

NPA-Panay seizes 11 M16s

A UNIT of the New People's Army (NPA)-Southern Panay (Napoleon Tumagtang Command) successfully overran the municipal police station of Maasin, Iloilo, at 10:30 am on June 18. After a 20-minute operation where no shots were fired, the NPA seized 11 M16 rifles, four pistols, ammunition and VHF radios. The Red fighters safely withdrew after taking the firearms. Before retreating, they distributed leaflets explaining the purpose of the raid.

According to Ka Julio Montana, spokesperson of NPA-Panay (Coronacion Chiva "Waling-Waling" Command), the detachment was disarmed because its policemen have long been extorting money from small peddlers in the town center. They also tolerate the proliferation of illegal drugs and gambling.

The next day, panicky operating troops of the 61st IB and Alsa Masa fired at each other in Lampaya, Leon, Iloilo. Romeo Cabalong, a member of Alsa Masa and *barangay tanod* in the place, was wounded in the mis-encounter.

In Compostela Valley, Red fighters ambushed a 71st IB unit in New Barili, Maco. Two soldiers were killed and four were wounded. This was the same military force that attacked an NPA unit a few hours before.

A unit of the Apolonio Mendoza Command successfully launched an ambush in Barangay Pala-Ajos, Catanauan, Quezon on

"11 M16s...", continued on page 3



EDITORIAL

Heed the cries of Marawi and Mindanao

As the AFP siege and occupation of Marawi and the imposition of martial law in the entire Mindanao drag on, the fog of disinformation and deception grows thicker. Military officials, Duterte and his spokesmen and instigators, daily weave tall tales to bury the truth.

They manufacture all sorts of stories about Marawi and control the flow of information. Gun in hand, the AFP issues threats against anyone who will release information, through the trimedia or the internet, that they deem damaging to their image or helpful to forces they call enemies or rebels.

It is the task of the revolutionary movement to unearth and reveal the truth about the siege and destruction of Marawi as well as about the imposition of Mindanao martial law which the Duterte regime, the AFP and the US seek to bury.

The war which Duterte and the AFP brought to Marawi City is styled

as a war against the so-called Maute Group. Duterte himself claims that the Mautes are involved in drugs, are terrorists or "ISIS."

In fact, the war was ignited after the AFP soldiers raided the city of Marawi on May 23. They were part of an operation believed to be run by the US military to capture "foreign terrorist" Abu Sayyaf-leader Isnilon Hapilon and pocket the \$5 million reward money. Like the 2015 botched Mamasapano operation, the deluge of soldiers in Marawi City was met with resistance by various armed Moro groups, including the Mautes, a prominent family from Butig, Lanao del Sur.

Almost a month has passed since the AFP besieged Marawi, yet it has failed to crush what it calls a "small terrorist group." In war, a "small" group cannot persist in continuous battle if it has no broad support among other armed groups, leaders and people in the area.

For some time now, armed groups have been converging in Marawi, center of Moro culture and commerce. These are among the emerging Moro groups who wish to pursue the Bangsamoro armed revolution. Some armed groups, like the Mautes, once belonged to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), an organization whose leaders have declared they will no longer wage war.

Some of these groups are furious at the US military and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which they denounce for meddling in local politics. The GRP-AFP-US stoke armed rivalries among clans to divide the Moros and weaken their resistance. US military presence has been building up since 2003 when the US declared the Bangsamoro

area as the "second front in the war against terror."

Taking up arms is the Moro people's response to their continuing national oppression under the GRP. The Moro people continue to be subjected to the GRP's duplicity, oppression, violence, rape, punishment and dispossession through its men in the AFP.

Many of these groups are dismayed at the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) crafted by the GRP and MILF and some groups in the MNLF. Among the key issues confronting the Moro people is the question of Bangsamoro resources. Hundreds of hectares of land are being coveted by foreign big capitalists and their local partners to turn into plantations.

The Duterte regime is pushing for BBL amendments to attract the Moros to surrender their arms and subsume themselves to the GRP, AFP and the US military. A bloody war, like the destruction of Marawi, is what Duterte promises to those who would not agree to his plan.

The various armed Moro groups

emerging are brought together in various ways by Islam and the Shari'a Law (like the MILF before). Some of their leaders look up to the ISIS (in the Middle East), a group supported and funded by the US to overthrow the elected Assad government in Syria. But for the armed Moro groups, the basic issue behind their taking up of arms is the struggle against oppression and for self-determination.

Like the imperialists, the Duterte regime is fanning "black scare" or Islamophobia (fear of Islam) to justify the oppression of the Moros and obscure their socio-political issues. Duterte labels the present Moro armed resistance as "extremism" even when they have long waged armed struggle for their welfare and rights.

Even without solid basis (except for flying the black flag which is the universal symbol of Islam), he claims the armed fighters are under the ISIS. Muslims are automatically suspected of "terrorism." Moro communities in Davao City and in Manila are subjected to surveillance. Muslims in Marawi are subjected to AFP stringent restrictions.

Not even Duterte can deny that the prolonged resistance in Marawi indicates the unity of the Moro people and the armed groups. This is being buried by supposed reports of armed attacks against civilians. Such attacks should be denounced, if true. To gain the people's support, one must avoid harming civilians and train weapons only against the armed enemies.

Duterte insists that because of "extremism," a communal war among clans is inevitable. On the contrary, the war ignited by Duterte in Marawi will only bring about greater unity among the Moro people and will push them to open another chapter in the armed struggle for their right to self-determination.

MARTIAL LAW TRAMPLES on the rights of millions of people. Cases of

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police and military abuses are on the rise. The people are fed up with restrictions against their freedoms and denial of their rights. Under martial law, the AFP's all-out war against the people has worsened.

