

Offensives in Bicol, Samar and SMR

FIVE NEW People's Army (NPA) tactical offensives inflicted 34 casualties in Bicol, Samar and Southern Mindanao.

On July 1, at one p.m., forces of Front 20 and Front 22 of the NPA-Southern Mindanao ambushed troops of the 25th IB at Sitio Upper Buay, Baylo, Monkayo, Compostela Valley. Seven soldiers were killed and two wounded. The NPA confiscated an R4 rifle, ammunition and several military-issue backpacks.

A platoon of the NPA-Northern Samar (Rodante Urtal Command) ambushed troops of the 20th IB between the barangays Polangi and Somoge in Catarman town, Northern Samar at 9 p.m. on June 20. The Red fighters blew up a command-detonated explosive and fired at soldiers aboard a vehicle. Two were killed and seven wounded.

Meanwhile, Red fighters confiscated a .45 cal. pistol at a checkpoint they set up near the ambush site.

On June 21, at 1 a.m., Red fighters of the NPA-Camarines Norte (Armando Catapia Command) attacked the 902nd Infantry Brigade patrol base in Barangay Dumagmang, Labo, Camarines Norte. In a battle that lasted for three hours and 40 minutes, one AFP trooper was killed and four wounded, while

"Offensives..." continue on 3



EDITORIAL

Firmly oppose the anti-national and anti-people policies of the Duterte regime!

Vigorous mass protests and large mass actions of workers, peasants, urban poor, indigenous people, Moro people and other democratic classes will confront GRP Pres. Rodrigo Duterte's second SONA (state of the nation address) on July 24.

The people's pent-up rage seethes against a pretentious regime that has turned its back on its promises and is clearly becoming anti-people, openly fascist, and subservient to the US. Unimproved living conditions and worsening repression:

this is the true state of the nation.

The revolutionary forces must give direction to the people's rage to assert the people's interest and put the Duterte regime to account. They must be united into a broad alliance of workers, peasants, indi-

genous people, Moro people and other sectors of society such as personalities and church people, academe, media personnel and other professionals, and patriotic businessmen.

Fight for the people’s basic rights and welfare. It is only right for the workers to demand an end to contractualization, the provision of stable jobs, wage increases, workplace safety, and the scrapping of the government’s labor export policy. Peasants must also assert their clamor for land to till and the urban poor for decent jobs and housing. The indigenous people must demand the recognition of the rights to their ancestral land and self-determination against Duterte’s projects that will displace them from their land. Respect for the Moro people’s right to self-determination must be pushed.

Duterte’s foreign-leaning neoliberal 10-point socio-economic pro-

gram has worsened US imperialist, landlord and bureaucrat capitalist dominance in Philippine society.

Whatever the people gained this past year were won through their own struggles and the support of progressives in and outside the Duterte government. Contractual workers became regular only through strikes or collective action and union struggles for collective bargaining. The urban poor gained homes through collective occupation of idle and rotting houses in Bulacan. Even the parcels of hacienda and plantation land had to be occupied by peasants through difficult struggles although these had already been accorded to them by law.

Condemn strongman rule and defend the people’s rights against repression. Call for the termination of Oplan Kapayapaan all-out war that wields fascist violence against the revolutionary movement and the people in the countryside.

Push for the lifting of martial law in Mindanao, ending the bombardment of Marawi and the brutal suppression of the Moro people’s struggle for self-determination. Demand justice from the government for the victims of AFP and PNP violence and compensation for the affected people and their property due to AFP bombing and violence in Marawi and other parts of Mindanao.

Condemn gross violations of human and civil rights and the GRP’s obstructions to peace talks with the NDFP. Expose and oppose the bloody anti-drug war. Above all, oppose the imminent military rule in the Philippines.

The revolutionary movement gave Duterte a chance to prove his good intentions to forge an informal alliance for the country’s peace and progress, based on his almost three decades of friendly relations with the revolutionary movement in Mindanao when he was still mayor of Davao City.

The revolutionary movement is serious in going into the peace talks. It displayed goodwill in extending the unilateral ceasefire to six months (August 2016–February 2017), the longest in the revolutionary movement’s history. But the four rounds of peace negotiations have proven that the GRP is only interested in the NPA’s capitulation through a bilateral ceasefire agreement and not in addressing the roots and causes of the Philippine civil war.

Placing the whole Mindanao under martial law and the previous declaration of all-out war against the revolutionary movement coupled with intractability in the peace talks are clear indications of the Duterte regime’s subservience to US imperialist dictates. The AFP uses martial law in Mindanao to further facilitate Duterte’s brutal

 <p>Vol. XLVIII No. 13 July 7, 2017</p> <hr/> <p><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Hiligaynon, Waray and English.</p> <p><i>Ang Bayan</i> welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p> <p> instagram.com/prwcinfo</p> <p> youtube.com/PhilippineRevolutionWebCentral</p> <p> @prwc_info</p> <p> fb.com/philrevwebcentral</p> <p> cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</p>	<h2 style="text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <p>Editorial: Firmly oppose the anti-national and anti-people policies of the Duterte regime! 1</p> <p>Offensives in Bicol, Samar and SMR 1</p> <p>Where is the change? 4</p> <p>Protests on Fil-Am Friendship Day 4</p> <p>US intervention escalates under ML 5</p> <p>Old politics in the time of Duterte 6</p> <p>Investing in the president 7</p> <p>Supreme Court upholds martial law 8</p> <p>GRP to scuttle peacetalks 8</p> <p>Moro people’s rights violated 9</p> <p>Human rights violations worsen 10</p> <p>Dominance of land monopoly 11</p> <p>Peasants’ <i>bungkalan</i> 12</p> <p>US destruction of Syria 13</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	

“all-out war” and “flatten the hills” order against the revolutionary forces in Mindanao and extend this to the Visayas and Luzon. Martial law’s real targets are the mounting revolutionary armed struggle and the resurgent armed struggle of the Moro for self-determination.

Duterte’s bloody anti-drug campaign is a war gone wild. It targets ordinary drug users and pushers while big drug lords and masterminds of criminal syndicates in the AFP-PNP and bureaucracy remain free. There is also the conspicuous use of state terrorism against the revolutionary movement and other legal opposition.

Concurrent with broad open actions against intensifying repression, armed struggle must be intensified to protect the revolutionary forces and the people against martial law and fascism. The New People’s Army must launch tactical offensives nationwide and further strengthen the people’s army in different parts of the archipelago.



Make

Duterte account for his independent foreign policy fraud.

Call for the immediate repeal of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement and other unequal treaties.

