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On the Party's anniversary CPP calls on the people to launch peace rallies

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE of the Communist Party of the Philippines calls on the Filipino people to manifest their indignation over the Duterte regime's failure to fulfill its peace vows. The Party calls for peace rallies nationwide on December 26 to demonstrate the Filipino people's unity for a just and lasting peace to coincide with the celebration of the Party's 48th anniversary.

A national assembly will be held in a guerrilla zone somewhere in Davao City while simultaneous mass demonstrations will be launched across the country inside and around guerrilla zones and revolutionary areas.

The Party urges all sectors of society desirous of a just and lasting peace to join and support these demonstrations. Organize peace marches and caravans to press the Duterte regime to fulfill its peace vows and comply with agreements, particularly, the demand to free all political prisoners and to terminate or suspend Oplan Bayanihan operations. Representatives of the Duterte regime are urged to attend these demonstrations in order to hear for themselves the people's outcries for peace.

These demonstrations will also serve as an opportunity to consolidate and rally the people to wage struggles and resistance for a just and lasting peace. AB



EDITORIAL

Manifest the people's indignation over Duterte's unfulfilled peace vows

The Filipino people rebuke GRP President Rodrigo Duterte for his unfulfilled peace vows. They denounce his failure to release political prisoners, a promise he has made twice. They denounce, as well, his deployment of combat troops in rural communities despite having ordered a ceasefire, resulting in rampant military abuses against the peasant masses.

Over the past few months, the Party, the NDFP and all revolutionary forces have repeatedly displayed patience in engaging the Duterte regime in peace negotiations, especially in the face of delays and unfulfilled promises and false statements, even amid treacherous armed and intelligence operations being conducted by the GRP's armed forces.

In the spirit of building amity with the Duterte regime, the revolutionary forces have exercised

flexibility amid the GRP's failure to satisfy the original expectation of releasing 430 plus political detainees before October 26 through a presidential amnesty proclamation.

In the interest of preserving the reciprocal ceasefire declarations, the New People's Army has bent over backwards and carried out evasion maneuvers in the face of treacherous AFP offensive and hostile operations and military abuses by Duterte's armed troops within the sphere of NPA guerrilla

zones and bases.

Duterte has capriciously changed his mind and has declared that no political prisoner will be released until a bilateral ceasefire agreement is signed. Displaying flexibility once again, the NDFP has offered to discuss and sign such a bilateral ceasefire agreement provided that it will take effect upon release of all political prisoners.

The NPA ceasefire has so far lasted 115 days. Historically, this is the longest yet, showing the extent of the revolutionary forces' willingness to boost efforts to forge cooperative relations with Duterte who once declared himself a Leftist and socialist.

Indeed, besides the release of NDFP consultants and the very positive outcome of the first round of talks, the revolutionary forces were encouraged by his patriotic proclamations, particularly the

policy statements declaring an independent foreign policy and threats to end US military presence and joint military exercises and to abrogate the bases agreement (ED-CA).

The Filipino people and their revolutionary forces, however, are also fully conscious of Duterte's anti-people and undemocratic policies. The starkest among these is the growing number of extrajudicial

killings instigated by Duterte and perpetrated by police forces and by an apparent network of death squads.

Besides ordering the AFP to continue with its Oplan Bayanihan operations in the countryside, he also ordered the military to give the erstwhile dictator Ferdinand

Marcos a hero's burial in a display of utter contempt for the Filipino people who suffered gravely under martial law.

The people's desire for change boosted by Duterte's promises remain largely unsatisfied. He has also perpetuated the neoliberal economic policies (low wages and flexible employment, social cut-backs, privatization of public services and others) of the past regimes which has caused widespread misery to the Filipino people.

