Caguiat; KARAPATAN paralegal staff Bernard Zamora; their lawyer Julian Oliva Jr. from the National Union of People's Lawyers; Bagong Alyansang Makabayan Chairperson Dr. Carol Araullo; and former Gabriela Women's Party Rep. Liza Maza.

Meanwhile, KARAPATAN continues to demand the release of political prisoner Miradel Torres to allow her to care for her two-month old son under less repressive conditions. On January 28, the mother and her infant were ordered back to the Taguig City Jail despite a petition filed by her attorney for her and her son to remain at the Taguig Hospital until April 30, 2015. Torres faces trumped-up murder and frustrated murder cases at the Infanta Regional Trial Court in Quezon.

tion is deeply rooted among the peasant masses within the guerrilla fronts—the result of a long tradition by the people's army of advancing the antifeudal united front and agrarian revolution. For decades, the peasant masses have been benefiting from the victories of agrarian revolution in the form of changes in the sharing of the harvest in coconut lands (*tersyong baligtad*), higher wages for farm workers in coconut, rice and sugar lands, higher farmgate prices for copra and other agricultural products, resistance to, and elimination of, merchant extortion in the form of *tara*, *taktak* and *resikada* in copra trading, rigging of weighing scales and other usurious practices.

The peasant masses and national minorities have also benefited from successful struggles against pasturelands, dismantling them and organizedly occupying and settling these lands. Thousands of hectares of pastureland, frontier land and abandoned and foreclosed land previously owned by landlords have been tilled and made productive by peasant associations. In these areas, the seeds of people's democratic power are growing and taking shape step by step.

In more consolidated and advanced areas, cooperative projects and various forms of exchange of labor alongside other mass campaigns to raise production, promote health and sanitation, education and other campaigns to advance the people's welfare are being advanced.

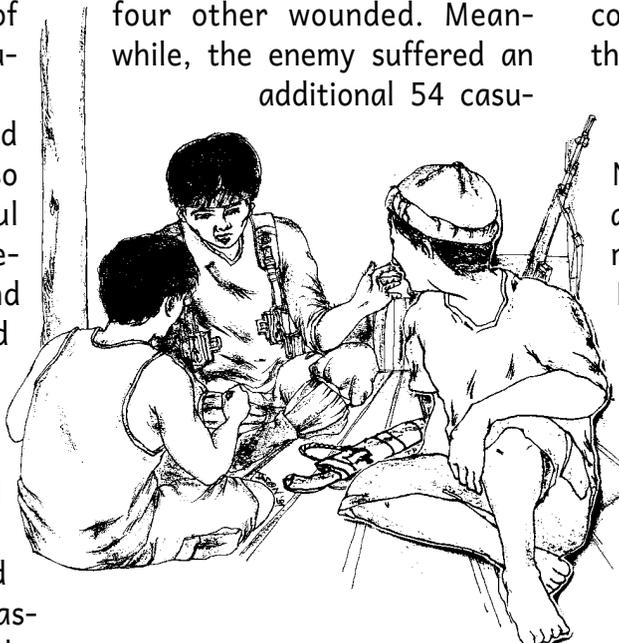
The people's army continued to mete blows on operating enemy troops in the guerrilla fronts of Southern Tagalog. NPA tactical offensives hit almost all AFP battalions (the 74th, 76th, 4th, 16th, 80th and 85th IB of the

Philippine Army; the 4th Marine Battalion Landing Team; the 730th Combat Group of the Philippine Air Force; and the 23rd Division Reconnaissance Company) aside from PNP and CAF-GU units.

The enemy suffered at least 111 casualties (56 killed and 55 wounded) in 71 tactical offensives, the most resounding of which was the successful raid on the Paluan, Occidental Mindoro police station on November 7 which yielded 21 high-powered rifles, two pistols and several pieces of military equipment seized from at least seven slain soldiers and policemen and four other wounded. Meanwhile, the enemy suffered an additional 54 casu-

alties (36 killed and 18 wounded) in 12 defensive actions where Red fighters were able to seize the initiative.