Duterte’s anti-US pretensions are directed at expanding his sources of loans and arms to China and Russia and not at breaking US domination in the country. He has not repealed a single unequal treaty with the US. US troops remain in Philippine soil, construction of at least six of its military facilities inside AFP camps has begun, 257 military exercises have been launched this year, and US warships ply Philippine seas in the continued militarization of the South China Sea.

Duterte has allowed US spy drones and P3-Orion spy aircraft to fly over the Philippines for electronic surveillance, intelligence gathering, and combat support for the AFP, especially in Marawi. His “anti-terrorist” war has now fallen squarely into the frame of the US’ international war against terrorism, thus giving the US leeway to further escalate its interference in the country’s internal affairs. He is effectively collaborating with US psy-ops in fanning Islamophobia, religious war, and the ISIS scare in the Philippines. The US is ever pushing and moulding Duterte’s penchant for strongman rule into subservience to its dictates.

Duterte is exacerbating the social crisis of the Philippines semicolonial and semifeudal system. A political crisis is bound to erupt. Amidst the continued deterioration of Philippine society and economy and the long depression of the world capitalist system, the people have no recourse but to struggle and advance their national democratic aspirations and launch increasingly bigger mass struggles.

AB

"Offensives..." from page 1

the NPA sustained no casualties. One K3 machine gun was confiscated from the AFP.

The same day, around 6 a.m., two trucks carrying at least 15 soldiers for reinforcement at Barangay Dumagmang was blasted by a command-detonated explosive. The demolition action was carried out some 400 meters from the 9th IB detachment at Barangay Mahawanhawan, Labo. Corporal Rey Lota was killed and four others were wounded in the exchange of gunfire. No casualties were recorded on the NPA side.

Also on June 22, around 11 p.m., the NPA-West Camarines Sur (Norben Gruta Command) blasted a passing truck of the 92nd Division Reconnaissance Company at Sitio Castilla, Barangay Napolidan, Lupi, Camarines Sur.

CAFGU Hilario Caña was killed in the explosion while five others were wounded. The truck was carrying a section of military reinforcements for the previous day’s encounter.

Meanwhile, Ma. Roja Banua, spokesperson of NDF-Bicol, said that “the [military’s news about an] encounter between two forces of the NPA-Bicol in barangays Hanopol and San Roque, Caramoan on July 1, at 7:30 p.m. was a figment of the imagination.”

“No battle happened and there was no NPA presence in the area mentioned. The military is using this fake news to spread terror among the communities of Caramoan and freely scour the countryside,” Banua added.

AB

On Duterte's first year, where is the change?

CARRYING CALLS to make good on his promises of change, hundreds of members of progressive organizations marched to Mendiola, Manila last June 30, a year since President Rodrigo Duterte took his oath of office. Unlike the previous year's optimism and high expectations for Duterte who claimed to be socialist and the first Left president, various sectors expressed dismay for his failure to fulfill his promises.

The protest was led by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan). According to BAYAN, majority of Duterte's actions were negative, anti-people and pro-imperialist. Leaders also scored his policies and the unchanged conditions since the past administration. Among these are low wages, widespread contractualization, landlessness and stalled peace talks. Duterte's martial rule has worsened human rights violations and military abuses.

During the rally, the groups used emoticons to sum up the Duterte administration's response to the people's demands. Prominent among the reactions were emoticons that were 'sad', 'scared' and 'angry.'

Groups also criticized the continued AFP bombings in Marawi city, the government's response to the attacks by the Maute group in Marawi. These airstrikes have resulted in widespread humanitarian crisis of dislocation, hunger and destruction.

Human rights advocates also condemned the appointment of 57 former military and police officers in his cabinet, including Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año, the brains behind the disappearance of peasant activist



Jonas Burgos.

Duterte is no different from his predecessors implementing neoliberal economic policies, despite his claims of independent foreign policy. The Duterte regime's economic policies are "wrong, anti-people and anti-progress," said the IBON Foundation. His administration spreads lies to justify tax reforms which he will use for his grand infrastructure projects.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) also slammed Duterte's inaction to their call regarding contractualization, wages and workers' welfare.

"There are 24.4 million workers who are victims of different types of flexible labor standards and Endo. Even wages remain unchanged," said Elmer Labog, chairperson of KMU.

Days before the protest, progressive groups held a People's Summit at the Philippine Heart Center, Quezon City last June 28 to assess Duterte's first year. They concluded that genuine reforms for the people remain to be seen on Duterte's 1st year.

Protest actions were also held in front of Eastmincom headquarters in Davao City, Cabuyao, Laguna and Plazoleta Gay, Iloilo. AB

Protests on Filipino-American Friendship Day

ON THE Filipino-American Friendship Day last July 4, hundreds of members of progressive organizations marched to the US embassy in Manila to slam US intervention, return of US military bases and the growing number of US armed troops in the country.

The clearest example of this interference is its self-styled assistance to government troops engaged in armed fighting with the Dawlah Islamiyah in Marawi City under martial law.

Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. remarked how the Philippines is now part of the priority areas of the US Special Operations Command focused on defeating terrorist groups such as the Daesh or ISIS.

Bayan also added that the two nations can never be friends, especially if this relationship is one-sided and exploitative. For a long time, the Philippines has been subjected to war, colonization and violation of sovereignty.

More than its military presence, said Reyes, US intervention gravely affects our local politics, culture and economy.

Despite his anti-US rhetoric, the Duterte regime failed to translate it into concrete action and policies, instead he drifted closer to US imperialism by implementing the US counterinsurgency policy, Oplan Kapayapaan, approving US military forces to construct military bases through EDCA and declaration of Martial Law.

After the rally, groups marched to the Supreme Court to express dismay on its decision favoring Duterte's martial law. AB

US intervention escalates under martial law

GRP Pres. Rodrigo Duterte's martial law, as well as his "anti-ISIS war," falls completely in line with the US' interventionist line of "war against terror" and sets the stage for the escalation of US intervention in the country's internal affairs.

Since last year, the US has been raising the alarm on the supposed ISIS presence in the country. It claimed that the Philippines is set to be the next "ISIS center" based on a single video of the group calling on all "jihadists" to drop by the Philippines if they encounter problems going to Syria. It also overplayed the bandit group Abu Syyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon's supposed pledge of loyalty to the group. In line with this, the US, through Sen. Joni Ernst, insisted on August 2016 the need to "go back" and establish US bases in the Philippines. Presently, only one of the five planned locations for these bases is in Mindanao, although this is where their presence is largest.

Last May, a few weeks before the AFP laid siege in Marawi, the commander of the US Special Operations Command stated that the Philippines remains a priority for military intervention. It identified ISIS and Al Qaeda as its priority targets and the countries where these have presence as targets for "long-term military intervention." On June, the US Secretary of Defense declared that the withdrawal of its special forces from the Philippines in 2015 was "premature." Most of its troops were permanently based in Zamboanga then. At the same time, the US maintained troops in other AFP camps, including in Camp Ranao located inside Marawi.