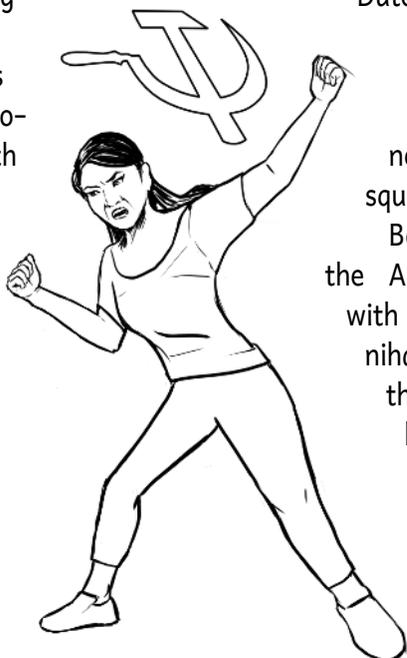
The revolutionary forces are also aware of Duterte's steps back since November. He has reaffirmed "friendship and alliance" with the US and has agreed to let the US military conduct more than 257 military exercises in the Philippines by next year. Clearly, Duterte has chosen to tone down and backtrack his earlier anti-US rhetoric to secure the support of the US-beholden AFP.

In the face of Duterte's unfulfilled peace vows, his closing ranks with the US and the AFP, and continuing military operations and war of suppression in the countryside, the unilateral ceasefire declaration issued by the CPP has become increasingly untenable to maintain.

The CPP has already clearly stated that an extension of its ceasefire declaration can only be secured if the Duterte regime fulfills its vows to release political prisoners and orders the withdrawal of its troops from the guerrilla zones and bases.

At the same time, the CPP supports efforts of the NDFP Negotiating Panel to forge a bilateral ceasefire agreement with the GRP with clear provisions protecting civilian communities from so-called civil-military operations which shall take effect upon the promised release of all political prisoners.

The revolutionary forces can further go the extra mile and await the realization of such steps until January.



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AB

Groups denounce grave human rights violations

On December 10, International Human Rights Day, thousands of people across the country slammed the worsening human rights situation under the Duterte regime.

Militarization and abuses by the Armed Forces of the Philippines run unabated in the countryside notwithstanding the ceasefire.

Extrajudicial killings of civilians worsened, both under the regime's Oplan Bayanihan suppression and the so-called anti-drug war.

Persecution, harassment and abuse of activists and other dissenting groups continue in various



parts of the country. There are mounting cases when the regime used the "anti-drug war" to justify the murder, arrest and harassment of activists and revolutionaries.

According to Karapatan, there are already 18 cases of political killings, 20 frustrated killings and almost 14,000 have been forced to evacuate due to Oplan Bayanihan operations from July to November.

Meanwhile, over 5,000 have been slain, mostly from poor communities, in the anti-drug war. The Duterte regime does not hesitate to trample upon the right to due process, even that of his fellow bureaucrats.

The people also condemned Duterte's inclination to proclaim fascist measures—from the suspension of the writ of habeas cor-

to be continued on page 4

Duterte's empty talk

GRP Pres. Rodrigo Duterte has proven over and over that his words carry no weight especially regarding the release of political prisoners. "Give me a signed bilateral peace talks agreement and I will release them within 48 hours. I promise you that," he said on December 12. This was after he "promised" to release 40 sentenced and 130 elderly and sick prisoners in the NDFP list in a meeting with its consultants on December 2 in Davao City.

According to Fidel Agcaoili, NDFP panel chief, Duterte's pronouncements are "disturbing and disappointing." "This is a complete turnaround to what he promised," he said.

In a speech on December 8, Duterte repeated a previous statement that he will not release political prisoners because "mawawalan siya ng baraha." (He will lose all his cards). He said this before in October, after the second round of talks between the NDFP and GRP panels in Oslo, Norway, where his negotiators signed an agreement regarding the amnesty proclamation.

Two of the 130 slated for release are presently in the hospital—Amelia Pond, 64, and Apolonio Barado, 62. Pond was admitted for

surgery at the Southern Philippines Medical Hospital in Davao City last November 11. Barado was rushed to the New Bilibid Prison hospital in Muntinlupa City due to severe chest pains last December 4.

"Duterte's rash accusation that the political prisoners are all NPAs betrays his adherence to his predecessors' policy and practice of detaining political prisoners on the basis of trumped-up criminal charges and using them as hostages to leverage and pressure the NDFP into an indefinite ceasefire or negotiated capitulation" Agcaoili added.