The Party strongly denounces the Duterte regime for the US and AFP's relentless bombing and destruction of Marawi. People's homes have been plundered and destroyed. The AFP insists only 26 civilians have been killed, despite reports stating that at least one thousand bodies have been brought to funeral homes.

The Duterte-AFP-US siege of Marawi has resulted in a grave humanitarian crisis. More than three hundred thousand from the city and neighboring towns have been forced to evacuate and currently are without homes or livelihood.

Duterte has virtually unleashed a genocide against the Maranaos and Moros of Marawi. With Mindanao martial law powers, Duterte has fed Marawi to his wild beasts in the AFP hoping to tame the military. The banner of the "war against terror" which Duterte raised is now being used by

the US to expand its presence and intervention in the Philippines.

Duterte has declared his plan to impose martial law across the country. The Party and entire revolutionary movement will oppose this rigorously.

The broad masses in Marawi demand justice for all the lives killed by the bombs and cannons and for all their stolen possessions. The Filipino and Moro people must make the Duterte regime account for all the destruction dealt in Marawi.

Everything must be done to help the people of Marawi during their evacuation and in their struggle to return to their city; unite and join their struggle to be justly recompensed for all the damages resulting from the siege of their city.

The Party calls on the entire Filipino and Moro people: Heed the cries of Marawi and Mindanao. End the AFP's siege and occupation of Marawi! End martial law in Mindanao! Pull out AFP and American troops from Marawi! Make Duterte, the US and AFP pay for all their crimes against the Moro people! AB

Peace talks to continue in August or September

THE FAILED fifth round of peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) will resume in August or September, according to the NDFP peace panel. This came after Sec. Silvestre Bello III's positive response to the NDFP's previous offer for the New People's Army (NPA) in Mindanao to refrain from offensive actions as a measure of goodwill to salvage the talks.

The NDFP offered the said measure after the GRP withdrew from the fifth round in the series of talks on June 2. The New People's Army will implement the recommendation as soon as the conditions warrant this. Among these conditions are the immediate withdrawal of Duterte's "all-out war" which it has been carrying out against the revolutionary movement since February and the AFP's desistance from skirmishes with the NPA. Likewise, the NDFP clarified that no ceasefire exists at present, within and outside Mindanao.

This clarification was issued after the Department of National Defense, the regime's spokesperson and some senators criticized the NPA's raid on a police station in Iloilo and other NPA military actions.

The NPA and the whole revolutionary movement note the declarations of the DND that AFP operations to pursue the NPA will continue in spite of the GRP peace panel's declaration. AB

June 18, around 10:30 p.m. They used a command-detonated explosive to blast a 6x6 truck with at least 24 soldiers of the 85th IB. Military officials claimed two casualties but according to residents in the area, they saw 10 wounded and one dead.

The soldiers fired indiscriminately for more than 15 minutes even as the Red fighters had already withdrawn. Meanwhile, the 1st Pulang Bagani Battalion attacked troops of the 16th IB in Barangay Paradise Embac on June 11 where nine soldiers were killed and six were wounded.

On June 9, a unit of the 6th Pulang Bagani Company and Guerrilla Front 18 captured SPO2 George Canete Rupinta, Badge No. 080699, of Barangay Tagugpo, Lupon, Davao Oriental. Red fighters confiscated his

9 mm pistol issue. That same day, the NPA-North Central Mindanao Region (Western Agusan del Norte-Agusan del Sur Sub-Regional Command) ambushed troops of the 26th IB near the latter's patrol base in Barangay Comota, La Paz, Agusan Del Sur around 8 a.m. One soldier was killed. A newly issued R4 rifle was taken from him.

On June 7, a unit of the NPA-Jennifer Cariño Command punished the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company, a foreign mining company in Cabatuan, Barangay Colalo, Mangkayan, Benguet. They destroyed the company's blasting equipment and tailings dam which pollutes the water system in the area. The Red fighters also destroyed a barangay police outpost. AB

The Moro people and martial law

Almost one month has passed since GRP President Rodrigo Duterte imposed martial law in Mindanao but its direction and outcome is still unclear. Two of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) deadlines in their Marawi operations have lapsed, still they have failed to "clear" the city of armed men.

Duterte is now putting the blame on local politicians, as well as the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), for the ongoing battles between the AFP and armed groups entrenched in the city. He is unable to satisfactorily explain why instead of being defeated, armed resistance against the AFP is increasing.

Soon, the Moro people's anger will erupt over the regime's destruction of their city, the AFP soldiers' disrespect and the desecration of their culture and rights. Marawi residents have repeatedly demanded a stop to the endless bombardments and indiscriminate firing by soldiers as these cause the worsening hardship and destruction of livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Marawi residents as well as those in the neighboring towns.

This has created an extensive humanitarian crisis in the whole Lanao del Sur. Up to more than 309,000 residents have evacuated from their communities. There are reports of 59 civilian deaths in evacuation centers including three children, while almost 21,000 have fallen ill. Around 23,000 students have failed to enrol because their schools have been destroyed. More than 3,000 are still trapped inside Marawi and are experiencing extreme hunger. In the midst of battle, a young boy inside a mosque was killed by a stray bullet.

According to an investigation by the National Interfaith Humanitarian Mission last June 13-16, violations of the Moro

people's civil and democratic rights continue unabated. Mass arrests escalated. Men wearing black are suspected of being members of ISIS and are interrogated. Duterte's 'rape' joke has brought fear. Soldiers constantly threaten that they will rape the women or take the pretty ones as their wives. The AFP likewise encamp inside homes and mosques. They fire their weapons without discrimination. Three stray bullets hit the evacuation center in Bubong, Lanao del Sur, where 300 families are staying.