These troops are believed to be the instigators of the failed attempt to liquidate Hapilon on May



23 in an operation similar to the botched raid in Mamasapano in 2015. As before, various armed groups banded against the AFP and killed a large number of soldiers. Some witnesses said that soldiers deployed to the city were "almost decimated" on the first encounter. Pictures of Moro groups in control of AFP's war tanks and the SAF-PNP's AFVs abounded in social media. Armed groups coming together in a "pintakasi" is a practice of fellowship among Moro clans against what they consider as a foreign force.

But unlike in Mamasapano where the slaughtered soldiers were not reinforced, Duterte declared martial law on the same day (at 10 p.m.) and poured tanks and troops into the city.

Calculated and systematic psy-ops to deceive the public, promote confusion and justify the continuation of war were carried out. Stringent information control

(particularly in the media) and disinformation has always been a part of US (covert) operations.

Duterte's vilification of the Maute group designed to influence the public and justify his iron rule falls in line with the US anti-Islamic and racist line. To demonize the group, he bestowed the Maute the "ISIS" title, even when military officials denied the link. Marawi residents said that they only heard of the Maute as "ISIS" on television. They only knew the armed group as a family engaged in a *rido* (clan war) in the city.

Duterte's portrayal of the Mautes as berserk "extremists" who kill indiscriminately and without reason even without clear evidence indicates public conditioning as his main objective. Fake news from the AFP have been debunked frequently. Even Duterte's claim that the group beheaded a police chief has been

proven a big lie. Contrary to AFP predictions, the priest taken hostage by the group remains alive.

Duterte has repeatedly called on the Moro people to resist the Maute group's "foreign ideology." This is a downright copy of the US line of generating nationalist fervour to gain sympathy for the war. Duterte's praises of soldiers doing their "patriotic duty" is a part of this line, as are stories about the "poor soldiers" killed or wounded in encounters which abound in the traditional media. Duterte glorifies the war, while blaming or belittling civilian casualties.

Even the regime's methods mimic the US tactic of bombing entire communities to destroy private commerce and public infrastructures, leaving the place in shambles for foreign capital and companies' easy entry. (Read related article on Syria in page 13.) The regime reinforced Marawi with US-trained troops, using US-made weapons.

Duterte openly welcomed US troops, drones and warplanes in Marawi. It promised to sell to him more arms, including his most wished-for bombs.

He is still angling to get Chinese and Russian long-term commitment or military aid after his trips from both countries this year. So far, his mendicancy in Russia has not borne any concrete results. Meanwhile, China only sent some weapons as a "gift." AB

Old politics in the time of Duterte

Under the Duterte regime, the Philippines' semifeudal economy persists. Under this system, big landlords hold control over vast tracts of land and plantations, exploiting the toil of peasants in order to produce agricultural products for export.

This is combined with the trade with foreign capitalists by the bourgeois comprador class which serves as intermediary between foreign capital and local resources.

On the basis of the semifeudal economy, "semifeudal politics" prevail over the country. This is how political economist Dr. Edberto Villegas describes the Philippine situation in his essay "The Semi-feudal Political System in the Philippines and the National Democratic Revolution." Here, the author traces back the present system of government to the development of semifeudalism during the last part of Spanish colonization.

However, it is US imperialism which moulded the current political control of bureaucrat capitalists who represent their interests, alongside the interests of the comprador bourgeoisie and landlord classes. After the Filipino revolutionaries sequestered large tracts of land from religious orders during the early part of the 20th century, this was overturned by the American colonialists and sold to rich Spanish families including the Elizalde, Ortigas, Ayala, Aboitiz and others. Rich Chinese families (Ledesma, Lopez, Tuason and Osmeña) were also able to acquire sugarcane haciendas.

These rich families who became partners of the American capitalists were entrusted by the US to take charge of government. All those who became the country's highest official (Roxas, Osmeña, Laurel, Lopez, etc.) belong to landlord and comprador



families. Unlike during the Spanish colonial period wherein positions given to rich local families were limited to the municipal level, the US trained political representatives from these families for positions up to the national level.

From 1903, pensionados were sent to the US to learn the method of government and administration in various aspects of society in accordance with the colonial design. Taxes collected by the US colonial government were used to subsidize the schooling of these children of rich families coming from the provinces. Upon returning to the country, they were entrusted with key positions in the sectors of agriculture, education, commerce, and others.

The Commonwealth government, acting as a transition towards being a complete semi-colony of the US, also served as training ground for those being groomed to become officials, from the president down to local representatives. By encouraging different political parties, the US and the local ruling classes attempt to deceive the people with the illusion of democratic elections. Nonetheless, whichever faction comes out on top, the same classes are kept in power.

The US imposed its system of "democracy" in the Philippines without abolishing the exploitative feudal structure, because this ensures the supply of cheap agricultural products to the US. On the other hand, those in power use government machinations, the laws they created and other re-

sources in order to further enrich themselves and keep their families in power. An assortment of benefits is enjoyed by the big bourgeois compradors and bureaucrat capitalists investing in politics.

More than empowering the families of bureaucrat capitalist families and their class, it is US imperialism which profits the most in the former's placement in authority. For example, apart from providing leniency to local governments in collecting their own taxes, the Local Government Code stipulates the reduction of government subsidy from the national treasury. This was endorsed by the World Bank so as to guarantee that the government will be able to collect for debt servicing to the World Bank.

Moreover, warlordism in many provinces of the Philippines, according to Dr. Villegas, is also characteristic of an economy based on feudal ownership of land. This is reflected in the country's politics, wherein political clans build their own armed groups to counter their rivals.

Likewise, the military and police serve as the ruling clans' own armed group against their political rivals.

Starting 1960, new political families emerged, including the Duterte clan. These clans continue to hold power in government, among them the families of Abad (Batanes), Abaya (Cavite), Villar (Las Pinas), Dy (Isabela), Alonto (Lanao del Sur), Angara (Aurora), Ejercito-Estrada (Laguna at San Juan), Pimentel (Cagayan de Oro), Marcos (Ilocos Norte), Binay (Makati), Escudero (Sorsogon) and Zubiri (Bukidnon). In the current number of lawmakers, 56% of the Senate and 74% of the Lower House come from political clans.

For the people, the strengthening of the revolutionary movement gives them confidence that these families' political power will be smashed both in the countryside and the cities. While the semicolonial government set up by the US persists, the people establish, alongside with this, organs of political power which truly represent the class of the toiling people and advance their interests. **AB**

Investing in the president

The Duterte family is a bureaucrat-capitalist clan. Its members rose to state positions with the help and support of big local businessmen. Sara and Paolo Duterte, Davao City incumbent mayor and vice mayor, continue with their clan's bureaucrat-capitalist deeds. They have connections to, and defend the interests of, foreign capitalists in the city.