The GRP also goes on spreading false news regarding the ceasefire and AFP violations of its own ceasefire. This December 13, the NDFP had to again belie the GRP assertion

that the revolutionary movement is ready to sign a bilateral ceasefire agreement. According to Luis Jalandoni, the NDFP has not backtracked on its position that the GRP has to fulfill its obligation of releasing political prisoners. "The bilateral ceasefire will take effect 48 hours after the signing, within the timeframe which Pres. Duterte said he would order the release of all the political prisoners," said Jalandoni. "If there is no release of political prisoners, the ceasefire will not take effect," he explained.

Meanwhile, state agents openly harassed two NDFP consultants last December 11. Ruben Saluta and Concha Araneta-Bocala were on their way to the airport when they noticed that they were being followed by motorcycle-riding men from the house they were staying in at Quezon City. Saluta and Bocala posted bail in August to participate in the first series of peace talks. Until now, they face trumped-up criminal charges. **AB**

pus and revival of the detested Philippine Constabulary, up to the declaration of martial law. He insulted the people when he honored the dictator Marcos by allowing his interment at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

In the field of peace negotiations, Duterte persists in refusing to release the majority, if not all, of the political prisoners. More than a matter of promise, it is Duterte's obligation to release the prisoners in accordance to the CARHRIHL and other subsequent agreements of the NDFP-GRP peace talks. Two sick, elderly prisoners whom he promised to release are presently hospitalized. Aside from them, one has already died from illness amid unfinished hearings for trumped-up charges.

Rallyists also scored Duterte for appointing the "hatchet man" general Eduardo Año as new AFP chief-of-staff. Año, who is also called "rebel hunter," is answerable for many crimes including the

abduction and disappearance of activist Jonas Burgos and murder of Leoncio Pitao (Kumander Parago) last year.

In Manila, more than 5,000 assembled at the foot of Mendiola Bridge. They carried the call "Digong, tama na!" (Digong, enough!) and #LayasMilitar (MilitaryOut), as well as the call to release all political prisoners.

During the same day, political prisoners, their families and supporters ended their hunger strike. At least 198 political prisoners participated in the protest.

In Davao, about 2,000 joined the rally to commemorate Human Rights Day. Among the calls of the rallyists was the immediate release of Amelia Pond who is presently in the hospital for surgery. She is one of the 83 political prisoners in Southern Mindanao.

In Cagayan de Oro, around 4,500 assembled at Magsaysay Park, Divisoria. In Butuan City, more or less 800 went to the 401st Bde headquarters before proceed-

ing to the PNP regional headquarters and the DILG and NCIP regional offices.

In Kalinga, around 400 human rights defenders and Innabuyog-Gabriela members commemorated this day by travelling to Barangay Western Uma, Lubuanga to confront 50th IB soldiers who were encamped at the barangay hall, school and day care center. Prior to this, the residents pressed the soldiers to go, but instead, the latter strengthened their control of the place. Military abuses also worsened in reaction to the complaints of the residents. On their way to the barrio, soldiers stopped the Innabuyog-Gabriela convoy. Upon arrival, the rallyists set up a peace camp in Western Uma. Soldiers also occupied several communities in the municipalities of Balbalan and Pinukpuk.

Protest actions were also held in other parts of the country including Masbate, Bacolod, Baguio, Tuguegarao and Isabel City in Cagayan Valley. AB

Military operations in Abra and Ilocos

Elements of the 24th IB and 81st IB continue their rampage in different villages in Abra and Ilocos despite the opposition from residents, including village elders.

In Sallapadan town, soldiers occupied the barrios of Bazar, Naguilyan, Sacaang and nearby places. Since September, elements of the Alpha Coy of 24th IB have been encamping in the barangay hall and sowing terror in the community. They use the "anti-drug war" and prevention of robberies as pretext for their presence but in reality, they keep themselves busy with drinking, gambling, womanizing, and playing basketball.

