



Fourth round of formal talks held

THE FOURTH ROUND of talks between the NDFP-GRP was held successfully last April 3-6 in Noordwijk, The Netherlands despite a day's delay when Pres. Rodrigo Duterte of GRP imposed conditions before proceeding the formal talks.

In a released statement, the NDFP said that both parties are determined to resolve snags to push the peace talks forward.

The fourth round of talks included negotiations on bilateral ceasefire agreement and the more substantive agenda of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms.

According to Prof. Joma Sison, NDFP Chief Political Consultant, the NDFP is most interested in the soonest possible signing of CASER to respond to the clamor of the people for substantive reforms. On the other hand, the GRP is more interested in obtaining a bilateral ceasefire agreement with the NDFP.

Previously, on March 25, two POWs, paramilitary members Rene Doller and Mark Nocus, captured in Lupon, Davao Oriental on February 14, were released by the NPA custodial force to members of the Third Party Facilitators and Independent Humanitarian Mission (TPFIHM) in Mati City, Davao Oriental. Presently, there remain four POWs—PFC Edwin Salan captured in Alegria, Surigao del Norte; Sgt. Solaiman Calucop and

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EDITORIAL

Reject the anti-peace US stooges

It is fitting for the Party and the Filipino people to commend the negotiating panels of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) for successfully holding the fourth round of talks last April 2-6 despite efforts to derail it by the stooges of US imperialism.

Through the efforts of both sides, talks on the negotiation's substantive issue of socio-economic reforms were advanced steadily. They wisely confronted and handled the ceasefire question used by the US stooges to disrupt the talks.

These US stooges in the Duterte regime are no other than Defense Sec. Delfin Lorenzana, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon and Gen. Eduardo Año, AFP chief.

They are employed by US imperialism to derail the talks. They carry out different steps to hinder the negotiations and stop its momentum. They oppose the release of political prisoners. They have also pushed for widespread deployment of armed troops in rural areas which trampled on the spirit of ceasefire since August 2016.

They attempted to deter the fourth round of talks. Contrary to

the agreement to reciprocally declare a ceasefire before the start of talks last April 2, Lorenzana and others insisted that GRP should not comply. This directly challenged the signed Joint Statement last March 11 and undermined the GRP Negotiating Panel. Duterte stood with Lorenzana in the position against the unilateral ceasefire.

Still, the US stooges were not satisfied. A few hours before the fourth round, Lorenzana spat out vitriol against the revolutionary movement, and while pretending to support the talks, insisted on imposing additional conditions for it to proceed. This was followed by AFP officials' blabber demanding that talks center on forging a bilateral ceasefire agreement, contrary to the agreement that talks will be devoted to the substantive issue of socio-economic reforms.

In line with stand of the US stooges, Duterte unexpectedly demanded a change in the agenda and insisted on prioritizing the ceasefire agreement.

Duterte pushed the fourth round to the brink. It only pushed through because of the open-mindedness of the NDFP Negotiating Panel on discussing the bilateral ceasefire and the flexibility of both sides in setting the agenda.

After three days of talks, both sides signed an agreement on forging a joint interim ceasefire in the future.

They identified the issues to be settled and commanded each other's ceasefire committees to meet and forge the ground rules for this agreement. At the same time, the NDFP made clear that the ceasefire is not the ultimate goal of talks and that signing such an agreement must follow or be simultaneous with the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (Caser).

While successfully settling the derailing issue of a bilateral ceasefire, they were also able to attend to bring closer the different Caser drafts. They also agreed to continue with the process of preparing a

joined draft in preparation for the next round of talks starting May 26.

As peace talks vigorously move forward, the US imperialist stooges are becoming more desperate in hindering the process of addressing and resolving the issues at the root of the civil war in the Philippines.

The advance of peace talks in resolving the substantive socio-economic issues, especially the matter of genuine land reform and national industrialization, runs contrary to US imperialist interest. They also wish to prevent negotiations on political and constitutional reforms which shall include issues of national sovereignty and freedom against intervention and presence of foreign troops and its military bases.

The fascist lackeys of the US serve the interests of big war industries, and the trade and investment interests of US big capitalists and its partners among the big bourgeois compradors such as the Zobels and Ayolas and the big landlords including the Aquino-Coujucos.

They are determined to defend the exclusive dominion of US imperialism over the Philippines and prevent it from exercising sovereignty to engage in independent economic, diplomatic and military relations with other countries. They serve US imperialist interest to perpetuate its hegemony over the Philippines in the face of growing challenges in the context of a multipolar world.

Lorenzana and the militarists are more interested in waging an all-out war against the Filipino people to suppress their struggle for national liberation from US imperialism. This way, they can ensure that the Philippines will continue to buy guns and other military equipment, helicopters and jetfighters to drop US-made bombs to suppress the Filipino people's



Vol XLVIII No. 7 | April 7, 2017

Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Hiligaynon, Waray and English.

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Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines

struggles.

However, in intensifying the brutal anti-people war of suppression, the AFP is succeeding only in convincing thousands upon thousands of peasants, workers and other oppressed classes and sectors to participate in the armed struggle and support and join the New People's Army.

The Party calls on the Filipino people to support the NDFP-GRP peace negotiations as a means of addressing the roots of the civil war in the country and attaining substantive reforms for the people.

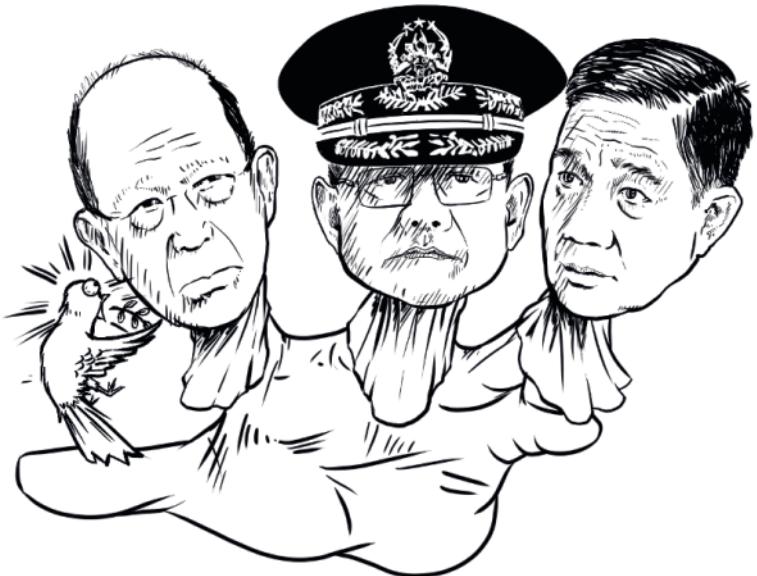
Firmly oppose the militarist stooges of the US who seek to derail the peace talks and are interested only in suppressing the people's struggles and armed resistance. The Duterte regime must be pushed to reject these US imperialist stooges to ensure that its negotiations with the NDFP will move forward.