Rodrigo Duterte comes from a family of politicians who benefitted from the Marcos dictatorship. His father Vicente, a staunch supporter of the dictatorship, was appointed as Secretary for General Services during Marcos' first term. Prior to this, the older Duterte was mayor of Danao, Cebu. He became governor of then-unitary Davao province from 1959 until 1965. Their Cebu-based relatives also held key positions in Cebu City during the 1950's.

Ever since becoming mayor of Davao, Duterte represented the interests of big foreign and local capitalists. When he ran for president, he reported receiving up to P335 million funds donated by big businessmen. Ten of his biggest campaign donors have big interests in mining.

These include Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano (donated P71 million), who was likewise funded by the Zamoras of Nickel Asia company. This May, Cayetano was appointed as secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Senator Cynthia

Villar's son also gave P14 million through the mining company TVI Resources. As a reward, Villar's other son, Mark, was appointed secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways. The Villar family is in the construction business and clearly has interests in building and investing in public infrastructure.

Meanwhile, Duterte's childhood friend Carlos Dominguez, whom he appointed as chief of the Department of Finance, contributed P3 million. Dominguez is one of the owners of Sagittarius Mining, investing in copper and gold extraction in Mindanao. His brothers-in-law, Tomas and Nicasio Alcantara, likewise have big mining interests. They contributed P28 million for Duterte's campaign funds. For his part, Bienvenido Tan, another one of Dominguez' business partners, gave P20 million.

Another Duterte close friend, Davao del Norte Rep. Pantaleon Alvarez, was given the position of House Speaker, and declared his full

support to Duterte (including martial law extension until 2022). Meanwhile, Salvador Medialdea, currently the Executive Secretary, gave P1 million for his campaign. Also, after contributing P30 million, businessman Dennis Uy was appointed Presidential Adviser for Sports. His businesses in gasoline retail and logistics services (2GO) grew when Duterte assumed office.

It is also expected that Duterte will favour the Floirendo family, owners of large banana plantations in Davao and the biggest funder during his candidacy. Congressman Antonio Floirendo Jr. gave a total of P100 million (P75 million to Duterte and P25 million for Duterte's party PDP-Laban). Since 1998, the Floirendo family has been funding Duterte's candidacy for mayor of Davao. Duterte appointed Floirendo's brother in law as ambassador to the United Kingdom.

After the elections, Duterte admitted that the Marcos family gave support. In exchange for this, one of Duterte's first orders was the burial of the former dictator at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. He immediately gave the Marcoses control over Philweb, the government company which runs online gambling. **AB**

Supreme Court upholds martial law

Voting 11 in favor, three abstain and one dissenting, the Supreme Court upheld last July 4 the Duterte regime's martial law and Duterte's authority to issue the declaration. This paves the way for the extension of the current declaration and its expansion to cover the entire country.

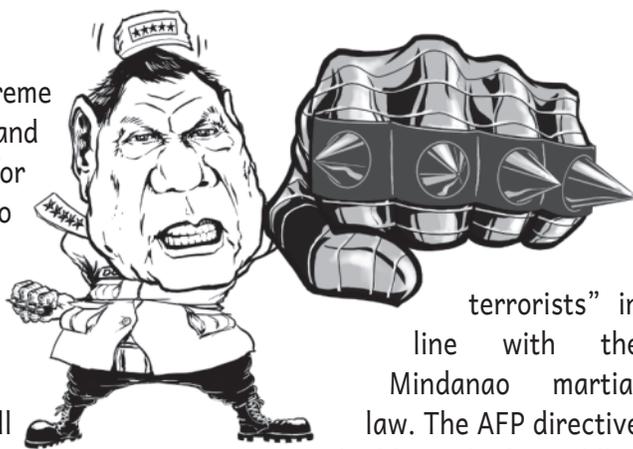
In a document made public by the Supreme Court, the court agreed that the Maute group's "siege" of Marawi last May 24 was an "act of rebellion." Thus, Duterte's martial law, as well as his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in the entire Mindanao is justified. "The Constitution grants him the prerogative whether to put the entire country or parts thereof under martial law," the court said. "There is no constitutional edict that martial law should be confined only in the particular place where the armed public uprising actually transpired."

The court parroted Duterte's claim that he should not be made to wait for a "rebellion" to infest all corners of the country before declaring martial in the entire country. "For sure, this is not the scenario envisioned by the Constitution," the Supreme Court added. The decision practically

pushes Duterte into declaring martial law nationwide.

Malacañang is all praises for the Supreme Court. Solicitor General Jose Calida immediately crowed that the decision confirms the "existence of a real and present rebellion" and that it "threatens the lives of Filipinos in Mindanao" as claimed by the executive branch. The decision certainly "unified" all government branches—the executive dominated by militarists, the legislative full of its lackeys and the judiciary that is scared out of its wits. Since last year, Duterte has been threatening the Supreme Court to toe his line, otherwise he will implicate the judiciary in his "war against drugs."

On the same day, a directive surfaced calling on the AFP to quell the "communist rebellion, illegal drug syndicates and other local



terrorists" in line with the Mindanao martial law. The AFP directive laid bare the lie peddled by DND Sec. Delfin Lorenzana, the GRP peace panel headed by Sec. Jesus Dureza and Silvestre Bello, and by Duterte himself, that the NPA is "not a target" of martial law—a claim that the revolutionary movement has always known to be untrue. The AFP and the regime have even used this lie to pressure the NDFP peace panel and force the NPA to withdraw its call to defend itself and the people.

The AFP Operational Directive 02-17 not only directed the "degrading of the NPA's armed capabilities," it also ordered the arrest of "all target threat personalities" and "file cases" against them. In AFP parlance, this refers to activists and members of national-democratic organizations. AB

GRP on the way to scuttling the peacetalks

THE PEACETALKS is on the way to being scuttled completely by the Duterte regime. This was the observation offered by Jose Maria Sison, the NDFP's chief political consultant, based on the following reasons:

- 1) the regime's failure to make good its promise last May 16, 2016 to free all political prisoners
- 2) the GRP's precondition that the NDFP must first surrender under the guise of a protracted and indefinite bilateral ceasefire before any agreements on substantive agenda
- 3) the GRP's continuing all-out war policy against the revolutionary movement since February
- 4) the anti-NPA proclamation of martial law in the entire Mindanao and its rapid expansion in the entire country after the the Supreme Court decision and open US imperialism's support.