Last June 15, Maranao leaders belonging to the Sultanate Leaders of Lanao and the Imams League called on the Duterte administration to stop the bombardments and declare a ceasefire in order to save many more lives and properties. They demand that the president heed the call of the civilians.

According to them, the Moro people will surely have nothing to return to if the war in Marawi drags out. They criticized Duterte's apparent indifference to the plight of evacuees and instead blaming the victims as the culprits of the crisis.

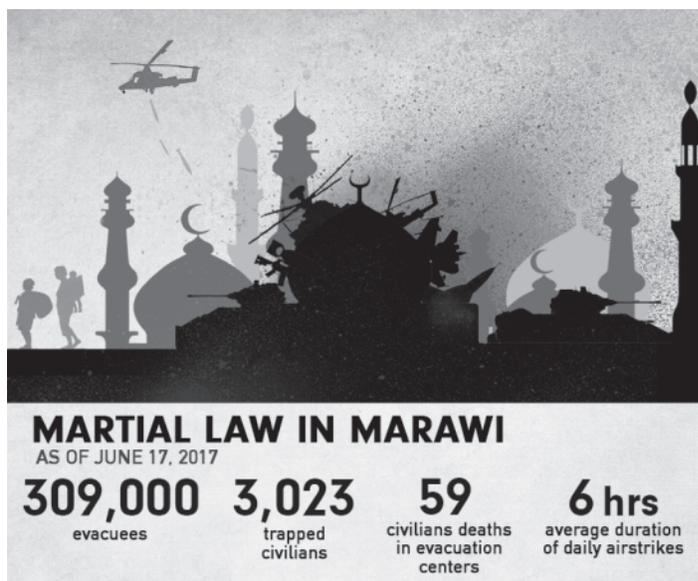
More so, the leaders asserted that apart from terrorism, the war in Marawi has other causes which

definitely could not be resolved by means of violence and martial law.

One aspect of the war in Marawi is *rido* or the conflict between clans disputing over politics or land. The Maute family is a powerful family who once ruled over the local politics in the town of Butig, Lanao del Sur. Impelled by its conflict with the Pansar family on issues of projects and land, the Mautes occupied Butig last December 2016. Subsequently, the Pansar family colluded with the AFP to suppress the Mautes. This prompted the AFP's bombardment of Butig's town center and farms, a matter infuriating not only the town's residents, but also those in the adjacent towns. From hereon, the Maute brothers were able to gather support, and build a stronger force to counter their political rivals.

Last June 9, representatives from Makabayan and leaders of progressive organizations filed a case with the Supreme Court to abolish the martial law in Mindanao. The group asserted that the declaration violates the constitution because the claim that a rebellion exists in the whole of Mindanao cannot be substantiated. There is likewise no evidence to claim that the public's security is endangered, and therefore the need to suspend the writ of habeas corpus is not necessary.

Using the "war against terror" pretext, the AFP crushed Marawi City without any regard to the damages this will bring to the lives and livelihood of the civilians. Bombs targeted homes of local politicians who are rivals of the AFP's favored officials. The AFP hunted down and arrested rivals of incumbent Marawi officials and tagged them as "Maute funders" and "drug lords." In Marawi City, Duterte is simultaneously waging his wars.



War against the Moro

The reactionary state has a long and bloody history of suppression primarily aimed to defeat the Moro people's struggle for secession and self-determination. A series of atrocious anti-Moro wars have been unleashed by fascist regimes from Marcos up to the present.

In 1970, the US-Marcos dictatorship made use of martial law in order to consolidate its rule over Mindanao. The dictatorship killed 200,000 Moros in a virtual genocidal war while hundreds of thousands of families were driven away from their communities. Three decades hence, the US-Estrada regime launched its total war against the Moro. In 2000, more than 50 battalions (more or less 70% of the AFP's total force) were deployed in a full offensive to lay siege to five provinces, including Maguindanao, where the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's main camp, Camp Abubakar was located. For their part, the Arroyo and Aquino regimes unleashed the "war on terror" and ordered the AFP to spread violence and ter-

ror on Moro communities.

Amidst these wars, the Moro people's unity strengthened in their demand for autonomy and self-determination. In 1972, the MNLF was formed. Thirteen Muslim tribes united to wage armed struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. From 1972-76, the MNLF carried on a fierce struggle which crushed 30% of the AFP's forces. These struggles greatly contributed objectively to the development of the national democratic revolution.

Because of the continuing compromise of the MNLF leadership with the regimes of Marcos (Tripoli Agreement of 1976) and Ramos (Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development of 1996 which led to the formation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao), other armed groups like the MILF took the initiative in leading the Moro people's armed struggle. The MILF's decision during the Arroyo regime to enter into a ceasefire, end its armed struggle and submit to an agreement for the Bangsamoro Basic Law which is governed by the authority of the

GRP, has brought about the emergence of various Moro armed groups which represent different interests and have various numbers and spheres of control. Events in the recent years prove that as long as the reactionary state denies the Bangsamoro's right to self-determination, the Moro people will build and wage their armed resistance.

Like the whole nation, the Moro people are not free. They are not free from oppression and exploitation by the imperialists and local ruling classes. While burdened by an exploitative economy, they further suffer national oppression and discrimination.