The entire people must act to push for the acceleration of negotiations to forge at the soonest possible time the CASER as well as the Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms (CAPCR). In particular, intensify the peasant masses' struggle for genuine land reform and break up the land monopolies of haciendas and big plantations. While demanding Duterte to fulfill his promise to end contractualization, the masses of workers and entire people must push for national industrialization and an end to the neoliberal policies of dependence

on foreign loans and investments.

At the same time, the NPA must persevere along the path of armed struggle to advance the people's war and defend the people's welfare. Especially without a ceasefire agreement and amid the reactionary state's relentless intensified campaign of armed suppression, the NPA must strengthen and vigorously advance the armed revolution.

AB



"Fourth round..," from page 1

PFC Samuel Garay captured in Columbio, Sultan Kudarat and PO2 Jerome Natividad, captured in Talakag, Bukidnon.

The NDFP urged the GRP to release a 10-day suspension of military and police operations to expedite the release of the four remaining POWs.

Areas listed by the NDFP cover seven towns and cities in Bukidnon: Talakag, Lantapan, Baungon, Malaybalay, Pangantucan, Kalilangan, and Valencia City; seven towns in Surigao del Norte including Surigao City, Alegria, Bacuag, Gigaquit, Claver, Placer, Mainit; Kitcharao in Agusan del Norte; Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and South Cotabato.

The GRP for its part pledged to immediately process the release of the 23 NDFP-listed political prisoners. Most of them are sick and eld-

erly.

Both the NDFP and GRP claimed that the agreement to hasten the release of the POWs and political prisoners are part of the success of the ongoing peace negotiations.

In addition to the signed agreements, last April 6, both panels signed an agreement to craft and sign a joint interim ceasefire agreement at the soonest possible time. Both groups directed their respective ceasefire committees to conduct formal and non-formal talks, formulate and finalize guidelines and ground rules for the implementation of such agreement.

Wilma Tiamzon, NDFP peace consultant and chairperson of the reciprocal working group on End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces, clarified that the Agreement on an Interim Joint Ceasefire

signed by the two parties is not yet a permanent or final ceasefire.

"Interim means it's not yet permanent but will only create conditions for the progress of the substantive agenda," Tiamzon said.

For his closing remarks, Sison added that there can be a bilateral ceasefire if the GRP complied with their commitment to grant amnesty and release all political prisoners. This can be immediately signed after the forging of the CASER.

Along with this, Sison congratulated the NDFP and GRP and their delegations for the success of the fourth round of the talks.

He also added that, in the forthcoming round, both panels will discuss and work on the remaining items on agrarian reform, national industrialization, environmental protection and other concerns regarding the bilateral ceasefire.

AB

Second Congress stories

The Communist Party of the Philippines' Second Congress was a congress of unity. Lessons and decisions forged here have profound and historical significance for the continued advance of the Philippine revolution (*Read the Communique in Ang Bayan, March 29, 2017.*) At the same time, the process of the activity itself has distinct details. In a guerrilla base, one battalion of the people's army, almost a hundred leading Party cadres and members, and members of the people's militias were able to assemble in one camp despite on-going enemy operations.

Ensuring democracy for stronger unity

The congress is the forum for the highest form of democracy within the Party. Thus, participation of the delegates, especially those from the regions, was ensured by having the facilitator go around the hall and by having cadres help translate into the local languages of those who had difficulty speaking in Filipino, the congress' official language. During heavy rains, wireless microphones were passed around and connected to two big amplifiers. English and Filipino versions of the documents under discussion were projected simultaneously on two separate screens, as members of the presidium kept track through their computers from their places on the podium.

Although the facilitators found it hard to reign in discussions that poured out from decades of accumulated experience, there was a relaxed atmosphere of reciprocity among participants who all aimed for unity. A member of the documentation team shared that "I couldn't participate much in the discussions because I had to get all the ideas into the minutes, but when I really had something to say, I was also given the chance. The discussions were really

lively. And I'm happy because I was able to see my comrades from my previous collectives whom I haven't heard from for decades."

In approving proposed amendments or resolutions, three members were assigned to count the number of hands raised, and those who abstained were given time to register their opinion and explain if they had reservations. Elections for the new set of leaders were done through secret ballots, and counting at the plenary session where every name was called out by the canvassers and confirmed by three watchers from different regions was simultaneously recorded on the blackboard, the projector, and on paper.

The whole assembly decided that only those getting a majority vote from the delegates would be accepted for the Central Committee and the Political Bureau. As long as the agreed number of seats for each

of the two organs were not filled, run-off elections were done repeatedly, extending up to twelve midnight. However, the participants did not feel tired. One delegate joked, "see, it's been years since we voted in the corrupt government [elections], so let's even it up here."

One young military cadre who was elected to the leadership said, "It's so inspiring to get to know, to mingle with comrades from various areas throughout the archipelago, with different generations, meeting each other in a historical event and exchanging views."

The activity's steering committee did everything possible to put the delegates at ease and thus help them concentrate on the discussions. From the giant four meter Party flag in front of the session hall and the 24 medium-sized Party flags at both sides for the 48 years of struggle, up to the orchids and other forest plants used to decorate the tables, comrades meticulously poured their attention to make the gathering successful and memorable.

"When I learned that the mural, streamers and banners I was assigned to do were for the Congress, I was overwhelmed; I had goose bumps all-over," the young artist who was part of the decorations committee said. "This event happens only once, and I never expected to be part of it. I almost got ill with stress, but I was inspired."

To keep abreast with the current situation, a television set was placed in the mess-cum-social hall, to monitor the daily news.

The television also served as recreation for the support staff. At night, when there were no enemy movements around, even those in the sen-



try posts could come to watch koreanovelas or other movies that were interpreted on-the-spot by comrades to make it comprehensible in the local language.

Unity was present not only among the delegates but extended to the revolutionary masses around the camp. Up to more than ten kilometers away, the masses sent news about enemy troop movements. Members of the Party branches in the villages around the camp sent local delicacies they cooked for the comrades.

They assisted in marketing and fetching or being guides to comrades who went in or out of the camp.