A Marcos-type fascist martial rule situation is now

existing and rapidly developing in the Philippines, Sison added. It will be made worse by Duterte's attempt to misrepresent revolutionaries as terrorists and addicts unworthy of the right to life. Aerial bombings and artillery fire against communities the AFP suspects as supportive of the revolutionary movement will surely intensify.

In line with this, Sison belied the claims of Sec. Silvestre Bello, GRP peace panel head, that the fifth round of talks is scheduled to be held in Japan in August. There has been no common decision yet, he said. Instead, informal talks will be held to iron out differences in the submitted drafts on socio-economic reforms or CASER.

Aside from the GRP's loss of interest in substantive peace negotiations, there is already a growing public clamor for intensifying the people's war against the almost certain imposition of martial rule on the people nationwide soon, Sison said. AB

Duterte is violating the Moro people's rights

VARIOUS MORO groups denounced last June 30 GRP Pres. Rodrigo Duterte's violation of their rights in his drive to supposedly solve the "Maute problem" by bombing Marawi indiscriminately.

Duterte's action to solve problems regarding the group without first consulting the Moro people is a violation of their right to self-determination, Suara Bangsamoro said. His destruction of the city violates their civil rights. The drive to require all Moros in the country to carry "Muslim IDs" also violates these rights.

On June 22, the Ranao Ulama Leaders Conference appealed once again to the GRP to 1) allow them to talk with the Dawlah leadership (of the Maute group) to get them to leave the war zone voluntarily; 2) to talk to Duterte to inform him of the ulamas' call for the immediate cessation of aerial bombings and lifting of martial law; and 3) immediately make way for the clearing and cleaning operations so that the evacuees can return to their communities. The AFP and Duterte did not heed their calls.

According to the AFP's lowered

estimates last month, only 40% of the city has been destroyed by aerial bombardment. Also, only 44 civilians have died, contrary to some residents' pictures and stories of dead bodies "littering the city streets."

In a barangay where Marawi officials were allowed to inspect briefly, they found human remains scattered outside destroyed houses. "The dogs ate them," an official said. In another barangay, they discovered 17 cadavers. The officials are aware that a darker and more sinister picture await them once the fighting is over and the full destruction of the bombardments is made known.

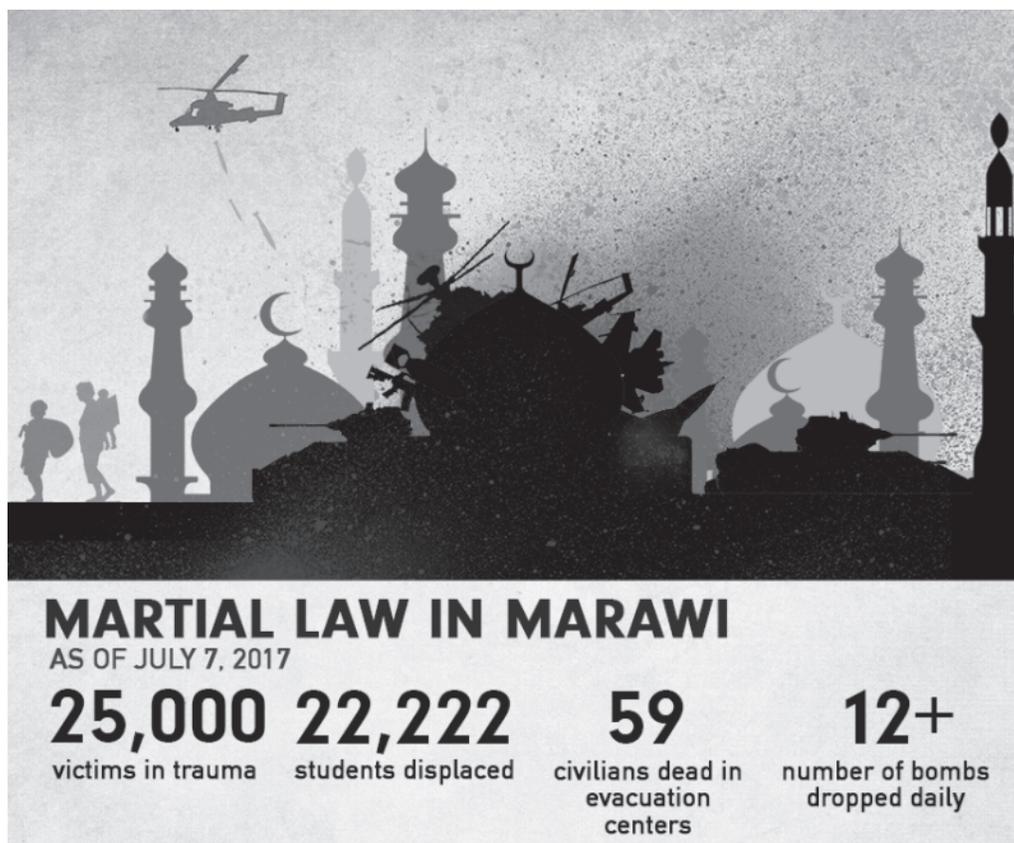
On the other hand, the AFP reported on July 6 that it had already killed 351 Maute men (from the original 50). Excluding the AFP spokesperson, nobody else has been able to confirm that these were armed men.

Due to persistent efforts, ulamas and personnel and leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) were allowed to enter the war zone twice and managed to rescue around 2,000 civilians. This is contrary to the AFP's earlier claim that only 500 are trapped inside the city. The rescuers could have saved more civilians if the AFP did not give them a hard time and if its soldiers did not violate the ceasefires.

More than 400,000 people have evacuated from Marawi and nearby towns. A large number of them are in evacuation centers where many have fallen sick and suffer from hunger as food aid has started to dwindle. Around 59 have died and a recorded 25,000 who suffer from severe trauma have sunk into depression.

Many of the evacuees fear that they will have nothing to come home to in Marawi. Stealing from vacant houses is widespread. Stories and pictures of soldiers forcing their way into closed houses in their "search" for Maute men abound. Those who dared to return for their possessions are given a hard time in checkpoints and accused of being thieves.

More people are complaining of discrimination in the 17,494 checkpoint operations conducted all over Mindanao. On June 30, a family was held at a checkpoint in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao simply because they carried the Maute surname. Troops from the 37th IB later detained them in Cotabato. Even more people experience bullying, intimidation and threats from overbearing soldiers and police.



Human rights violations worsen under martial law

Human rights violations worsened under the Duterte regime's martial law. Aside from Mindanao, violations are widespread in other parts of the country where peasant struggles are gaining ground and in communities the AFP suspects as supportive of the revolutionary movement.