Sallapadan elders complain that soldiers order the children to steal chicken. The soldiers also use relief operations as an excuse for their

presence. In truth, they have not helped a single resident and have only taken care of their own needs. Worse, they, together with the police, illegally arrested five civilians who were hunting within their village territory. The policemen took the hunters' guns and did not return them.

In Malibcong town, soldiers took advantage of relief operations to encamp in barangays Gacab and Poblacion. Police maliciously accused 10 civilian motorcycle drivers from the Gubang tribe, residents of barangays Bangilo, Umap, Buanao and Lat-ey of being NPA supporters.

They coerce residents in these barangays to attend meetings so that they can be put under investigation.

From November to the present, Bravo Coy of the 24th IB has been encamped in Brgy. Poblacion, Lacub town. They forced former Red fighters to surrender and conducted recruitment for infiltrators to spy on the revolutionary movement. Several residents have been pressed to join combat operations aimed at seizing firearms from the NPA.

Instead of heeding the call to leave the village, the soldiers brought in additional camp equipment including a generator, refrigerator and bulk supplies for a long-haul quartering.

In Tubo town, the 81st IB have launched continued combat operations in barangays of Tiempo, Kili, and Poblacion Mayabo since the last week of November. Because of this, most of the residents no longer go to the forests for fear of being accused as NPA members.

The military also continues its attacks in the Ilocos region. According to Ka Rosa Guidon, National Democratic Front-Ilocos Region spokesperson, they have listed 185 cases of human rights violations, which have victimized more than 33,000 people under Oplan Bayanihan operations.

Likewise, more than 100 suspected drug users and pushers have been killed in

the region. Two of them were killed under the guise of Oplan Tokhang, not for any relation to drugs but for their political beliefs.

Also, AFP soldiers insist on continuing their operations despite the ceasefire. At least 20 barangays in four Ilocos Sur municipalities have reported the 81st IB occupation of civilian communities. These include eight barangays in the municipalities of Sta. Lucia, six in Salcedo, five in Quirino and one in Cervantes. In Quirino, Suyo and Sta. Cruz, soldiers are conducting forcible recruitment for the Civilian Armed Auxiliary, which are being used as mercenary goons of commercial plantations and mining companies.^{AB}

Tondo activist killed in anti-drug war

AN ACTIVIST from Tondo, Manila was killed, execution-style, last December 5. The killers made it appear that Joel Lising, 43, was a drug pusher. According to his mother, he was never into drugs. He was instead an official of Tri-wheel Organization para sa Kabuhayan (PATOK), an alliance of drivers of tri-wheels (tricycles, pedicabs and *kuliglig*, a modified tricycle) which led protests against the proposed phase-out of their livelihood. Lising had no drug record.

Each day, no less than 30 are killed in Duterte's anti-drug war. Since he came to power up to the second week of December, more than 5,600 have been victimized by this war. Around 2,012 who "resisted arrest" were killed by the police. About 3,000 have been killed by death squads which operate all over the country, especially in Metro Manila.

Oplan Bayanihan in Mindanao

The National Democratic Front-Southern Mindanao Region (NDF-SMR) released a statement on December 10 condemning the continued attacks of Oplan Bayanihan in more than 25 municipalities and cities in the region. The NDF received reports of numerous cases of abuse by the operating AFP PDTs in Kibawe, Bukidnon; Compostela, Mawab and Pantukan in Compostela Valley; and Loreto, Agusan del Sur.

Cases of extrajudicial killings by the military and paramilitary have been reported in Arakan and North Cotabato; and targeting Lumads of Talaingod in Davao del Norte; Kitaotao, Bukidnon and Loreto, Agusan del Sur.

According to the NDF-SMR, AFP soldiers repeatedly violated their own ceasefire declaration. Last November, Red fighters twice stopped armed soldiers conducting combat-intel operations in the hinterland villages of Compostela Valley. The soldiers who surrendered were warned by the NPA of their obligation to the ceasefire before they were released.