Party cadres and members, Red commanders, Red fighters and organized masses around the camp participated in the cultural programs at the opening and closing of the congress. Each unit had a prepared number, and the regions shared their dances: *pat-tong* from the Cordilleras, *curacha* from Samar, and Lumad dances from Mindanao. Delegates from other regions participated in the dances. For those who could not go with the dances, a part of each of the programmes were set aside for more popular dances such as cha-cha and "maskipaps" (slang for freestyle dancing) still in the tune of revolutionary songs with the appropriate tempo. Comrades also performed their local songs, including the *kulilipan* and *dawes* of the Cordillera. Also introduced in this occasion were two songs created for the congress, *Muong na Buo* (Solid Fortress) and *Pag-ugit ng Kasaysayan* (Directing History) that celebrated the Party's determination to develop the regions in step to advance the people's war faster to greater

heights.

Meticulous preparation

At least three months before the congress, regional committees held their plenary discussions on the draft constitution and program and listed their comments and proposals. They also drafted proposed resolutions that they wanted to present to the congress. They elected their representatives to the congress through secret balloting,

both the attending and non-attending delegates. The transportation staff also prepared routes and alternative routes, and various modes of transportation.

A few weeks before the activity, the revolutionary mass organizations, people's militia, and people's army units in the area were busy building the big session hall, clinic, barracks and individual huts, and other camp structures. Among these were five bathrooms for the whole camp and several bathrooms for comrades with mobility difficulties. Several people's militia squads moved construction materials and food supplies to stock houses accessible to several kitchens at different areas of the site. Boxes of medical supplies were brought in as preparation for any emergency.

Even earlier, comrades had started raising animals for food because the usual vegetable production of the people's army was expected to fall short of the demands for a long period of such big gathering. Sacks of flour were also stored to be baked into bread and cakes which were served as snacks for the whole camp. When the delegates

and other staff arrived, they had accommodations ready for them complete with electricity in every hut, copies of the collated comments from the regions, and even the doctor, nurse and other paramedics to administer medical check-ups, supervise nutrition, and give medical services to the whole camp, especially to the elderly and those with medical conditions.

According to one member of the medical group who had long prepared herself for her assignment, "we were the ones who monitored those with hypertension and those taking maintenance drugs. I am glad the historic congress concluded without any comrade falling with a major illness. The comrades were amazed that we could conduct ECG check-ups inside the camp.

And we had an in-house doctor who could immediately interpret the results. It was tiring but I had fulfillment."

Long delay

During the last part of the 1980s, when the revolutionary forces had gained enough strength and expanded its reach and the US-Marcos dictatorship had been overthrown, plans were in place for a Party congress. The draft documents had been prepared but because revisionist counter-revolutionaries were present within the Party leadership, the congress that almost became a congress of disunity was not held.

Around mid-2000s, preparations for the congress were again started and drafts were disseminated among the Party committees. But again, it did not push through because of big changes including intensive and widespread enemy campaigns at the planned site. Now, despite the long delay, the Congress held this 2016 was truly successful and historic.

On the NPA's 48th anniversary

Groups hold lightning rallies

To commemorate the New People's Army's (NPA) 48th anniversary, revolutionary mass organizations staged lightning rallies at various major cities in the country. Concurrent with the March 29 anniversary, the Communist Party of the Philippines announced the successful convening of the second Party Congress on October 24 to November 7.

NCR. In Metro Manila, hundreds of members of the Makabayan Kilusang Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA) marched in Quiapo, Manila to celebrate the NPA's 48th anniversary. More than 500 members of revolutionary organizations also launched lightning rallies in Cubao, Quezon City, on March 27. The protest action started at 8 a.m. at the corner of Aurora Blvd. and EDSA. Traffic stood still for more than half an hour.

The rallyists sang the Internationale while calling on the people to join the NPA and advance the people's war.

On March 31, organizations under the umbrella of the NDFP again launched actions to celebrate the successful Second Congress of the CPP. The lightning rallies were held at the Mendiola Bridge and at Caloocan.

In its statement, NDF-Metro Manila stated that the Second Congress is a concrete demonstration of the strength of the fighting people, the Communist Party of the Philippines, and the New People's Army. This strength will but continue to grow until the cities are surrounded from the countryside and the protracted people's war will becomes victorious," it said.

Laguna. A lightning rally was also held by members of revolutionary organizations in Calamba, Laguna on March 29. The Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions in Southern Tagalog stated that the working class must face the great challenge of increasing the NPA membership.

Bicol. Revolutionary forces marched on March 29 around the Sorsogon City Public Market. They saluted the NPA and encouraged the people to continue supporting the people's war.

SMR. In Davao City, members of revolutionary organizations held rallies in various areas of the city. Wearing shirts printed with the call "Join the NPA" and masks with the face of the late NPA commander Ka Leoncio Pitao, the rallyists declared their support for the people's war and the ongoing NDFP-GRP peace talks on April 2-6.

NEMR. The Kabataang Makabayan-Caraga led a lightning rally in Butuan and Surigao City on March 29. According to the NDFP-NEMR statement read at the rally, the NPA, together with the fighting masses, frustrated the counter-revolutionary campaign of the previous presidents from Marcos to Aquino III, which dreamt of annihilating the revolutionary movement. By grasping the correct line of protracted people's war,

the capacity of the Red fighters to fight the brutal AFP and PNP operations had been raised.

Thus, the Red fighters' tactical offensives continue to be successful. The Party's political power in the countryside

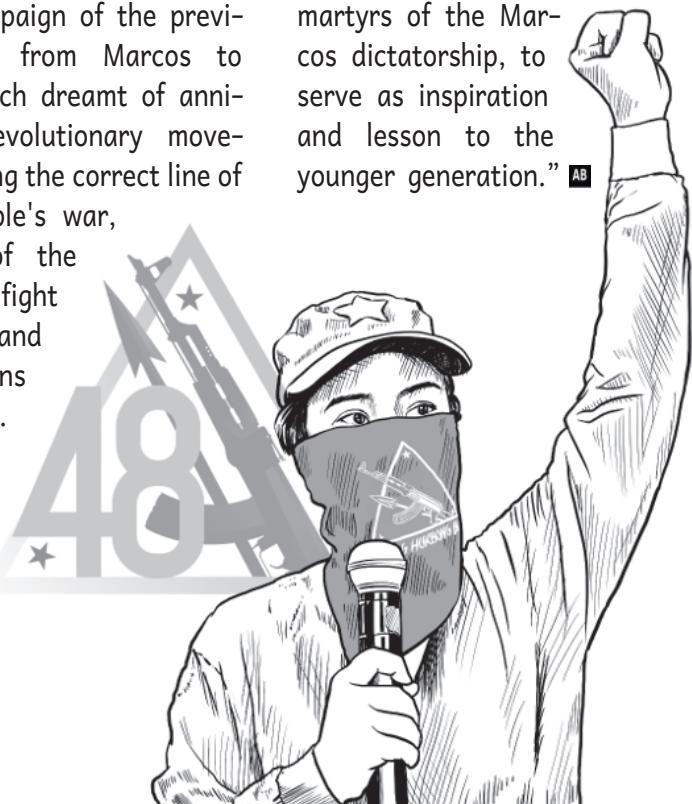
has grown and the agrarian revolution continues to gain victories while the democratic movement in the cities advances.