Surigao del Sur. More than 2,000 people from nine communities in Lianga once again evacuated on July 5, after days of terrorization by the 75th IB. Two hundred (200) students and 43 teachers of the Alcadev school in Barangay Diatagon were among those who left their community. It has been less than a year since they returned to the area after spending a year in evacuation centers. The first evacuation was after three of their leaders were brutally murdered by the AFP's paramilitary groups. They have only started classes this school year when the harassments began again.

In nearby Barangay San Miguel, soldiers circulated a list of "enemies of the state," which included the names of four Lumad school teachers.

Negros Oriental. Elements from the 79th IB sowed terror in sitios Laos and Agpapataw in Barangay Binobohan, Guihulngan City after their troops clashed with an NPA unit near the area on June 30. On July 1, they tried to drive away the residents without giving them a chance to gather their things, stole their farm animals and other properties. They detained four minors, siblings Elizabeth Garde, 17; Jeremy, 11; Ana May, 9; and Angelo, 8, and took them to the site of the encounter.

After the encounter, the barrio folks reported five residents missing. They are Simplicio Garde and his daughter Teresa Garde and the couple Botsoy and Aurillia Cantela and their daughter Jenamae. Relatives of the five attempted to search for them in the fields near the encounter site but were stopped by the military. The soldiers burned the Cantela house and occupied other

peasants' houses as their barracks.

Southern Mindanao. Soldiers arbitrarily detained four progressive leaders at a checkpoint in Lasang, Davao City on June 28. The Task Force Davao held Hanimay Suazo, Karapatan-Southern Mindanao Region (SMR) secretary-general, along with Lito Lao, Pedro Arnado and Jerry Alborme, all of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, for five hours. The leaders came from an activity of the Madaum Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries in Tagum City when they were stopped at the said checkpoint. The soldiers tried to bring them to their military camp. It was already midnight when the soldiers released them.

On July 2, elements of the 66th IB detained four members of the Compostela Farmers Association in Compostela Valley. Alicia Tindasan, Jhona Rose Baugto, Rolan Segocia and Estanislao Talledo were on their way to a Lumad school in Purok 4B, Barangay Mangayon, when they were accosted and arrested by eight soldiers. The soldiers took them to the Compostela Municipal Police Station where they underwent interrogation and were booked on with trumped-up charges.

On June 30, nine leaders and members of the Bagkus-Salog, a Lumad organization in Talaingod, were detained by members of the paramilitary group Alamara in Sitio Cabadjan, Barangay Sto. Nino in Talaingod, Davao del Norte. They were on their way to Davao City to join a protest action in connection with the Duterte regime's first year. They were released last July 1 from the Sto. Niño Police Station after being rescued by Karapatan-SMR and Promotion of Church People's Response.

Southern Tagalog. Soldiers from the 731st Combat Group of the Philippine Air Force conducted operations in Barangay Coral ni Lopez in Calaca, Batangas on July 6 in a bid to drive away peasants tilling the land. The farmers here have been trying to get back the 70-hectare land stolen from them by landlord Louis Lopez during the US-Aquino regime.

Prior to this, private goons owned by landlord Federico Campos III violently broke up a peasant and fisher folk camp in Balakbakan, Laiya Aplaya in San Juan, Batangas on July 3. They fired on the camp of the Haligi ng Batangenyong Anakdagat which hit two members and wounded more. The goons then invaded the camp and threw away the peasants' food supply. Campos evicted 600 peasants and fisher folk from their community on 2014 to make way for his resort.

In Quezon, members of the PNP arbitrarily arrested Roldan Tayactac inside his house in Barangay Camflora, San Andres last July 4. The police did not present any arrest warrant, Talactac's wife said. Talactac is a tenant of Hacienda Uy, which is currently being tilled by the farmers. He was accused of stealing coconuts from the lot he has been tilling.

Panay. Police arbitrarily charged more than 60 individuals in relation to the NPA's successful raid of a police station in Maasin last June 18. Twenty of them were named, including two high school students from a nearby municipality. Among the accused is Mary Ilyich Bocala, NDFP consultant Concha Araneta-Bocala's daughter, who happened to be vacationing in the country. The young Bocala vigorously condemned the inclusion of her name, as well as the publication of her sister's picture. The PNP is harassing them, she says, because their parents are involved in the revolutionary movement. The sisters have already filed counter-charges against the PNP. AB

Continued dominance of land monopoly

In many parts of the country, large tracts of land are monopolized by a handful of families. Most of these lands are set up as haciendas, a legacy of colonial Spain's feudal rule. Landlord economic and political power is based on this hacienda system. Plantations also cover large tracts of land. These are part of US imperialism's social base for its control of the country.

Haciendas and plantations

Millions of hectares of agricultural lands are still concentrated in the hands of a few landlords and big corporations. These are aside from the public lands used by landlords or withheld by the government from the rightful owners' use.

In these parcels, intense exploitation, constant threat of eviction, violence and killing are prevalent. A big part of these concentrated lands are earmarked for conversion into industrial, residential, recreational, tourist areas, agribusiness and other uses.

Some of these are the following:

Daguma Range. More than 350,000 hectares in 10 municipalities in South Central Mindanao are controlled by various companies of the Consunji family. Seven are located in Sultan Kudarat, two in Maguindanao and one in South Cotabato. Logging operations have long wrought destruction here. There are also other DMCI projects. Consunji plunder affects Dulangan Manobos, settlers and Moros and their ancestral lands.

Fort Magsaysay. Covering 48,070 hectares in adjoining villages in Nueva Ecija, Bulacan and Aurora, these lands were seized by the AFP from the tillers. Last year, four farmers who joined the *bungkalan* (collective farming) were killed. They were members of ALMANA 3100, an organization leading the struggle to regain the lands.

Camp Peralta Military Reservation. This covers 33,310 hectares in more than 20 villages of Capiz that are ancestral lands of more than 20,000 Tumandok. The 3rd ID continues its attempts to drive away

the indigenous farmers and many have been killed in decades of indigenous people's defense of their ancestral land.