Through deceptive agreements, many of their leaders are constantly drawn to capitulation. Local Moro ruling classes are given minor concessions in order to effectively mislead and make passive the majority of the toiling Moro. Alongside this, foreign capitalists and local exploitative classes extensively arrogate and plunder the Moro people's resources and ancestral lands. AB

Under the Duterte regime's 'wars'

A year of destruction and killings

On its first year in office, the Duterte regime inflicted unprecedented destruction to the lives, livelihood and properties of the Filipino people.

Since coming into power, GRP Pres. Rodrigo Duterte seemed to have fulfilled his promise to 'kill' all his enemies. He persistently belittled 'human-human rights' and other processes and laws. In front of police and military personnel, he frequently promised 'I will take care of you' in defense of their crimes and violations.

The regime has relentlessly attacked the people's rights through wars using bombs and other heavy weapons, in tandem with extrajudicial killings. There have been 9,000 drug-related killings, more than a thousand killed due to bombings

and militarization and more than 300,000 forcibly evacuated due to military operations. Majority of the victims are national minorities, peasants, ordinary workers and the urban and rural poor.

Duterte wages his wars in partnership with the corrupt police, fascist military, paid propagandists and factotums in congress and senate. To justify these, he envelops the wars with a fog of disinformation which his propagandists and factotums systematically disseminate. Police and the military closely monitor information and those offering counter-data or opinions are

persecuted.

To win police and military support, he promises its officials and personnel the moon and the stars. He appointed no less than 27 high-ranking military and police officers to his cabinet and government. He persists in bribing them with higher salaries, new arms and added benefits, such as the P50-billion fund supposedly for military dependents. He offers unstinting sympathy to soldiers and police personnel killed in his wars while displaying indifference to lost civilian lives.

Duterte's wars

Duterte had yet to fully assume his presidential post when his "war against drugs" took off.

Under this, he and the PNP terrorized urban and rural poor communities. At the height of this one-sided war, around 30 people were killed daily in police operations, most of whom allegedly fought back. According to data from the PNP Double Barrel Secretariat, up to 3,002 have been killed by police from July 1, 2016 to May 23, 2017. This does not include the 5,000 plus killings still under investigation or killings perpetrated by death squads run by or made up of police personnel. Rival drug lords in police custody are blatantly killed, such as the case of Tony Co who was stabbed in a riot inside the Bilibid prison and Mayor Rolando Espinosa who was shot by the police inside a jail in Albueria, Leyte.

Duterte jailed Sen. Leila de Lima, his drug war's number one critic. He made public three lists naming politicians, judges and entrepreneurs he wanted cowed or persecuted. He insulted a UN official and kicked her out of the country when the latter attempted to investigate the killings. His political rivals filed a case of mass murder against him in the International Criminal Court last May.

Side by side with the “war against drugs,” the regime implemented the counter-revolutionary Oplan (operation plan) Kapayapaan, which Duterte used to balance out the peace negotiations he was con-

ducting with the NDFP and Moro groups. He intensified this Oplan when the AFP declared an all-out war against the New People's Army in February. This “war” worsened when he ordered the AFP to “flatten the hills” in response to resurgent NPA offensives.

Under Oplan Kapayapaan, up to 67 activists and members of progressive organizations were killed by state forces from July 2016 to June 2017. Most of them were Mindanao peasants.

Arrests of ordinary civilians and harassment of progressives are rampant. In Davao City alone, more than 300 were arbitrarily arrested when martial law was imposed.

Up to 39 political detainees, including 19 NDFP consultants, were freed for the peace negotiations. But up to 39 have also been illegally arrested on trumped-up criminal charges. They include four NDFP consultants and a bishop. They join more than 400 other political prisoners who are still detained in various jails despite the regime's obligation to free them all under the CARHRIHL.

Aside from CARHRIHL, the regime also violated its ceasefire agreement with the revolutionary movement. From August 2016 to February, the AFP took advantage of the NPA's ceasefire to forward deploy troops in 500 barrios and conduct combat and intelligence opera-

tions within. After the CPP and NPA terminated its unilateral ceasefire, the AFP intensified attacks against areas it considers as NPA territories. From March alone, no less than 27 bombing incidents by the AFP have been reported, mostly near or inside communities they consider as NPA bases. These have displaced 4,000 families and killed a civilian. This excludes AFP bombings in Moro civilian communities in Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat which “pro-Maute groups” supposedly occupied.

When Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao this May, the Department of National Defense stated the NPA's “extortion” activities as one of its reasons. Despite the DND and the GRP peace panel's withdrawal of this statement, military forces remained in NPA areas. From May 23, skirmishes between NPA and AFP units continued in different parts of Mindanao. These include encounters in the provinces of Davao, Surigao, Agusan, Cotabato and Bukidnon. The AFP is also active in arrests and fake surrenders of individuals presented as NPA members. Troop deployment did not change even when the AFP was supposedly focused in Marawi. In some areas, they even boosted their presence.

In Marawi, extensive and severe destruction caused by AFP operations is indisputable. The frequency and severity of the bombings apparently aim to leave no structure standing as the AFP destroys the city's infrastructures, including hospitals, schools, commercial buildings and houses. It has created a grave humanitarian crisis. (*Read related article.*)

The city's economy is in tatters. More than half (60% in 2012) of the population live under the poverty line. Majority of them are in small enterprises (small stores, hollow block factories, construction and others). ARMM workers earn the lowest minimum wages (P255-P265) in the entire country. Before the AFP ground the city to dust, inflation was already high (4.5% in



2015, compared to 2.7% in Davao City and 4.1% average for the whole country). Prices further soared after martial law was declared.

Towns dependent on Marawi for their livelihoods are affected. The city serves as the commercial and trade hub for the entire Lanao del Sur. According to estimates by bureaucrats, it will take years and P30 billion to rehabilitate the city.