Ma. Laya Guerrero, national spokesperson of Kabataang Makabayan, challenged all the youth to intensify the struggle against the AFP's all-out war, campaign among their fellow youth to send material and personnel support to the people's army and undergo integration in the guerrilla zones in their numbers.

She said, "the revolution is advancing. But for it to advance further, the youth's strong support is needed in the form of millions of new NPA members."

Meanwhile, various progressive groups gave tribute to all NPA martyrs and all Red fighters who continue to advance the people's war in the countryside.

Renato Reyes, Jr., secretary-general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, said, "we chose this occasion that is commemorated yearly to remember the martyrs of the Marcos dictatorship, to serve as inspiration and lesson to the younger generation." **AB**



NPA launches widespread offensives

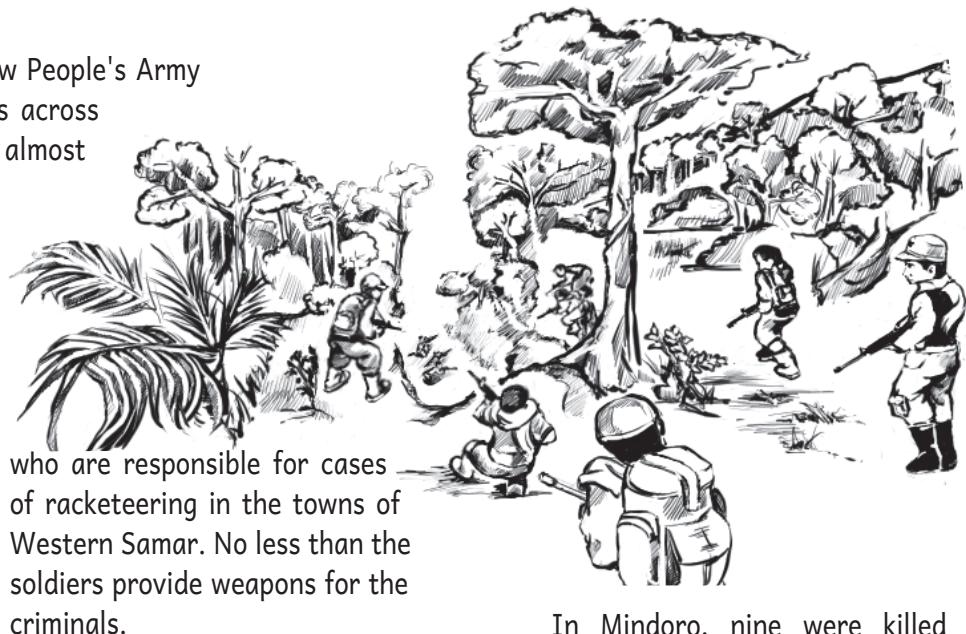
From March 18 to March 30, the New People's Army launched at least 25 armed actions across the archipelago. These are equivalent to almost two offensives per day. Up to 77 casualties were sustained by the enemy, mostly soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Eastern Visayas. A machine gun and 10 rifles were seized by the NPA-Eastern Visayas in a successful raid by the Red fighters on a Civilian Armed Auxiliary (CAA) camp in Brgy. Geparayan, Silvino Lobos, Northern Samar. Confiscated from the raid were one M60 Machine gun, one R4 rifle, five M1 Garand rifles, and four carbines. The victorious raid was staged last March 30.

The regional command of the NPA in Eastern Visayas (Efren Martires Command or EMC) commanded the Red fighters who staged four coordinated tactical offensives on the said date.

Aside from the raid, two harassment operations were also launched by the NPA-Northeast-Central Samar Subregional Command against two detachments of the 52nd IB and CAA in Motiong and Paranas. A unit of the NPA first fired at the camp in Motiong at around 3 a.m. last March 10. One soldier was reportedly wounded. Meanwhile, at around 5:30 a.m. that same morning, the camp in Brgy. Paranas was likewise fired upon.

According to the NPA spokesperson in the subregion, Bernabe "Ka Cani" Linay, the elements of the 52nd IB have long committed human rights violations against the residents, including coercion to serve as guides in military operations, cruelty and proliferation of criminal activities and illegal drugs. Added Ka Cani, camps of the 52nd IB also serve as havens for counter-revolutionaries and bad elements



who are responsible for cases of racketeering in the towns of Western Samar. No less than the soldiers provide weapons for the criminals.

The NPA-EMC also reported that one of its units subjected a paramilitary camp in Burauen, Leyte to harassment operations. The regional operations command added that these coordinated tactical offensives serve as punishment to the AFP for its continuing violations of human rights and for sabotaging the peace negotiations between the NDFP and GRP.

Southern Tagalog. The NPA-Sierra Madre Subregional Command (Rosario Lodronio Rosal Command or RLRC) successfully foiled an attack by the 80th IB last March 30 in Brgy. Lumutan, General Nakar, Quezon. Five reactionary troopers were killed. Five others were also wounded.

The Red army did not suffer any casualty, said Ka Armando Jacinto, spokesperson for the NPA-Sierra Madre. Meanwhile, one baby M-16 was confiscated by the NPA, along with other military effects and documents with intelligence data.

Enemy troops launched company operations against the NPA who conducted a consultation and held the NPA's 48th year anniversary celebration in the barangay, the NPA-Sierra Madre said. The Red fighters organized a counter-attack and valiantly fought and counter-maneuvered against them.

In Mindoro, nine were killed while eight elements of the 4th IB's Bravo Coy were wounded when they were ambushed by a unit under NPA-Mindoro (Lucio de Guzman Command or LGC) last March 29. The NPA-LGC launched the tactical offensive at Caguray River, Sitio Lalaunan, Brgy. Benli in Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro.

North Central Mindanao. Two harassment operations were staged by the Red fighters under the South Central Subregional Command against two columns of the 8th IB in Quezon, Bukidnon last March 30. Three were killed in the said actions, including platoon commanding officer Lt. Pablo. Meanwhile, 13 other soldiers were wounded.

The first harassment operation was launched at 2:19 p.m. in Sitio Mahayahay, Brgy. Minongan, where Lt. Pablo was killed. Six were wounded. At 4 p.m. the casualties were airlifted aboard two helicopters.