According to reports collated by Barug Katungod Mindanao, there have been 36 cases of human rights violations by AFP soldiers in Southern Mindanao since July. These include eight cases of extrajudicial killings and 33 cases of soldiers putting to military use public structures such as schools, health centers and those used for religious purposes. Three cases of harassment have also been recorded.

In Western Mindanao, the 53rd IB's coercion of the Subanens to attend their assemblies is prevalent. Here, the Lumads were subjected to interrogation and ac-

cused of being members of the NPA. As in other places in the country, soldiers encamped in civilian communities and conducted surveillance over the residents' activities.

Elmer del Rosario, 26, a farmer in Zamboanga, was one of the reported victims of Oplan Bayanihan. According to his father Edilberto, the younger del Rosario simply disappeared after they were called to a meeting and threatened by soldiers from the 55th IB on August 19. According to a witness, soldiers surrounded Elmer's hut that day. After some time, residents unearthed Elmer's corpse near the area where the 55th IB encamped.

In Misamis Oriental, AFP PDT operations persist. Every morning, soldiers knock on homes of the peasant organizations' members and threaten them against joining rallies.^{AB}

2 activist detainees walk free

TWO YOUTH activists who were arrested and detained for two years due to trumped-up charges walked free last December 5. A local court in Nueva Ecija junked the charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives filed against Guiller Cadano and Gerald Salonga in December 1.

According to Guiller's father Amado Cadano, he is happy that his son and Gerald are finally free. But his joy is incomplete as not all political prisoners are released.

He points out that the OPAPP and the GRP panel never lifted a finger to help release the two activists. "It took a long time before Guiller and Gerald were released, even if they were innocent," says Amado. "How about all those political prisoners who are likewise innocent but have languished in jail for decades?" The elder Cadano is a member of the organization Hustisya.

Soldiers arrested, maltreated and interrogated Cadano and Salonga in Brgy. RT Padilla, Carranglan, Nueva Ecija on August 4, 2014. They were then conducting research on peasant issues in the area. They were accused of being members of the New People's Army and detained.

Both came from the University of the Philippines Extension Program in Pampanga. Cadano is a business administration graduate who became the Kabataan Partylist regional spokesperson while Salonga graduated with a psychology degree and was an organizer for youth group Anakbayan in Central Luzon.

Worsening attacks on farm workers

Guards open fire on banana plantation workers

Since setting up a camp to reclaim their land this December in Madaum, Tagum City, protesting farm workers have met relentless violence from the Lorenzo family, owners of Lapanday Foods Corporation. Nine farm workers have been wounded in three separate incidents of strafing by company guards.

On December 14, two farm workers became the latest victims after guards opened fired while they were watching over their fellow workers harvesting bananas. Prior to this, seven were wounded when said guards strafed the farm workers and their supporters on December 12.

The farm workers were members of the Madaum Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association Incorporated (MARBAI), the association of owners of the 145-hectare land planted with export-grade bananas contracted for Lapanday. The land had been awarded to the workers in 1997 under the first US-Aquino regime's sham land reform program. Their ownership was confirmed in 2011. Despite this, Lapanday controls the land through the anomalous and exploitative Agribusiness Ventures Agreement (AVA). The particular AVA in question was contracted between Lapanday and Hijo Employees Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Cooperation 1 (Hearbco1) which encompassed the MARBAI members' lands in September 2011. Before the signing, MARBAI members had already separated from Hearbco1. Because of this, MARBAI members were ejected from the plantation.

The AVA is a scheme designed by the sham Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program to reconcentrate distributed land into the hands of big landlords and commercial plantation owners.

According to Linda Dayahan, MARBAI officer, they arrived at the plantation Monday morning to stop the LFC from harvesting the ba-

nanas, along with some 1,000 supporters. They were met with gunfire from the plantation guards. Seven MARBAI members were immediately hit. Two of them are in critical condition.

On December 9, the farm workers set up their camp inside the plantation to reclaim their right to the land. Since June this year, they have been camping outside the plantation. On December 11, the guards fired warning shots to make them leave.