Even as his martial rule is yet to be concluded, Duterte has already warned that he will declare a second martial law which will be a copy of the Marcos dictatorship

if the Supreme Court scraps his current declaration. The longer he stays in power, the clearer become his directions towards implementing more severe suppression campaigns. In the face of criticisms to his rule and his wars, he is more and more relying and toeing the line of the state's fascist pillar and its imperialist master.

Human Rights Violations*	
<small>(July 1, 2016 - June 20, 2017)</small>	
Political Killings	67
Illegal Arrests	875
Forced Evacuation	19345
Threat and Harrassment	27374
Indiscriminate firing and bombing	25740
<small>*Except for Marawi</small>	
DRUG WAR RELATED	
Extra-judicial Killings	
Killed in police operation (July 2016 - May 2017)	3,002
Under investigation (July 2016 - March 2017)	5,844

Pro-imperialist, anti-people foreign policy

There is no denying that Duterte has a background of criticizing the intervention and exploitation of the United States in the Philippines when he was still Davao City mayor. This is one of his differences with the past heads of the reactionary state.

However, these differences are more words than action. His declarations have not translated into concrete and significant changes during his first year in power. In fact, his adherence to US imposition is becoming starker by his slant towards the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the pillar of US domination in the country.

The Philippines remains a US neocolonial state despite Duterte's rhetoric of pursuing an independent foreign policy. All his threats of repealing unequal treaties between the US and the Philippines have turned out to be empty. He only touched upon US monopoly control over the Philippines to give space to other imperialists.

His strong words against the US were apparently meant to impress China and Russia, both anti-US, to persuade them to grant his desired loans, aid, and investment.

Last August, China declared support for the government's "anti-drug war" and provided funds for building rehabilitation centers in the country. This boosted his diatribes especially when the European Union

and US held back their loans because of criticism for his "anti-drug war."

During the ASEAN summit last September, he denounced the US' long history of intervention and exploitation of the Philippines, especially in Mindanao. He even declared severing economic and military ties with the US in his visit to China in October where he bagged a pledge of \$24 billion in loans.

Finance Secretary Dominguez applauded Duterte for raising the highest Official Development Assistance in history in the first year of his presidency. The government will be borrowing almost P1 trillion from Japan and China alone for the grand infrastructure projects that the bourgeois compradors are drooling over. This will mean more than P1 trillion additional debt for the masses to pay endlessly.

In a year of foreign relations, Duterte's declarations butter up to whoever he hopes can provide commitments of loans and aid. When American senators visited the country last July, Duterte emphasized that the Philippines is a known

ally of western powers so the interest of the county and its ally will hold priority in the territorial dispute in South China Sea. When he and DND Secretary Lorenzana met with US Secretary of the State John Kerry, he was able to pull off a \$32 million pledge for training and military services.

When he begged Japan, a US ally, for loans, he assured them that China and Philippines have no military alliance. He thus acquired \$8.7 billion in loans, including the purchase of ships and Philippine Coast Guard equipment.

In preparation for his Russian visit, he continued slurs against the US for its failed commitments. In talking with Putin, he stressed his need for soft-loans for new and modern weapons from Russia. He disparaged the US for selling second-hand weapons.

Despite his strong words, the best he could do in the name of an independent foreign policy was to prohibit the AFP from joining joint patrols with US naval forces in the South China Sea. The US continues to patrol Philippine seas. In October and January, the government accepted weapons from the US for the AFP. American soldiers maintain their presence in Mindanao

despite Duterte's declaration that "they should go home." He approved the expansion of military bases inside AFP military camps. He also allowed 257 joint military-exercises of AFP and US soldiers after declining these.

Amidst his innuendoes, he has given no formal notice to the US government regarding the rejection of American soldiers in the country. He has allowed meetings of high-ranking officials of the AFP and the US to continue. When the AFP announced the participation of US soldiers in Marawi, he used his ignorance as an excuse and expressed gratitude since they were involved already.

He authorized two US warships to dock in Cebu, near the shores of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, under the umbrella of "military-exercises" from June 19-25. The additional forces here are support for the supposedly few US soldiers in Marawi. Simultaneously, he invited the warships of China, Russia and Japan to dock on Philippine ports. He did not do anything against China's construction of military structures in the islands and reefs covered by Philippine sovereign rights in South China Sea. He has

practically allowed and encouraged the militarization of South China Sea.

For the past months, Duterte has been striving to sell the Philippines in the midst of the contradictions among the imperialist countries. He has further opened the already foreign investment-dependent Philippine economy to foreign debt, consequently making his government subject to foreign political meddling and military interference. He has spent millions for his almost monthly tours around the world. In one year, the reactionary government spent more than P386 million for travel expenses of his delegation and family. (His last four trips to Cambodia, Hong Kong, China and Russia are not yet included.) This is more than twice the combined expenses of the past two presidents in their first year in power.

Duterte's foreign policy pretends to be independent. Even as US imperialism remains dominant



and he continues to toe the line, he is auctioning off the country's wealth and natural resources to other imperialist countries such as Japan, China, and Russia to give him and his favored business partners the biggest benefits (in form of loans, aid, or investment). These powers will only use Philippine raw materials and cheap labor for their interests to dominate the emerging multi-polar world.

Genuine independent foreign policy is accompanied by development of a self-reliant economy. The people should continue to struggle for national sovereignty, peaceful coexistence, non-interference, and inter-relation with mutual benefits. AB

No let-up in human rights violations

While the country is almost dumbstruck in the seemingly unfathomable state violence in Marawi City, the state continues to violate human rights in other parts of the nation.