As in previous years and times, the urban democratic mass movement has not relented in fighting, and raising national and social issues in order to expose and oppose the ruling Aquino clique and each and every ruling faction that comes to power. The Southern Tagalog mass movements have a prominent presence and avidly participate in all major struggles in Metro Manila such as mobilizations against CARPER and for genuine agrarian reform, for recovery of the coco levy fund, for the support of farmers in Hacienda Luisita, against mines and megadams, Aquino's SONA, human rights violations and military abuses and in mass actions against the PDAF/DAP and the pork barrel and in related actions for the people's initiative and the movement to oust Aquino, as well as continuing struggles against growing US military intervention in the Philippines under the VFA/ED-CA/ACSA framework. **AB**



## It's final: DAP is illegal

**T**he Supreme Court decided with finality that the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) is illegal. In a decision issued February 3, the Supreme Court reiterated that the 1987 constitution does not allow the erroneous definition of "savings" and the use of such funds for projects inserted by Benigno Aquino III and Budget Secretary Florencio Abad in the 2014 national budget. Aquino and Abad had insisted that funds made available at the beginning or in mid-year due to the non-implementation of a project could be considered "savings" and used for any other project identified by Malacañang or its favored politicians.

The Supreme Court first ruled that the DAP is illegal in July 2014. The final decision this February was issued in response to a motion for reconsideration filed by the Aquino government. **AB**

# Advance the national-democratic propaganda movement!

*The following was excerpted from the message of the Communist Party of the Philippines to the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) on the commemoration of the 45th anniversary of the First Quarter Storm of 1970.*

**T**he KM is one of the Party's arms. It is a challenge to you to massively arouse, organize and mobilize the youth to contribute to the advance of the Philippine revolution. As an arm of the Party among the intellectuals, the Party looks forward to seeing thousands of fighters spring forth from KM's ranks in the arena of the propaganda movement and mass struggles and in the field of armed struggle.

Propaganda and counter-propaganda is war. As warriors, you must train and develop expertise in propaganda. Read. Conduct research. Study and review. The propaganda war is a contest for the people's hearts and minds. To arouse the masses, you must be humble and listen to them, know their situation, their experiences, views, language and taste.

Turn the campuses into centers of protest. Advance the rights and welfare of the youth in education. Fight commercialization. Relate the problems of the youth to national problems. Let protests against the MRT and LRT fare hikes; privatization, inadequate education and health budgets; low wages and lack of jobs; landgrabbing; military abuses; corruption and plunder resound within campuses.

Turn campuses into centers of cultural revolution. Smash

colonial mentality, individualism, consumerism, selfishness and disorganization among intellectuals. Advance the mass line: recognizing the masses as the source of knowledge and creator of wealth. Study and develop expertise in communist theory. Propagate Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the scientific class understanding of society and history.

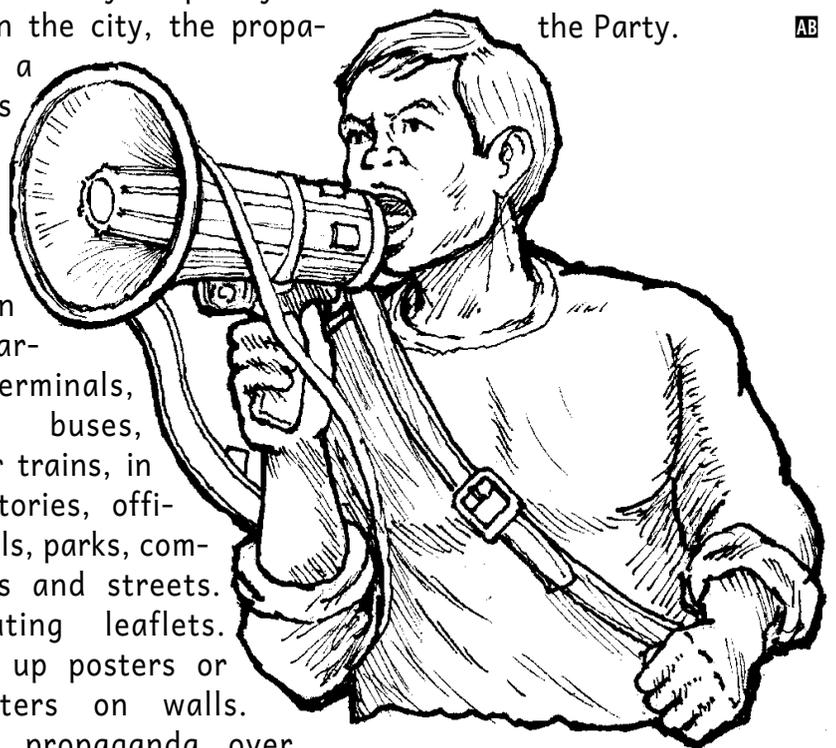
Enkindle patriotism among the youth. Always remind them of the history of the Filipino people, especially the Filipino-American war. This stage in history has been forcibly suppressed in the schools. Teach everyone about this to remind the people about their continuing struggle for national liberation.