The farm workers are demanding the cancellation of the AVA or agreements with LFC on leasing land for banana plantation. They assert that the agreement is exploitative and oppressive, and mire the farm workers deep in debt while concentrating land control into the hands of big corporations. The farm workers aim to assert their right to the land and grow food for their own consumption.

According to Mely Yu, MARBAI chairperson, the farm workers' earnings as contract growers under the AVA system are not enough to feed their family. Because of Lapanday's deductions for fertilizers, pesticides and others, farm workers take home only P2,000/month from the P15,000 they should be getting. Under the AVA, Lapanday buys the bananas from the plantations at \$3 (P150) per box that weighs 13 kilos or at P11.50/kilo.

The DAR national office issued a "cease and desist" order against Lapanday on December 14. On December 18, a National Fact Finding Mission headed by peasant

workers groups and human rights advocates concluded their investigation. The group reported cases of harassment, threats, intimidation, illegal arrest, frustrated murder, torture, coercion and setting up illegal checkpoints in Lapanday against MARBAI farm workers.

On December 19, the Tagum City mayor called for a dialogue to resolve the conflict between Lapanday and MARBAI.

Harassment at Hacienda Luisita

Meanwhile, the Aquino-Cojuangco family's goons once again attacked the *bungkalan* (tilling) area at Hacienda Luisita. On December 4, at around 9 p.m., drunken men fired at a hut of Ambala (Alyansa ng Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita) members in Sitio Silangan in Mapalacsiao to drive them away from the place. This sitio is part of the farm workers' *bungkalan* area. The next day, more than a hundred men occupied the hut, as well as other sheds used by Ambala members for the *bungkalan*. This is in direct defi-

ance to the Department of Agrarian Reform decision on October 1 for "status quo" or retention of the *bungkalan*. Farm workers started the *bungkalan* in 2005 in 10 villages within Hacienda Luisita.

Before this, paid goons from Brgy. Lourdes (also known as Brgy. Texas) entered the *bungkalan* area in Mapalacsiao on November 25. The goons, armed with farmer's knives and their faces covered, were sent by Lourdes barangay chief Edison Diaz to build outposts and scare away the tillers. Diaz acts on orders from the Aquino-Cojuangco family. Lourdes is two kilometers from Mapalacsiao.

The Lorenzo family is involved both with LFC and the Hacienda Luisita. Martin Lorenzo is an officer of Hacienda Luisita Incorporated while his sister Regina is in LFC.

In related news, the Pamalakaya-Pilipinas (Pambansang Lakas ng

Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas) group condemned the illegal arrest of ten fisherfolks in Brgy. Salvacion, Rizal, Mindoro Occidental on December 7. The fisherfolks were defending their huts against demolition ordered by Annaliza Pojas-Lopez, an investor claiming the land. According to the local peasant association, the Samahan ng Magsasaka sa Kanlurang Mindoro, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has declared the area a "marine zone" and as such, it cannot be sold to a private business. Likewise, they have been residing here for more than 50 years. Prior to this, Lopez's goons demolished

17 houses on October 24. **AB**



The Consunji family's exploitation and oppression in Far South Mindanao

Early this December, two Lumads were abducted by DMCI (David M. Consunji Incorporated) paramilitary and paid goons in Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat. Up to the present, the families of Dabis Mogul and Macky Bael, both Dulangan Manobos who fought against the expansion of DMCI mango plantations and mining operations in the province, have failed to locate the two.

Mogul and Bael are the latest in the long list of Lumads, Moros and settlers victimized by the DMCI. In more than three decades, DMCI's armed terror has reigned in the large areas of Southcentral Mindanao which it has occupied for its logging, mining and commercial plantation operations. For a long time, it has ruled in the area using the battalion-sized joint forces of the SCAA-38th IB, called the Investment Defense Force during the