Bicol. Troops of the 31st IB killed Captain Bernardo Lerio, 52, village chief of Barangay Patag, Irosin, Sorsogon, on June 14 inside his home. The military have been targeting Lerio since the Red fighters punished the late commander of the 22nd IB's Mapaso Detachment in Brgy. Patag in 2012.

Around 7 p.m. on June 13, elements of the Military Intelligence Company (MICO 5) went berserk like monsters in an hour-long killing spree in three barangays of Gubat, Sorsogon. Onboard a motorcycle

and armed with M16 rifles, they shot dead Councilman Pedro Esperida of Barangay Bentuco and Alfredo Espedido III of Barangay Naagtan inside the victims' homes. After this, the troopers went to Barangay Bulacao to kill another resident whom they have long been harassing for allegedly being an NPA "drop post" or supporter, but they failed to see him. Civilians in the area recognized one of the gunmen because he was a resident of their area, Pfc. Jordan Enconado, a MICO 5 element involved in sev-

eral cases of killing since Oplan Bantay Laya 1.

On June 9, at 9 p.m., elements of the 31st IB shot and killed Vicente Gatón, a civilian and resident of Brgy. Balocawe, Matnog, Sorsogon. The killing occurred at Brgy. Camcamán, in front of the old municipal hall while he was waiting for passengers in his tricycle. The victim had previously received threats from the military for having a relative who was a member of the NPA.

On June 13, forces of the 2nd IB gathered 19 civilians in

Barangay Bacolod, Milagros, Masbate to display them as surrenderees. Photos of them were taken with military uniforms, combat boots, five M16 rifles and one calibre .45 pistol.

South and Far South Mindanao.

On June 17, more or less 185 B'laan families (1,000 individuals) from Barangay Colonsabac, Matanao, Digos, Davao del Sur fled from their communities for fear of the 16th IB's continued military operations. The military encamped in the center of the community and forbade the residents to go out of their houses without IDs. The residents are afraid to go to their fields lest they be accused of being NPA members.

On June 11, two civilians were wounded when troops of the 16th IB strafed their homes in Paradise Embac, Paquibato District, Davao City. One of the victims is still in critical condition as of this writing. The said battalion is notorious in Paquibato for mauling civilians, ransacking homes and other abuses.

In Davao del Norte, on June 20, the Alamara fired their guns inside the school compound of Salugpongan Ta' Tanu Igkanogon Community Learning Center, Inc. (STTICLCI) while the students were holding classes. Four Alamara members forcibly entered the school in Sitio Nasilaban, Barangay Palma Gil, Talaingod last June 12, led by Rudel Buntalog, and supported by the AFP. They interrogated Ramel Miguel, Alliance of Community Educators (ACE) president and teacher-in-charge for half an hour and accused him of being an NPA sympathizer. According to ACE reports, the Alamara and AFP are still in the community and continue terrorizing the Lumad.

Aside from the harassment, there are also reported cases of damage to property in Sitio Dulyan in the same village. Here the 60th IB controlled the water system and limited the use of the residents.

In a separate incident on June

5, in Sitio Butay, Barangay Palma Gil, the Alamara and 60th IB troops barred former STTICLCI student Arnold Dalin and Nasilaban PTCA Secretary Lorena Mandacawan who were on their way to help at the Brigada Eskwela of the said school. Prior to this, the paramilitary and the AFP warned the residents of Nasilaban and Talaingod not to participate in the Salugpongan's Brigada Eskwela. The Brigada Eskwela is a clean-up activity commonly done in all schools nationwide before classes start.

Southern Tagalog. On June 7, Sigma Security Agency guards armed with armalites and automatic shotguns terrorized the farmers to stop them from weeding and cleaning the fields in Kapdula Land. According to Belinda Mojica, woman leader of Samahang Magbubukid sa Kapdula, "the guards did not wear uniforms, they had no IDs and they covered their faces." The previous day, six guards tried to stop them from tilling the land. The 155-hectare land in Kapdula which the farmers started to till on May 30 was grabbed from them by the Enrile family's JAKA in collaboration with the South Cavite Land Corp. Inc. and Sta. Lucia Realty and Devt. Corp some 20 years ago through the deceptive Joint Venture Agreement.

Northern Luzon. On June 6, operatives of the 7th Civilian Military Operations Battalion of the 7th ID in Candon City, Ilocos Sur summoned the owner of the Children's Rehabilitation Center-Ilocos Program Office (CRC-IPO) and Ilocos Human Rights Alliance's (IHRA) rented office. The military investigated her regarding the IHRA staff and told her that the office was being used as an NPA safe house. Barangay officials on their nightly patrols have noticed unfamiliar motorcycle-driving men roaming around the office at night till the early hours of the morning

morning for the past several days. Men identifying themselves as AFP operatives have been visiting local officials of Brgy. San Isidro, Candon City since April to spy on the IHRA office. They were also told that the NPA is conducting large-scale NPA recruitment at the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College-Candon Campus. They were given a list of supposedly new NPA recruits, which included a member of Anakbayan Ilocos and the Solidarity of Peasants Against Exploitation. Another one on the list was Pidong Gabayan, a farmer of Salcedo, Ilocos who has been dead since 1987.

Likewise in Baguio City, two state agents have, since May, been tailing Rima Mangili-Libongen, indigenous leader of Kabanguetan Agkaykaysa nga Ilaban ken Aywanan ti Biag, Daga, ken Kinabaknang, or Benguet Unite to Defend and Nurture Life, Land, and Resources (Kaiabang) and the Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA)-Benguet Chapter. According to Kaiabang, this intends to scare Mangili-Libongen to make her discontinue with her activities. She is a member of the well-known music group Salidummay and Secretary General of Bileg ken Urnos dagiti Agtutubo nga Ybenguet (Buday, Strength and Unity of the Benguet Youth).