A few minutes later, another column of the enemy was fired upon by a separate NPA unit in Brgy. Mahayag, Quezon. Seven 8th IB troopers were wounded.

Meanwhile, three simultaneous harassment operations were launched last March 20, 5 a.m., by units of the NPA-EMONEB (Eastern Misamis Oriental-Northeastern Bukidnon) against three Civilian

Armed Auxiliary detachments led by the 58th IB. Two of these camps are located in Brgy. Kibaban, and one in Brgy. Quezon, both in the municipality of Balingasag, Misamis Oriental.

Last March 18, a unit from the NPA-Mt. Kitanglad Subregional Command fired on soldiers of the 1st Special Forces Battalion conducting operations in Brgy. Baylanan, Talakag, Bukidnon. Two soldiers were reportedly killed.

Far South Mindanao. Seven soldiers of the Marine Battalion Landing Team-8's 2nd Marine Company were killed while several others were wounded when they were ambushed by the NPA-Mt. Daguma Subregional Command last March 21 in Km. 30, Sitio Tinagdanan, Brgy. Hinalaan, Kalamansig in Sultan Kudarat.

According to Ka Dencio Madrigal, NPA spokesperson in the region, the ambush was a punishment to the said unit of the Philippine Marines who for several years has been serving as guard for David Consunji in his destructive companies and landgrabbing.

Ka Dencio added that since the 1980s, Consunji took over more than 102,000 hectares of Lumad and peasants' farmlands in Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato and Maguindanao for his destructive businesses, including logging, mining and plantations. With the employ of AFP soldiers, Consunji's human rights violations against struggling people have become widespread.

Meanwhile, last March 31, Red fighters raided the headquarters of Amadeo Banana Company in Sinawal, General Santos City and disarmed its guards. Confiscated from them were two M16 rifles.

Zamboanga Peninsula. Last March 18, five soldiers were killed and many others were wounded on the part of the 55th IB in an am-

bush staged by the NPA-Mount Malindang Subregion-1 Operations Command. The ambush was done in Brgy. Gala, Tudela, Misamis Occidental, after a month-long offensive by the AFP in the province.

According to Ka Mario Jose, spokesperson of the regional operations command, the 55th IB has a long list of crimes against the people of Zamboanga Peninsula. Since the 1980s up to the present it has committed grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in order to give way to huge mining and agribusiness corporations that plunder the resources of Mt. Malindang and its surrounding plains.

Southern Mindanao. Last March 23 at around noon, a unit of the NPA-ComVal-Davao East Coast Subregional Command ambushed operating soldiers of the 66th IB in Brgy. Sobrecary, Caraga, Davao Oriental. Confiscated was an M4 assault rifle, one Harris radio and military backpacks. Five soldiers were killed. A day prior to this, the 66th IB conducted aerial bombings which damaged farms and livelihoods of the Mandaya and peasants in the area.

Meanwhile, last March 23, at around 9:25 a.m., Red fighters ambushed 60th IB troopers in Brgy. Cayaga, San Fernando, Bukidnon. Two were killed and another two were wounded on the enemy side. At 1 p.m. that afternoon, the NPA-ComVal-North Davao-South Agusan Subregional Command foiled an attack by the 75th IB in Laak, Compostela Valley. One CAFGU element was killed in the firefight.

The 4th Pulang Bagani Company of the NPA-SMR also launched three military actions against the 72nd IB/CAA and the 60th IB last March 23 and April 4. On March 23 at Km. 26 LS Sarmiento, Brgy. Kidawa, Laak, Compostela Valley, two simultaneous harassment opera-

tions were staged by the 4th PBC against the 72nd IB/CAA. Two were killed and one was wounded in these military actions. Meanwhile, the 4th PBC ambushed last April 4 the 60th IB in the same village. One soldier was killed and an M16 rifle was confiscated.

According to the NPA-SMR, this action serves as punishment for the said enemy unit's killings of three farmers in Laak, shooting of another, and intense military operations that brought fear to 1,397 families and resulted in the dislocation of 113 families. Last November 2016, despite the ongoing reciprocal ceasefires between the NDFP and GRP, the enemy constructed a camp in LS Sarmiento even with the strong refusal of the residents.

Meanwhile, a harassment operation was launched by the Red fighters from Front 20 against the 67th IB/CAA last March 29, 5 a.m. in Brgy. Nabunga, Boston, Davao Oriental.

Bicol. The NPA-Camarines Norte (Armando Catapia Command or ACC) ambushed troops of the 9th ID aboard a military truck along the hi-way in Brgy. Bagong Silang Dos, Labo last March 20. One soldier was killed and four were wounded in the offensive staged at around 10 p.m.

Before this, at around noon last March 18, a unit of the NPA-ACC fired on a platoon from the 9th ID in Sitio Hanlab, Brgy. Magsaysay, Capalonga.

In Camarines Sur, the NPA-Partido Area (Tomas Pilipil Command or TPC) launched a disarming operation against the Garduce family in Brgy. Bucogan, Lagonoy last March 28. Confiscated was one M-16 rifle and 18 magazines. According to Ka Baldomero Arcanghel of the NPA-TPC, the Garduce couple is active in the recruitment for military assets against the revolutionary movement. AB

#AFPFakeNews: Fabricated news by the AFP

FAKE NEWS BY the AFP swarmed the mass media these recent weeks with the aim to damage the reputation of the NPA and cover up for their defeats in battles and fascist crimes.

Last March 29, the Civil Military Operations (CMO) of the 8th IB spread outright lies regarding the fire that hit Concepcion National High School in Valencia, Bukidnon. First Lieutenant Erwin Bugarin, CMO officer of the 8th IB, circulated the news that it was the NPA who set the school on fire purportedly because of the school teachers' refusal to hand in their funds intended for the school's feeding program. The Department of National Defense' radio station DWDD, in its Facebook account, also posted the fake news. Mainstream news outfits likewise carried this news on their websites.

This fabrication of fake news by the 8th IB earned heavy criticism after personnel of the local government and teachers of the high school gave their statements. According to the Bureau of Fire Protection of Valencia City, the fire was an accident caused by faulty wiring. Even the residents and the barangay captain of Brgy. Concepcion, and the city mayor declared that the NPA had nothing to do with the fire. Teachers also belied the 8th IB's fake news and said that they do not have a feeding program because their students are all in high school and not elementary.