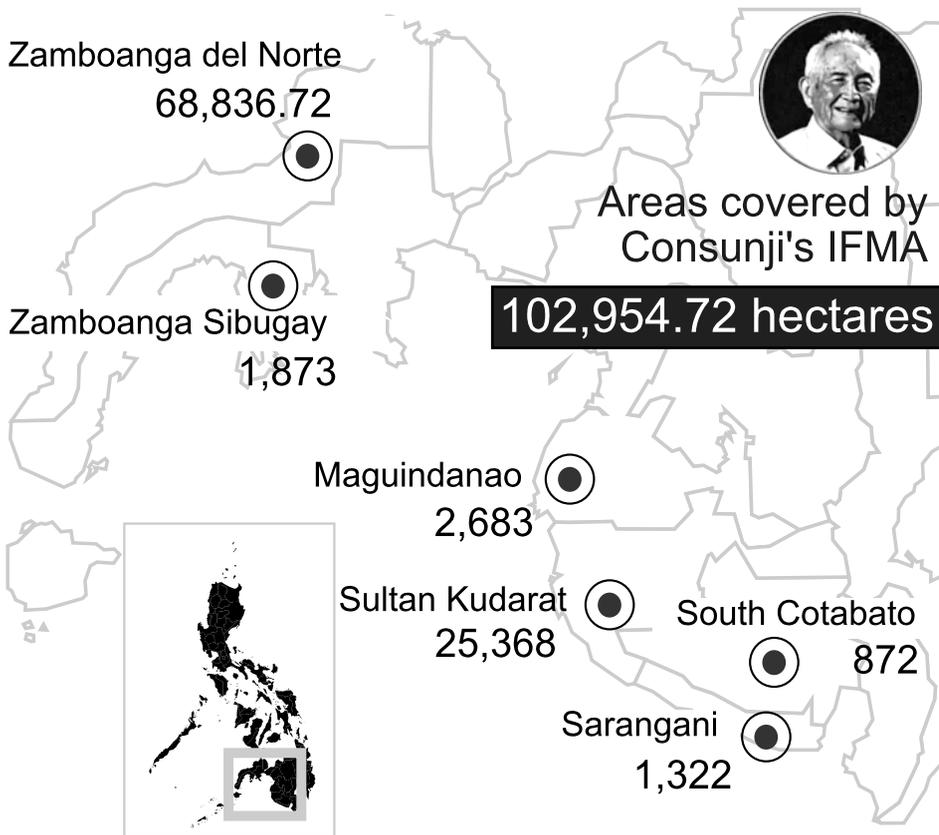
Arroyo regime. Its reign continues under the Duterte regime.

The DMCI is owned by David Consunji and his family. Outside logging and mining, his other interests include construction and real estate in Metro Manila and other urban areas. In 2015, he was listed as the 7th richest Filipino worth P183 billion. He was also listed in the 500 wealthiest individuals in the world.

Companies owned by the Con-

sunji family occupy more than 350,000 hectares in 10 municipalities in Southcentral Mindanao — seven in Sultan Kudarat, two in Maguindanao and one in South Cotabato. The Daguma range, which comprise part of the ancestral domain and traditional livelihood source for Lumad, Moro and settler communities, is found in this area.

Since the 1900s, large logging companies have taken turns denuding parts of the Daguma Range. During the mid-70s, the Marcos dictatorship awarded Consunji, who was then one of its cronies, logging concessions to 150,000 hectares in the Daguma Range in the Sultan



Consunji's crimes in Daguma

(Culled from KEDUMA's primer, July 2016)

Abril 30, 2015: DMCI guards killed John Calaba, Public Relations Officer of Kesasabanay Dulangan Manobo (KEDUMA) in Sitio Salabantran, Brgy. Salangsang, Lebak. (Read more at Ang Bayan, June 7, 2015.)

2000: Paid goods killed Datu Eyet Enggew, Dulangan Manobo leader in Kulaman.

1993: No less than 100 Lumads were killed by company guards in Kanalan, Tubak, including women and children. Their homes and properties were burned.

1991: Guards abducted two Dulangan Manobos (Lagbed Capitan at Lepeng Sabil) in Sitio Dapulan and Mepayag.

Late 1980: Guards killed a woman and wounded others after indiscriminately firing at a house in Sitio Tagbaken.

1989: Guards killed eight Dulangan Manobos while they were crossing a bridge in Kedakelan, Esperanza.