The men tailed her from her house in Itogon to Baguio City, and to the youth assembly she facilitated at Itogon in Bua, Tuding on May 30. On June 3, one of her stalkers grabbed her by the arm while she was at Shopper's Lane in Baguio City, and only released her when other shoppers took notice. After this, she continued receiving threatening text messages even after she changed her phone number.

Metro Manila. Relatives of political prisoner Ferdinand Castillo complained about the state's neglect of the conditions of prisoners in Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City. The

Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) ascribed the prison's already week-long loss of electric service to a fallen electrical post, but has not repaired this although other parts of the camp have already restored electricity.

There are 25 political detainees in the prison who are facing health problems due to the extreme heat within, aside from the cramped conditions of the prison. Ferdinand Castillo is suffering from heart disease. AB

Tribute to Bal Pinguel

THE NATIONAL Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) renders full honors to Baltazar "Bal" Pinguel, the firebrand of the First Quarter Storm!

Ka Bal served the people through the national democratic movement as best as he could, in hard struggle and self-sacrifice.

Hailing from a poor family in Samar, he became an activist while studying Political Science at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. He later joined Kabataang Makabayan (KM) and was its designated spokesperson because of his exceptional oratorical skills. He led demonstrators to the US Embassy or Malacañang where the demonstrators often ended up clashing with anti-riot policemen and Metrocom troopers.

When martial law was declared, he was one of hundreds of activists who went underground or joined the armed struggle in the countryside.

Ka Bal was first assigned to do guerrilla zone building in Southern Tagalog. He was later arrested, tortured and imprisoned at Camp Vicente Lim in Laguna. Shortly after, he took part in a daring escape and rejoined the revolutionary mainstream.

In 1974, he was assigned to Samar where he served as the political officer of one of the first NPA guerrilla units, and became a member of the first District Committee in the island. By the end of the 1970s, Samar had the distinction of leading the way in advancing the armed struggle against the US-Marcos dictatorship



nationwide.

Arrested again in 1980 in Cebu City, he was detained for five years at Camp Bagong Diwa before being released in 1985. Upon release, he helped found the Partido ng Bayan. In 1989, suspected military agents attempted to abduct him, so he sought political asylum in the US in 1992. There, he became involved in various justice and peace campaigns as program director at the American Friends Service Committee, and as one of the leaders of United for Peace and Justice, a broad US-based coalition against the American invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Ka Bal continued to serve the national democratic movement in various capacities. An adviser to BAYAN-USA, he last joined his fellow activists in a rally in front of the Philippine consulate in New York City to protest the dictator Marcos' burial at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

Ka Bal's untimely death cannot erase his legacy as a fiery agitator and propagandist who scorched the oppressors and exploiters and enlightened and enlivened the masses. Ka Bal passed away on June 10. AB

Groups push dismantle-hacienda movement

PEASANT ORGANIZATIONS and their supporters launched coordinated mass actions across the country on June 9-14 to call for the dismantling of haciendas.

Peasants in the towns of Toboso and Manapla in Negros Occidental staged simultaneous march-rallies on June 14 to expose the situation of sugar workers, especially with the approaching Tiempo Muerto or non-milling season in the hacienda. Led by the National Federation of Sugar Workers, Amihan and Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalalakaya), the protest actions also condemned the declaration of martial law in Mindanao.

Prior to this, the UMA launched a multisectoral caravan on June 9 from Manila to Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac to support the farmers' *bungkalan* in the area. The next day, they linked arms to form a human chain against militarization and to prevent the hacienda's guards from approaching the *bungkalan*.

Likewise, on June 9, the KMP carried out a march-rally in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur against martial law and land monopoly and called for agrarian reform.

That same day, 200 peasants led by the ECJ Farmers and Farmworkers Alliance in Negros (EFFWAN) started their campout in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) office in Bacolod City. They called for the cancellation of the 'corporative scheme' and 'joint venture agreements' with Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. These agreements with Cojuangco tied down 5,030 hectares in 11 haciendas which should have been distributed to the tenants.

In the morning of June 8,

peasants from towns near the Kapdula Land gathered in time for the DAR Cavite's and Region 4A's inspection of Kapdula Land. Farmers from E.M. Ramos Lands and Aguin-aldo Lands came to air their problems to the DAR.

On the other hand, fisherfolk from Navotas led by Pamalakaya held a protest action on June 7, World Environment Day. The fisher folk of the coastal community in Barangay Tangos, Navotas City opposed the ongoing construction of the Navotas Boulevard Business Park (NBBP), a 650-hectare reclamation project which will evict more than 20,000 fishers and urban settlers and destroy the marine life. The government has targeted more than 40,000 hectares of sea and lake shores for reclamation in the whole Philippines, 2/3 of which are in Manila Bay.

Groups oppose rice importation

DOZENS OF urban poor residents picketed the Senate grounds on June 14, in time for the hearing on rice subsidies. Led by Bantay Bigas, they slammed government policies regarding rice importation which according to them raises the opportunities for smuggling even as the high prices of rice remain out of the poor's reach. According to Zen Soriano, spokesperson of Bantay Bigas, rice importation is not the solution to reduce rice prices.

This even cuts into the income of rice farmers who are forced to sell their products at lower prices, while they receive no government assistance for their production expenses. "The government's liberalization of the rice trade and import policies, combined with government neglect of local rice production, are the causes for the increase in rice prices," said Inday Bagasbas of Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap.