Wherever you put your sights in the city, the propaganda warriors of the youth-student must be there: in the markets, terminals, inside buses, jeeps or trains, in the factories, offices, malls, parks, communities and streets. Distributing leaflets. Putting up posters or newsletters on walls. Waging propaganda over the internet.

In various parts of the country, the people's army, the people's militia and the mass organizations are growing, and armed struggle and agrarian revolution are raging. The Party is badly in need of new blood, new cadres and fighters to enthusiastically shoulder the growing tasks in the current stage.

The Party challenges the Kabataang Makabayan to recruit in the next few years more than 1,000 new Red fighters annually from among the youth and students. They will be added to the bigger numbers of peasant and worker youth who will be recruited into the NPA to intensify guerrilla warfare nationwide.

To the young communist comrades, develop your minds and bodies to prepare for the bigger tasks that lie ahead. Train and prepare to accomplish new organizing and leadership tasks from the various urban sectors up to the peasant movement and armed struggle in the countryside, as fighters and commanders of the New People's Army and cadres and leaders of the Party. **AB**



28th anniversary of the Mendiola Massacre

# Remembering and struggling for land and justice

Up to 1,500 peasants and their supporters marched from the University of Sto. Tomas to Mendiola in Manila on January 22 to mark the 28th year of the Mendiola Massacre where 13 farmers were killed.

For 28 years, the peasants not only failed in their quest for justice. Repression and violence against them have intensified. Under the current US-Aquino regime alone, more than 100 peasants have fallen victim to extrajudicial killing.

Before the march-rally in Mendiola, the peasants staged a vigil in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). Among those who attended were farmers from Hacienda Luisita Inc., Hacienda Araneta in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan; Hacienda Dolores in Porac, Pampanga; Hacienda Looc in Batangas; and Yulo King Ranch (YKR) in Coron, Palawan. They condemned widespread landgrabbing due to connivance between the state and private corporations.

Before marching to UST, they also conducted a short program in front of Aquino's house on Times Street, Quezon City to assail relentless repression on the peasant movement from the time of Pres. Corazon Aquino when the Mendiola Massacre occurred, up to the time of her son Benigno Aquino III. It was also done to assail the bogus and failed CARP/CARPER and how this was used to prevent land distribution to the peasantry.

There were simultaneous protest actions by farmers in the cities of Santiago, Naga,

Bacolod, Butuan, Pagadian and Davao.

**Yulo King Ranch.** Before commemorating the Mendiola Massacre, farmers from YKR had already been in Manila for more than a week with other peasants and fisherfolk from Southern Tagalog to launch a protest march beginning January 12. They also joined a two-day fast launched by peasants at Liwasang Bonifacio to air their grievances on land, food and shelter during the Pope's visit to the country. They likewise dialogued with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on January 21.

Peasant organizations consider the case of Yulo King Ranch the biggest agrarian anomaly in the country because of the involvement of no less than the state in seizing vast tracts of land. Through the Aquino regime's Proclamation 663 in 2013, the land was declared "unfit for agriculture." This is disputed by the peasants who had been making the land productive for years.