1979: Twenty four Dulangan Manobos, including Datu Jakang Abag, were killed when a vehicle they were riding on was sabotaged in Sitio Gintalas, Puluy-Puloy, Lebak.

Kudarat area, consequent with giving him large construction contracts in the national capital. Consunji then bought the existing companies in the area. By the 1980s, the DMCI have expanded and consolidated its monopoly on logging operations in Daguma.

In the 1970s, Consunji companies drove away the Lumads from the area using their private army, the then Civilian Home Defense Force and the paramilitary group Ilaga. When the Marcos dictatorship fell, Consunji used Corazon Aquino's fake reforestation program, the Integrated Forest Management Agreement (IFMA), to continue logging operations in Daguma. During this period, it also started its gold and coal mining operations and coffee plantations in the area.

Consunji companies brought about large-scale landgrabbing, dislocation of the Lumads, Moros and settlers, destruction of Lumad culture and systems, forest denudation and environmental destruction, widespread abuses and human rights violations against the people in the area.

Through the IFMA, Consunji companies drove away residents in the mountainous areas of Esperanza to convert the area into a

large nursery in the 1990s. These companies relentlessly grabbed farmlands from Dulangan Manobos and settlers by appropriating their areas for "reforestation." They converted other farmlands to coffee and fruit plantations. These companies have never compensated the residents who tilled the said lands.

Most residents faced hunger when they lost their source of livelihood after Consunji companies destroyed the Daguma forests. Most Lumads rely on the forests' natural resources for food and other needs. Due to commercial logging, their self-reliant system was destroyed and supplanted with a cash economy. Instead of tilling their land, they became farm workers in their own land.

The few residents which Consunji companies employ receive wages as low as P150/day. For their coffee plantations, they only employ seasonal workers. These workers are paid P3.50 for every kilo of harvested coffee or P140 for the sack they manage to fill for the entire day.

Due to hunger, not a few Lumads have dared to clear areas supposedly intended for "reforestation." There have been traditional

leaders and warriors or *agubalangs* who decided to fight to take back parts of their ancestral domain. To suppress and justify repressing their struggle, they were charged with arson and treated as bandits and criminals. In addition, the Consunji companies, in cooperation with the National Commission in Indigenous Peoples, weakened the traditional system of leadership in Lumad communities. Among the Dulangan Manobos, the traditional role of the *agubalangs* were dis-

mantled and supplanted with a simplified system for local governance. This paved the way for easier implementation of the reactionary state's schemes and programs favoring the Consunjis.

It would take hundreds of years to regrow the forests destroyed by Consunji companies. Due to overlogging, numerous hardwood species have been lost. At present, trees in the area are only at their three to five years of growth. Most animals (birds, wild boars, insects and others) which rely on the forest cover have disappeared or have been driven away.

Watershed systems and rivers have been destroyed. Up to 11 watershed areas have been affected,

the biggest of which is the Kabulnan Watershed Forest Reserve where only 500 hectares of forests remain. Irrigation for 13,500 hectares of farms in six municipalities rely on this watershed.

Since DMCI operations in Daguma commenced, armed and unarmed uprisings from Lumad (Dulangan Manobo, T'boli and Teduray), as well as Moro communities and poor farmer-settlers from Visayas and Luzon, also started.

In the beginning, Lumad armed uprisings in Daguma were small, spontaneous and fragmented. But they soon spread out and grew larger due to the DMCI private army's continuous maltreatment, abuses and oppression of the residents.

Datu Jakang Abag from the town of Esperanza was one of the first in the 1970s. Also known for taking up arms against DMCI are Commander Apen Kawayan and Isung Kawayan. In the 1980s, a certain "Guni," also known as "The Shirtless Commander," led a hundred men to attack the company's operations. More followed in their stead. The uprisings were treated as crimes.

At present, various forms of people's struggles continue against the DMCI. In the words of a Lumad leader, in their long struggle, they understand the need for unity. Consunji and its armed goons might be powerful, but a unified and enlightened people is more powerful than them. AB