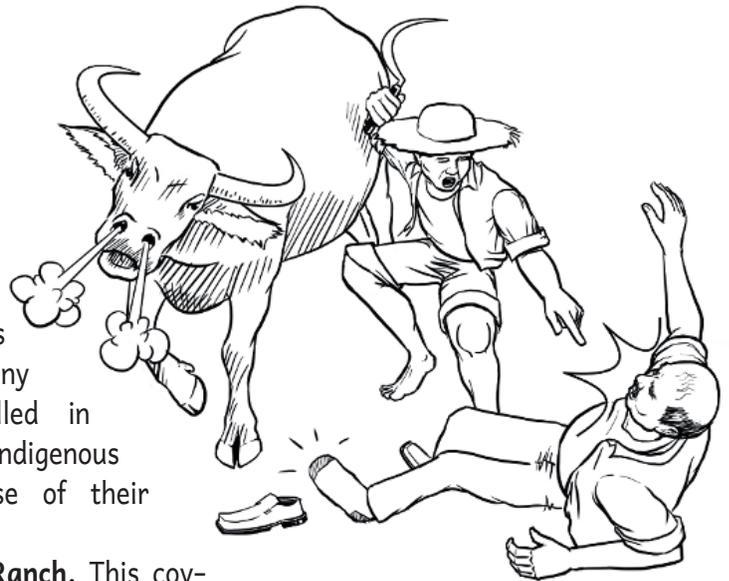
Yulo King Ranch. This covers 39,238 hectares in four villages in Coron and four in Busuanga, Palawan. These lands were seized by former dictator Ferdinand Marcos and awarded to his cronies Luis Yulo and Peter Sabido. This is under the local government at present.

Hacienda Looc. This consists of 8,650 hectares seized by Henry Sy which he plans to convert into a recreational park for tourism and for real estate. More than 10,000 farmers and fisher folk are in danger of being evicted.

Clark Green City. Farmers and indigenous Aeta will be evicted from 36,000 hectares in the municipalities of Capas and Bamban in Tarlac and Mabalacat City and Angeles City in Pampanga. Plans for building a modern city on a Public-Private Partnership basis are underfoot. The Duterte regime has offered this to Chinese investors. In this plan, haciendas and ancestral lands tilled by indigenous farmers will be converted into a commercial center.

Hacienda Luisita. This covers 6,453 hectares of land in ten villages in Tarlac. Although the Supreme Court has ruled the cancellation of the deceptive "Stock Distribution Option," the Aquino-Cojuangco families continue deceptive and violent land grabbing ploys.

Negros. A total of 5,030 hectares is comprised of Haciendas Balatong, Nieva, Bonifacia, Soledad, Candelaria, Fe, Caridad and Cand-



aguet, San Antonio, Ara-al, Kaiyaman and Adelina. Danding Cojuangco's deceptive "corporative scheme", or the scam that farmers can supposedly become millionaires as Cojuangco's partners, was implemented here. The erstwhile Estrada regime praised this program as a model of land reform.

Roots of the hacienda system

Europe's rapid capitalist expansion impelled changes in the Philippine economy in the early 19th century. Demand for cash crops rose and capitalist countries strengthened links all over the world. To face these changes, Spain ordered widescale cultivation of products such as tobacco, sugar cane, abaca and indigo for trade with capitalist countries.

This encouraged the local ruling class in the race to grab bigger and bigger swathes of land. Spaniards enlarged their landholdings, as did church corporations (particularly the Augustinians, Recolletos, and Dominicans), the peninsulares (Spaniards born in the Philippines), and Chinese mestizos. Land concentration was accelerated by royal grants, purchase of royal estates or *realenga*, and various types of land loans and sale such as the *pacto de retroventa*, and land grabbing by virtue of colonial laws on land ownership.

To squeeze out the biggest

profit, high crop quotas, taxes and lopsided sharing in favor of the haciendero were imposed. Prices for farmers' products were also pressed down.

The *kasamá* system originated from this arrangement. This aimed to cover up the exploitative nature of the system by using the word "kasama" (literally, companion) therefore giving the impression that the tenants are partners of the haciendero in tilling the land. Repression against opposition or resistance was deeply entwined with this exploitative system.

Haciendero-tenant relations remain essentially unchanged up to the present. Only the forms, labels and methods have changed.

Hacienda Luisita is an example of a hacienda that has been carried over since the Spanish period. This was a grant from the king of Spain to the Compania Tabacalera encompassing lands in La Paz, Concepcion, Capas in 1880. Even then, these have been sugarcane planta-

tions. At the same time, Hacienda Isabel and Hacienda San Antonio, covering a combined 11,000 hectares of tobacco land in Isabela, were awarded to this company.

Concentration or monopoly of land continued and intensified during the succeeding US colonial period. American banks' Philippine branches funded the trade in land sales, especially among the rich Spanish and Chinese. These lands, wide coconut and abaca plantations included, were the US' main suppliers of agricultural products. Feudal exploitation was not only restored, it intensified across the archipelago. Tenancy rates rose from 18% in 1903 to 38% in 1948.

Upon the formal withdrawal of US colonialism, lands appropriated by the king of Spain and the US were passed on to the puppet government, now classified as "public land," and turned into "forest or military reservations," logging or pasture concessions. This was a period of widescale land grabbing

that displaced thousands of settlers and indigenous people until the frontiers were exhausted in the 1960s.

HACIENDAS WERE ESTABLISHED to milk the peasants and maintain landlord class' power and monopoly of lands since hundreds of years ago. This is an important component of imperialist rule that profits from the products supplied by the landlord. This scheme will not cease to exist but continue to take on new forms to deceive peasants who desire equal rights or land ownership. Peasant struggles will always be met with the reactionary state's full violence when the sham land reform laws lose their power to deceive.

But whatever form of deception or repression the state employs, one thing is certain. This exploitative system will be toppled by the peasant class in unity with other toiling classes. They will retake the land that is rightfully theirs. **AB**

Peasants' 'bungkalan' activities continue

PEASANT PROTESTS and campouts to reclaim lands from big landlords and land grabbers continued these past two weeks.

Southern Tagalog. Four peasant campouts were successfully launched in Quezon last June 30 in the popularly named hacienda belt in Bondoc Peninsula. These campouts were part of the *bungkalan* and balik-saka campaign led by PIGLAS-Quezon. Hacienda Uy, Hacienda Matias, Hacienda Puyal and Lupang Gancayco are part of the Hacienda Belt. Farmers demand the land be distributed free.

Hacienda Uy comprises 385 hectares in Sitio Marok-Barok, Camflora, San Andres, Quezon. Residents and farmers of Hacienda Manuel Uy Ek Liong and Hacienda Juanito Uy joined their campout.

Farmers of Hacienda Matias in Sitio Butangiad, Don Juan Vercelos, San Francisco, successfully claimed their lands. According to Pangkalahatang Samahan ng Magsasakang

Tenante sa San Francisco, Quezon, tenants have been cultivating the lands for more than 30 years. They were victims of bogus land reform and the Kilusang Magbubukid sa Bondoc Peninsula which was influenced by Akbayan, a group under the Liberal Party.

A picket was also launched by residents of Purok 7, Brgy. Poblacion, San Francisco to oppose demolition threat in their community which was claimed by Armida Carabido and Delia S. Rey.

Farmworkers of Hacienda Puyal in Barangay Pacabit, Catanauan, Quezon, went through a series of harassments. They were prohibited to farm and harvest their crops; fabricated charges were filed against them and farmers were evicted from their lands.