Despite these evidences, the

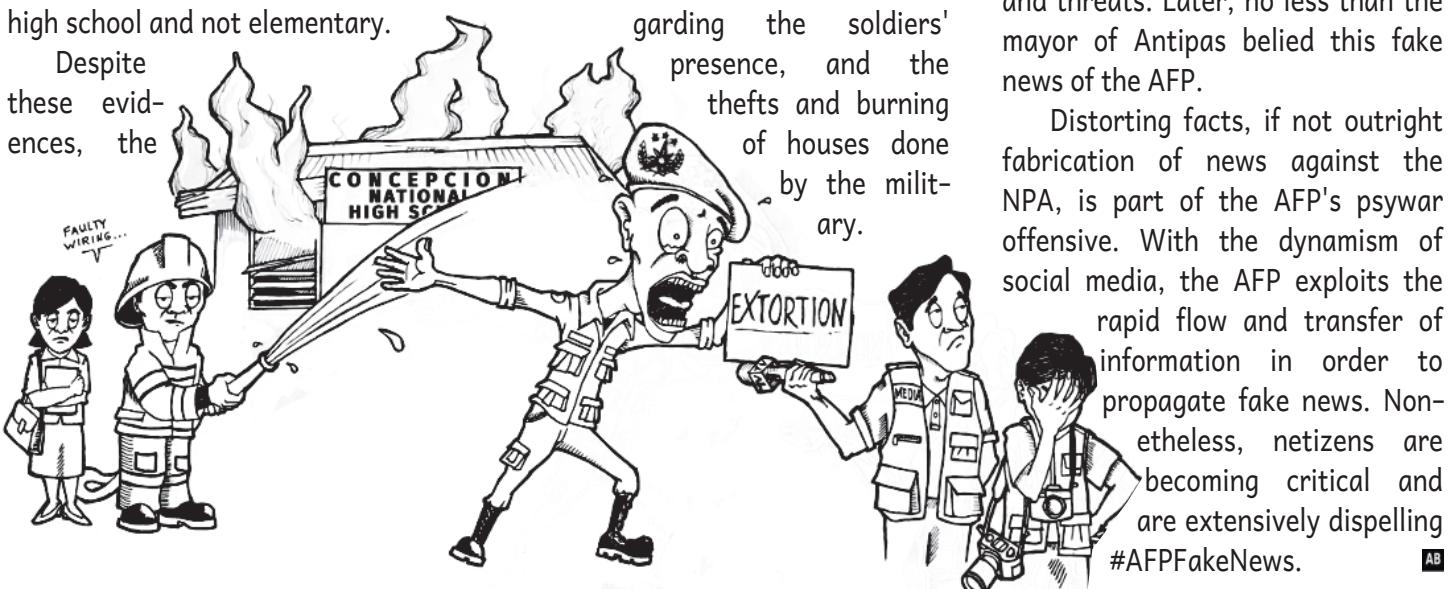
leadership of the 8th IB stood firm with their false news.

Meanwhile, on March 30, the 9th ID also circulated false news regarding an alleged killing of an NPA member in Sitio Traktora, Brgy. Bagong Silang, Sipocot, Camarines Sur.

According to the Norben Gruta Command, there was no encounter between the NPA and the 9th ID. Soldiers aboard two vans arrived at the area at around 3 p.m., and indiscriminately opened fire at civilians in a waiting shed. Killed in the shooting was Renel Mirabelles, while two teenagers, Joseph Sagario and Regie Loprandado, were wounded. Another civilian identified as Erick Estadillo was arrested and presented as a member of the NPA.

Also, residents of Brgy. Bololo in Guinobatan, Albay belied reports by the 83rd IB regarding their alleged consecutive encounters with the NPA last March 30. In an interview by a local radio station, the residents disclosed that the supposed encounters were just soldiers indiscriminately firing their weapons. Residents were likewise being forced to admit to being NPA members. Also, Brgy. Bololo's residents narrated their anxieties re-

garding the soldiers' presence, and the thefts and burning of houses done by the military.



It will be recalled that the 9th ID also circulated fake news regarding a supposed encounter last March 15 in Brgy. Itok, Capalonga, Camarines Norte where they shot and killed a civilian, and not a Red fighter.

In Southern Tagalog, after suffering casualties from the NPA-Sierra Madre's counter-offensive last March 30, military officers of the 80th IB, 2nd ID and even AFP spokesperson Maj. Gen. Restituto Padilla spread fake news. They had the media believe that supposedly ten were killed on the side of the NPA-Sierra Madre, contrary to the statement of the NPA in the area (*Read related news*).

Also last March 30 in Tagbinonga, Mati City, Davao Oriental, soldiers of the 28th and 66th IB killed farmer Jeffry Santos when they came across him on his way to the town center to sell copra. As with the many cases of peasant killings, the AFP automatically presented Santos in their media statements as an NPA killed in an encounter.

Likewise, the organized evacuation of residents in some barangays of Antipas, North Cotabato last March 23 because of the 39th IB's operations was portrayed by the AFP as supposedly a result of the NPA's hostage-taking, looting and threats. Later, no less than the mayor of Antipas belied this fake news of the AFP.

Distorting facts, if not outright fabrication of news against the NPA, is part of the AFP's psywar offensive. With the dynamism of social media, the AFP exploits the rapid flow and transfer of information in order to propagate fake news. Nonetheless, netizens are becoming critical and are extensively dispelling #AFPFakeNews.

NDF-SMR: Arrest and try Aquino, others over Kidapawan Massacre

On the commemoration of the bloody dispersal of Lumad and farmers in what is now notoriously remembered as the Kidapawan Massacre, the National Democratic Front in Southern Mindanao released the Indictment for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law against former GRP Pres. Benigno Aquino III, North Cotabato Gov. Emmylou Taliño-Mendoza, Kidapawan City Mayor Joseph Evangelista, North Cotabato Representative Nancy Catamco, several other GRP civilian personalities and military and police officials."

Thus averred Rubi del Mundo, spokesperson of NDF in Southern Mindanao, in a statement released on April 1, a year after the violent shooting by armed reactionary forces of protesting Lumad and farmers who were reeling from the effects of severe drought in Kidapawan City. The shooting resulted in the deaths of two civilians, the serious wounding 34 others, including 22 people who sustained gunshot wounds and the unjust arrest and detention of 79 people, nine of whom were elderly and five were pregnant.

The Indictment, which was released on December 26, 2016 but only made public this year, also prescribed the arrest of the named re-

spondents and, after due trial by a People's Court, "be meted out with appropriate penalties."

It declared that there is compelling evidence against the respondents for their "gross neglect and apathy and willful acts and/or omission" which resulted in the bloody dispersal of the protesting farmers. It also found evidence that the dispersal and the succeeding arrest and detention of the civilians constituted gross violations of a number of international tenets and covenants, including the CARHRIHL and the Geneva Conventions.