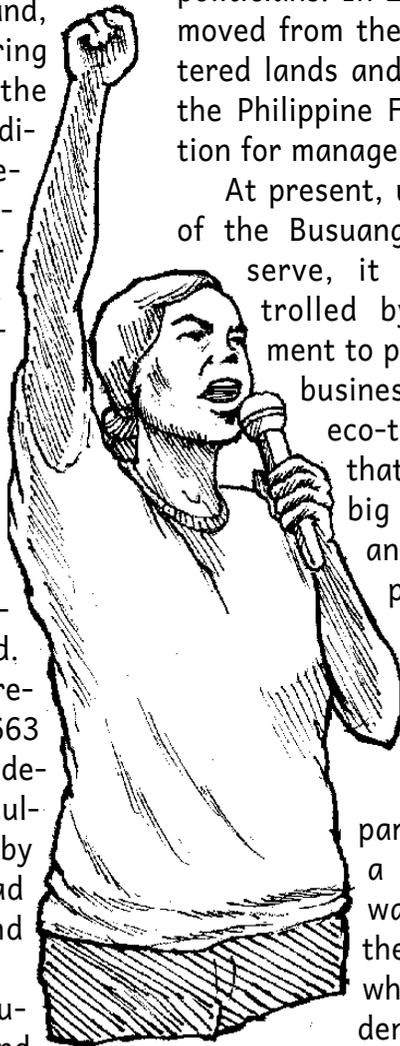
As a result, thousands of minorities and farmers were evicted from the land, including the original

settlers during Marcos' time, long before it was turned into a ranch. Nonetheless, the residents were later forced to return because of the lack of livelihood. This, despite being terrorized by security forces deployed by the state.

YKR comprises almost 40,000 hectares in the towns of Coron and Busuanga in Palawan. It was sequestered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government in 1986 as part of the ill-gotten wealth of Marcos cronies Luis Yulo and Peter Sabido. It was managed by the Bureau of Animal Industry, where new anomalies occurred during Corazon Aquino's time and succeeding regimes. Thousands of head of imported cattle and other farm animals and equipment from the ranch ended up in the hands of big politicians. In 2010, it was removed from the list of sequestered lands and transferred to the Philippine Forest Corporation for management.

At present, under the guise of the Busuanga Pasture Reserve, it is being controlled by the government to pave the way for businesses and other eco-tourism projects that would benefit big bureaucrats and private corporations.

In an attempt to show that land reform has been implemented in part of the ranch, a table survey was conducted by the DAR in 2012, where each resident would be given one hectare each. The method of distribution was alphabetical, which in essence is



a maneuver similar to the DAR's tambiyolo system at Hacienda Luisita.

The peasants oppose this system because many of them have long been tilling more than a hectare of land. It will likewise create discord among the peasants. None of them will agree to leave their farms, especially if they had been laboring on the land for years or decades. They are aware that at the core of all this is their eviction.

Along with the table survey came the repression especially in 2012 and 2013, when resident farmers were harassed by private company guards and elements of the Philippine Marines. There is talk that Aquino himself ordered the Marine Battalion Landing Team-4 (MBLT-4) into the YKR.

Some houses were demolished and cattle and horses were let loose to destroy the peasants' crops. Some were ordered to leave at gunpoint by the Marines. The peasants' interests will remain in jeopardy for so long as their right to the land they have long been tilling is not recognized. AB

## Farmers oppose excessive irrigation fees in Cagayan

Peasants in Cagayan and Quirino provinces continue to assail the high fees charged by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA). On October 22, they launched coordinated mass actions at the offices of the NIA in Cagayan and the Department of Agriculture in Tuguegarao City to demand anew the reduction of irrigation fees and their cancellation during times of calamity.

According to Kagimungan, the peasant organization that launched the mass action, not only does the state deprive the people of a basic service like irrigation, it has even taken over formerly communal systems in communities that used to provide free irrigation.

Earlier, farmers in Cagayan Valley succeeded in demanding that the NIA cancel their debts, interests and penalties from 2000 and back. They also achieved their demand for the agency to stop charging the people for other debts and filing cases against farmers who are already neck-deep in debt.