Meanwhile, around 100 police

and private guards entered the peasants' campout within lands claimed by the Almeda family in Barangay 9, Payompon, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro last June 26. They demolished 20 makeshift houses of farmers and indigenous people who were asserting their right to take back their lands. Farmers were evicted in the 5-hectare land they had been able to clear and till.

Panay. In Iloilo, more than 100 farmers and farmworkers launched a *bungkalan* campaign this year.

Bungkalan was held last June 30 in Sanson Estate, Sara, Iloilo. Farmers collectively cultivated 7.9 hectares which is part of the 700 hectares Sanson Estate. Led by Paghugpong sang mga Mangunguma sa Panay kag Guimaras and Anakpawis, farmers successfully planted bananas, sweet potato and cassava.

According to Jerlyn Diane, farmer-leader and spokesperson of Anakpawis-Sara, lands were already distributed last year to more than 300 beneficiaries but they were evicted from the land when they could not present any Certificate of Land Ownership.

Isabela. Peasants from Barangay Bagong Sikat, Isabela successfully foiled the threatened demolition of their community. This is the third attempt of the landlord, Aurelia Mapili.

Farmers have been paying rent since 1978. But the lands were not covered by land reform and slyly sold by Clarita Mariano and Sergio Mapili Sr. to Sergio Mapili Jr.

According to Exequiel Tubog, leader of Bagong Sikat Farmers Association, Sergio Mapili Jr. first collected one sack of unhusked rice as rent for the land their houses were built on. This rent kept rising by the year amid the protests of the residents. Because of this, they were charged with recovery of damages and possession of property. The court also allowed demolition of their houses.

Farmers continue to fight against the demolition. Residents also keep rebuilding their barricades against the efforts to evict them by the landlord Mapili in cohort with government agencies.

AB

US destruction of Syria

The US and its coalition (Australia, Canada, France, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and United Arab Emirates) have killed more civilians than ISIS fighters with their incessant bombing of Syria. The war against ISIS was launched in mid-2014 to conceal the war of aggression in Syria which intends to oust the anti-US government of Al-Bashad.

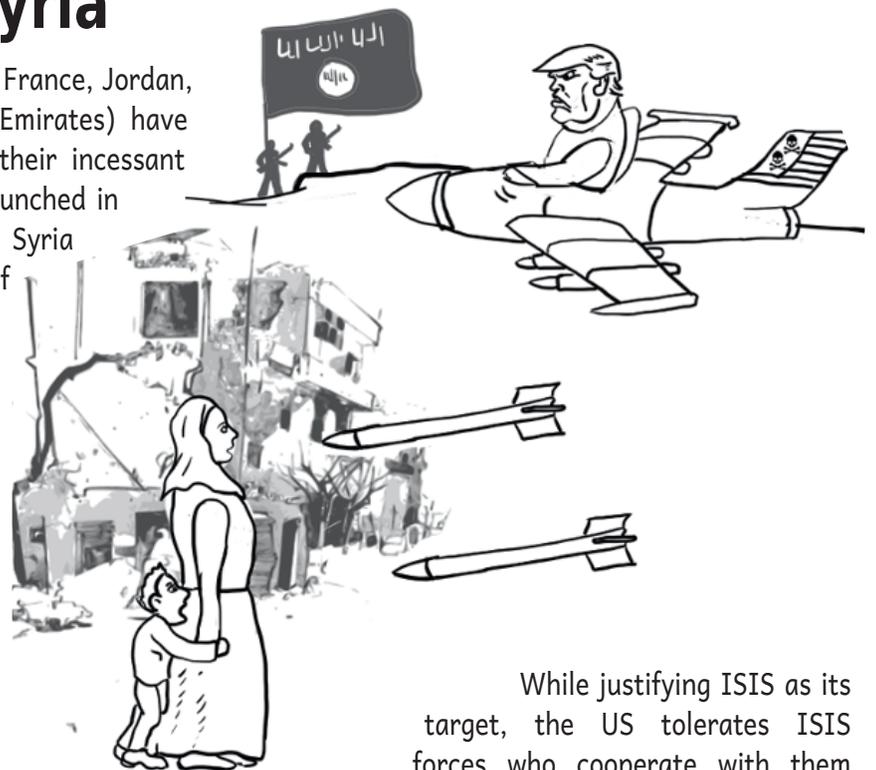
Airstrikes or massive aerial bombings are being used by these countries as primary form of warfare. These have resulted in relentless destruction of life, public and private infrastructures, and livelihood of the people. In Raqqa, Syria, most of the hospitals were demolished by bombs. A stadium, a museum, clinics, a hospital and government offices were destroyed in a day. Airstrikes continue even though 100,000 civilians are still trapped in the city.

In Mosul, Iraq, about 900,000 people have been displaced due to severe water and food shortage as a result of the widespread devastation caused by bombings. There are cases that people are compelled to eat grass. Mossul and Raqqa are identified as ISIS' strongholds. There are also reports of abuses by the Syrian Democratic Forces in the city like looting, abduction and illegal detention. Since August 2014 until now, nearly 8,000 civilians have died in Iraq and Syria. However, the US only admits 484 civilian deaths. Meanwhile, Russian bombings in Syria have victimized 2,000 people from 2015 until the first half of 2017. In 2015, a total of

22,110 bombs were dropped in Iraq and Syria, 947 in Afghanistan, 11 in Pakistan and 58 in Yemen. An estimate of 18,000 civilians were killed because of these operations.

The US spends up to \$20 billion per year in this war, at an average of \$12.5 million per day. From this bloody war, Raytheon and Lockheed Martin earned \$1.68 billion a year in sales of weapons to Saudi Arabia.

According to the CIA, ISIS has only 31,000 fighters in 2015, and in that same year, they had already killed 25,000 ISIS members. But the membership purportedly expanded to 200,000 in 2017, and the CIA claimed that US forces' bombings eventually killed 50,000 ISIS fighters. On the other hand, 250 US military forces were killed by friendly-fire.



While justifying ISIS as its target, the US tolerates ISIS forces who cooperate with them against the Syrian government, a Russian ally. ISIS acquired \$219.7 million worth of weapons and supplies from the US through the several "accidental air-dropping" intended for the Syrian Kurds into Islamic State territory. Moreover, in the attacks in Mosul, US allowed thousands of ISIS members to flee towards Syria to further crush the Syrian state. Like the establishment of Al Qaeda during Reagan's period, they fought the former USSR as Mujahideen resistance fighters.

The US 'war on terror' or against ISIS is a narrative of thousands of civilian deaths and destruction of homes and livelihood. Meanwhile, these 'terrorists' multiply, the dead come to life, and no one is punished in all of these crimes.

AB