Following the release of the Indictment, del Mundo also slammed the statements made by several re-

actionary politicians who dismissed the revolutionary government's justice system and gave their support to the respondents. "These reactionary officials, especially Pres. Duterte's mouthpiece in Malacañang, only showcased their contempt for the victims of the massacre by openly guaranteeing the protection of Aquino and the other similarly guilty respondents," she said.

She added, "They comfortably forget that the on-going peace negotiations is proof of the authority of the People's Democratic Government.

Meanwhile in North Cotabato, the masses welcomed the Indictment's order to arrest and try Aquino III and all the others in the People's Court. Upon hearing of the Indictment, one rice trader said that they "support the NDFP's statement. Justice should be served for the victims of the massacre."

A farmer who was present during the violent dispersal said that "the fascist perpetrators should be persecuted. They committed countless crimes and they will continue to do so unless they are arrested and tried by the revolutionary court." AB

At the onset of the fourth round of NDFP-GRP talks

Relentless fascist attacks of the state

Relentless fascist attacks by armed state elements against civilians continue. In the past two months, state agents killed one peasant, who is then labelled an NPA members or supporter, every two days. This was stated by peasant groups in a press conference launching the #StopKillingFarmers national campaign last March 29. Since the Duterte regime declared all-out war against the revolutionary forces on February 3, at least 24 peasants and members of the national minorities have been killed by state agents.

Criminal bombing and AFP militarization of civilian communities, illegal arrests, harassments and other rights violations also persist.

Extrajudicial killings

Last April 2, agents from the 46th IB killed Danilo Nadal, a peasant from Pantukan. Nadal is a member of Hugpong sa mga Mag-uuma sa Pantukan, Compostela Valley, an

organization which has fought for peasants' right to land. He was shot ten times.

On March 27, three peasants were consecutively killed by elements of the 60th IB in Laak, Compostela Valley. At around 3 p.m., Cora Molave Lina, 45, was shot four times inside her house in Barangay Kibagui. By 7 p.m., intelligence agents shot couple Arman and Arlyn

Almonicar in Purok 2, Brgy. Bollucan. All three were members of the Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Laak (Namulak or United Peasants of Laak). The Almonicar couple were known for their firm support for the peasant struggles in the area.

On March 23, elements from the 46th IB killed Pedro Pandagay, 48, inside his house in Purok Biaw, Brgy. Anitapan, Mabini, Compostela Valley. An official of the Golden Valley Banana Planters Association in Mabini, Pandagay was active in peasant struggles in their community.

Jeffrey Santos died on March 31 after he was shot in the stomach by

elements of the 28th IB in Brgy. Tagbinonga, Mati City.

Bombings of civilian communities

On March 30, the 203rd IBde bombed the area around sitios Karumata and Kalungbuyan in Brgy. Benli in Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro, after they suffered grave setbacks in an NPA attack which resulted in 15 casualties on their side. (*Read related article on page 7.*) The following day, soldiers encircled three sitios of Brgy. Benli, terrorizing the residents. Soldiers imposed a food blockade and transportation of basic needs was prohibited. Human rights groups failed to enter the area due to intense militarization.

On March 22, at 11 a.m., AFP planes dropped six bombs in Brgy. Olave, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. This was after elements of the 23rd IB clashed with an NPA unit in Sitio Malambago, Brgy. Sangay in the same town. A bomb exploded near a school where classes were being held, residents said. Deafened by the explosion, some children fainted and the others were petrified.

After the bombings, more than 60 troopers belonging to the 23rd IB arrived in Olave and arrested two civilians. Roland Abandola, 26, and Max Lagumbay, 30, were chanced upon by the troopers while they were walking in Upper Olave. They were illegally arrested and accused as NPA members.

In Southern Mindanao, bombings and AFP occupation of civilian communities continue, resulting in mass evacuations of its residents.

On March 30, more than 170 families in Brgy. Don Salvador, Tagbinonga and Calatagan in Mati City evacuated after the 28th IB bombed their communities. The soldiers occupied communities after an encounter with Red fighters near the area.

On March 26, residents also

evacuated from Purok 6, Brgy. Dala-guit, Montevista, Compostela Valley.

Evacuations due to militarization

Around 1,000 residents from five barangays in Calbiga (Literon, Hubasan, Burong, Canbagtic and San Mauricio) evacuated from their communities on April 4 after troopers from the 87th IB occupied their communities. The soldiers encamped in the middle of the village, in barangay and social halls, the residents said. They pressure the barrio folk and force them to act as guides in their operations. The soldiers stayed in the area after a clash with the NPA in a nearby area.

On March 30, 36 Higaonon families evacuated from Sitio Camansi, Banglay, Lagonlong, Misamis Oriental after soldiers from 58th IB occupied their community. Early morning of March 29, 100 soldiers arrived in their community and distributed leaflets urging the residents to "surrender" as NPA members. The soldiers threatened to stay if the Lumads do not comply.

In Isabela, human rights groups reported the occupation of the 86th IB of Brgy. Aringay, San Guillermo on March 28. The soldiers kept them away from their farms and some of them even pointed guns at the peasants. The soldiers pretended to be Red fighters but the residents were not fooled. They immediately demanded that the soldiers leave their community.

On March 21, the 2nd Marine Company of the Marine Battalion Landing Team-8 occupied Brgy. Hinalaan and two nearby barrios in Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat after they suffered deadly blows from an NPA tactical offensive the previous day. (*Read related article in page 8.*) Soldiers hamleted the area and terrorized the people by indiscriminately firing their guns. They destroyed a house so that their helicopter could land. On March 22,

they detained Pastor Godofredo Gantangan of the Dulangan Manobo Evangelical Church and interrogated him for seven hours. The soldiers forced him to declare himself an NPA member by threatening his life. On the same day, soldiers occupied a school run by the Mindanao Inter-faith Services Foundation Inc. in Sitio Tinagdanan, Brgy. Hinalaan and questioned its teachers and students. A few days later, residents evacuated the area to seek sanctuary and support from human rights groups and government agencies. More than half of the evacuees are children. The occupying soldiers also act as guards of the DM Consunji Inc. which has expansive mining operations in the area. They are supported by the company's private guards.

Arrests and intimidation

Arrests, physical abuse and threats against accused NPA supporters and members continue. Harassments of legal democratic activists also persist.

On the eve of March 21, composite forces of the 56th IB, police and intelligence agents arrested Rommel Tucay, 38, in Sitio Compra, Brgy. General Luna in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija. Tucay is an organizer of the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon assigned in Carranglan. He was assaulted and tortured before he was taken to the police station where he was interrogated.