On bogus independence day:

US imperialism, China, martial law denounced

THOUSANDS OF activists came out to the streets in a whole-day activity on June 12 to expose bogus independence. They condemned US imperialist rule over the Philippine economy, politics, military, culture and foreign relations. At the same time, they opposed the growing threat of Chinese intervention, especially in the country's economy and territory, and the present martial law in Mindanao.

Led by Bayan and P1nas, 5,000 rallyists marched to the Chinese Embassy in Makati City while shouting the slogans "China Layas, atin ang Pinas" (China Out, the Philippines is Ours), and "PH not for Sale, we are not for Sale." This is about China's continued intrusion into Philippine waters and the \$30 billion investment that Duterte is begging from them. From there, the rallyists held a caravan to Plaza Salamanca in Manila, and marched to the US Embassy where they had a scuffle with more than 1,000 policemen on barricades.

Hundreds of students and progressive organizations joined the interfaith prayer rally at the Andres Bonifacio Shrine in Manila. They called on the government to rescind the martial law declaration in Mindanao, continue with the peace talks, and promote human rights. Among the participants were victims of Marcos' martial law and Duterte's Oplan Tokhang. After the mass, they proceeded to Mendiola.

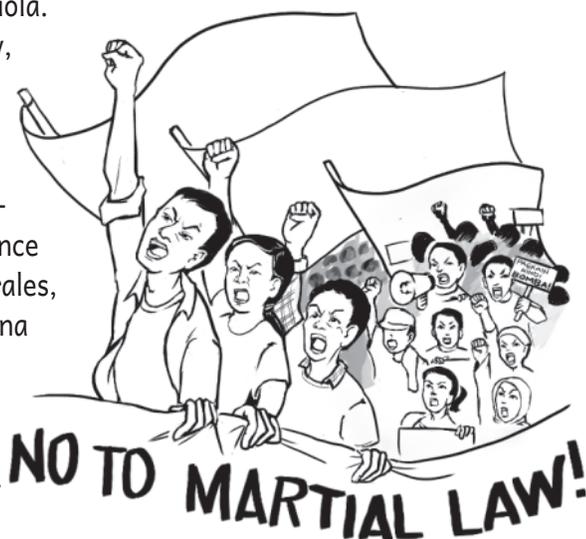
On the same day, 200 supporters attended the formal launching of the Free Bishop Carlo Morales Movement at the IFI Conference Center in Manila. Morales, bishop of Iglesia Filipina Independiente, was arrested in Ozamis City on May 11 and re-mains imprisoned for trumped-up charges of illegal

possession of firearms and explosives.

Students belonging to Anak-bayan and Kabataan Partylist in Albay held a picket for free education. Previously, on June 10, students belonging to the local chapter of the Union of Journalists of the Philippines in the University of the Philippines (UP)-Diliman, held a picket to condemn martial law.

In UP-Manila, the Health Alliance for Democracy and other doctors' and health workers' organizations led a picket at the campus gates against martial law in Mindanao and militarization in the whole country.

In Bicol, march-rallies against the bogus independence day were held in Sorsogon City, Sorsogon, attended by more than 800; more or less 740 in Legazpi City, Albay, and more or less 700 attended at Naga City, Camarines Sur. March rallies were also held by some 230 activists in Catanduanes and 400 in Camarines Norte. AB



Confrontations against contractualization on the rise

IN THE face of the Duterte regime's unfulfilled promises of ending contractualization, workers' actions against the scheme are increasing.



On the evening of June 14, contractual workers under Clarmil held their third "outlet-hopping" activity to shake up the capitalist into implementing the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) decision that they be regularized. Workers from the Ligang Manggagawa para in Regular na Hanapbuhay (Liga) set up placards in front of the Goldilocks outlet in Sta. Rosa. Clarmil is the owner of Goldilocks, which makes breads and other baked goods.

The same day, workers held a protest action in front of the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) office to oppose the petition of Manila Cordage Company and Manco Synthetic, Inc. (MCC-MSI) for a temporary restraining order and permanent injunction order (TRO-PIO). On June 8, workers and their supporters set up camp in

front of the NLRC during the first hearing. According to the workers, if the TRO-PIO is granted, scabs can get into the factory.

The strike by more than 500 contractual workers of MCC-MSI, factories producing ropes located in Carmelray Industrial Park I, Barangay Canlubang, Calamba City, Laguna has been going on since May 4, 2016. Workers have attended several of these NLRC hearings. The strikers are pushing for the regularization of their work. According to the DOLE's own investigation, they are legitimate employees of the said company, but the capitalist continuously denies this although the workers have been working for them for eight years. Students of the College Editor's Guild of the Philippines supported their struggle.

Contractual workers of the multinational Procter & Gamble (P&G) in Cabuyao, Laguna, staged a protest action at the DOLE Provincial Office in Laguna in June 13 for

the second mandatory conference between LABANKAMI-P&G-LIGA and illegal manpower agencies Topserve and ARM. The NLRC still has not reached a decision.

Workers from Metro Manila and Mindanao held a protest action in front of the DOLE office on June 7 to protest the harassment of Marbai workers and call for an end to martial law.

Meanwhile, DOLE recently released its list containing the names of 3,900 contractual workers of TAKATA who have been regularized. This victory of the workers was uncontested by TAKATA, a Japanese-owned maker of seats and belts for vehicles such as Toyota. A few days later, TAKATA's central office declared bankruptcy due to many suits filed by vehicular companies that they supplied with defective safety products such as airbags.

The DOLE also declared illegal the manpower agencies Career Express, Holistic Approach Systems, Idex Philippines, Maxim, Omniworx, OneSource, People's Concepts and Ideas, and Revier. AB