The farmers demanded the cancellation of all debt, interest and penalties. They stressed that local government units should subsidize irrigation services fees. They like-

wise exposed the anomalies within the NIA and asked that these be investigated and that everyone proven to be involved in corruption be punished.

Peasants whose land had irrigation canals built by the NIA also supported the mass actions due to the NIA's continued failure to compensate them.

Meanwhile, on the same day, farmers and minorities in Quirino province put up a barricade against Nescafe Plantation's landgrabbing. Nescafe has been conniving with the DENR to seize the land in Barangay Magsaysay, Diffun, Quirino, using the agency's National Greening Project as pretext. The disputed area has long been settled by peasants who toiled to build farms on the 71-hectare landholding. AB

## BM files supplemental petition vs. MRT-LRT fare hike

Bayan Muna (BM) filed a supplemental petition with the Supreme Court in a bid to stop the fare hikes at the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT). Reps. Neri Colmenares and Carlos Isagani Zarate filed the supplemental petition on January 21 to strengthen an earlier petition filed by progressive groups and individuals.

The supplemental petition cites an admission by the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) that it does not have the authority to order fare hikes. Bayan Muna also cited the

fact that the proceeds from the fare hikes would not benefit MRT and LRT commuters.

Meanwhile, students continued to launch protest actions against the fare hikes. They picketed the LRT 2 station at Legarda, Manila on January 23 to demand the revocation of the lopsided contracts entered into by the state for public services like the metro trains. They believe that any fare hike would be unjust, especially since this would only benefit private interests and would not be used to improve metro train services.

# NDFP congratulates Syriza Party of Greece

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) congratulated the Syriza Party of Greece for its historic victory in the country's national elections on January 25. With its leader Alex Tsipras at the forefront, Syriza won 149 out of 300 seats in the Greek parliament.

Syriza (or the Coalition of the Radical Left) comprises 13 groups considered as "Leftist," mainly because of their stand against austerity, which has spawned unemployment among one-fourth of workers and the impoverishment of millions. Its victory is the first of its kind in Greece and the entire European Union.

After its victory, Syriza announced the immediate reversal of a number of austerity policies imposed on the country by the so-called Troika—the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and European Union. Among Syriza's moves is to renegotiate with the Troika for the possible cancellation or reduction of the country's external debt, which now stands at €320 billion. It is determined to reverse the effects of the austerity program on the people, among which are the tripling of the unemployment rate, especially among the youth (50%), the loss of medical benefits of almost a third of the population, the fall in national production and incomes and swelling national debt.

Among Syriza's immediate measures are to issue food and power coupons to 300,000 households and to provide free medical care and guarantees against home foreclosures. It will also push for the reduction of fuel taxes. More than this, Syriza will ensure a hike in the minimum wage from €580 to

€751 monthly and provide additional 13th month pensions to those earning less than €700 per month. These measures form part of Syriza's National Reconstruction Plan which is aimed at addressing the people's basic needs, especially the poorest sectors and those currently unemployed. Syriza also plans to provide free electricity and food to a hundred thousand families, free transport fare to the jobless, the restoration of pensions to 1.3 million retirees and the creation of 300,000 new jobs annually.

Greece is one of the Eurozone countries severely affected by the financial crisis which has been besetting the world since 2008. It is one of the so-called

PIIGS (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain)—countries that are deep in debt. For the past six years, these countries' public debt has ballooned without letup. To enable them to pay their debts, the IMF, ECB and EU provided them with fresh credit in exchange for implementing widespread cuts in social services, mass layoffs, the privatization of the government's public resource and tax hikes.

Aside from Greece, anti-austerity movements are also gaining ground in other parts of Europe. Currently, the anti-austerity Polemos party in Spain is getting stronger.

The NDFP extended its warmest congratulations to Syriza and the Greek people and hopes for even bigger victories in their difficult tasks and the challenges that lie ahead. Their valiant struggle and victory strengthen and inspire other peoples who are also struggling against the antipeople policies being imposed by imperialist powers and their financial and other institutions.