In Bicol, members of the regional College Editors Guild of the Philippines complained about the continuing harassment and surveillance of its members from Ateneo de Naga University and Baao Community College, both in Camarines Sur. On March 17, police went to the house of Jan Joseph Goingo, CEGP vice-president for Luzon, and harassed his family. Police also visited student publication offices to intimidate its editors. AB

From the regions

Protest actions for rights, welfare and peace

LAST WEEK, PEASANTS, workers and students launched successive protest actions to assert their rights, present their issues on the ongoing NDFP-GRP peace talks and to demand that Duterte account for his unfulfilled promises.

In Catbalogan City in Western Samar, 5,000 people rallied in support of the NDF-GRP peace talks on April 4. Among the participants were survivors of Typhoon Ruby who filed a corruption case against the mayor of Catbalogan who borrowed funds ostensibly for relief and rehabilitation of victims. Despite this, the disaster victims remain in temporary shelters. Farmers from Bassey, Calbiga and Pinabacdao who are victims of militarization by the 87th IB joined the rally. Also present at the rally were relatives and village-mates of victims of political killings by the San Jorge and Calbayog City mayors' goons, and victims of the Duterte regime's anti-poor "war on drugs."

In Nueva Ecija, more than 3,700 farm workers belonging to the Liga ng Mangagagawang Bukid, together with the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Central Luzon-Nueva Ecija held protest in front of the Guimba municipal hall on March 27. Carrying streamers and empty sacks with the slogans "Fight for genuine land reform!" and "Distribute the promised Rice Subsidy now!"

The protesters wanted steps to release the necessary assistance and subsidy for the hunger they are presently facing. Among their demands were decent jobs, especially at the time that many landlords are using mechanized harvesters.

In Metro Manila, workers belonging to the Samahang Manggagawa sa Harbour Center held another picket in front of the DOLE-NCR office on April 1 to push for the speedy resolution of their case. They filed a complaint in relation to the refusal of their employer, the Grasials Corporation, to regularize them and asserted their rights and wel-

fare. The DOLE should have decided on the case last March 31 but postponed it to April 22.

In Southern Tagalog, simultaneous protests were launched by the Karapatan-Southern Tagalog and other organizations in Laguna (Calamba and UP-Los Baños), Cavite (Bacoor) and Rizal (Antipolo City, Rodriguez), Batangas City and Lucena City last March 21. They condemned the successive AFP attacks against civilians and the bombing of forests near communities resulting in forced evacuations of peasants. The rallyists supported the reopening of the GRP and NDF peace talks and pushed for the implementation of CARHRIHL.

On March 22, the PAMANTIK-KMU protested in front of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) office in Manila to call for the junking of D.O. 174. They condemned the DOLE for continuing contractualization and for not resolving workers' problems like low wages, no benefits, inhumane working conditions, and unfair labor practices.

In Baguio City, youth and students of the Anakbayan-Saint Louis University held a rally last March 23 to protest unbridled tuition fee increases. They raised the calls, "Enough, tuition fee increases are too much! Junk the Carry-Over Scheme!" These calls were made against the yearly increases in tuition and other fees under the "carry-over scheme" or CHED Memorandum Order No. 13 Series of 2-12 and bias towards the market-oriented K-12 program. The "carry-over scheme" is a CHED measure that allows private schools to arbitrarily increase tuition fees yearly. AB

Police illegally arrests 57 poor residents in QC

FIFTY-SEVEN (57) Kadamay members were illegally arrested last April 4 after they occupied a vacant lot in Apollo, Tandang Sora in Quezon City, eight of whom are seniors and 16 are minors. Forty-one (41) of them were charged with trespassing and coercion. Bail was set at P14,000 each.

The arrested individuals previously lived in the said lot before their houses were demolished during the early part of 2016. The local government arbitrarily declared the area as a fire hazard to justify the demolition, the residents said. No relocation was offered, except for an unnamed area in Cagayan Valley. The homeless families lived on the street near Apollo for nine months. They decided to re-enter the vacant lot after the Metro Manila Development Authority threatened to sweep them off the streets. They have lived in Apollo for decades.

Since Duterte came into power, more than 4,000 families in Metro Manila have had their houses demolished, adding to the 1.4 million residents who have lost their homes under the US-Aquino regime.

Tagum farmers hold protest in Manila

MORE THAN 70 members of Madaum Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Association, Inc. (MARBAI) trooped to Manila last March 28 to condemn land grabbing and continuing harassment by Lapanday Foods Corp. in Tagum City. Their caravan is also part of the annual National Peasant Campout for Free Land Distribution (Pambansang Kampuhan ng mga Magsasaka para sa Libreng Pamamahagi ng Lupa) which began March 30 and culminated last April 1. Farmworkers and agrarian reform beneficiaries from North Cotabato, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija also joined the campout.

MARBAI farmworkers arrived in Baclaran Church, Parañaque City last March 29. Religious sectors and church workers expressed support in their campaign for land and life.

On March 30, the group led a picket protest in front of Lapanday Foods Corp.'s main office in Chino Roces, Makati City. Officials of the said company did not come out to meet the protesting farmers.

During the picket, farmers lamented the trumped up charges filed by Lapanday against the members of MARBAI and demanded the cancellation of the Agribusiness Ventures Agreement which allows Lapanday to take over the lands intended for the

ARB members.

MARBAI farmers then set up their protest camp at the head office of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City, to press their demand for intervention in the distribution of CARP lands.

During the consultation last March 31, DAR officials agreed to proceed with and lead the land distribution at the earliest time possible.

Certificates of Land Ownership Award have been distributed to MARBAI farmers since December 19, 2016 but Lapanday ignored these. After 12 days, Lapanday guards harassed and assaulted the beneficiaries in a camp they set up in their own land.

ComVal banana workers go on strike

WORKERS FROM the Shin Sun Tropical Fruit Co. in Brgy. San Miguel, Compostela, Compostela Valley went on strike last April 6 after the company imposed mass lay-offs. Up to 53 workers were fired on March 16, all of whom are members of the Shin Sun Workers Union-National Federation of Labor Unions-Kilusang Mayo Uno. This was an attempt to dismantle the union, which has been fighting for the regularization of contractual workers.

Workers who have been fired have been working in the company for seven months. They were employed by labor agency ECQ Serve Human Resources, which the DOLE has found engaging in labor-only contracting (LOC). LOC is supposedly firmly prohibited by reactionary laws, and even in the newly-issued Department Order 174.

Instead of regularizing the fired workers, the company employed new workers from Human Pros Manpower Agency.