

Hundreds celebrate CPP anniversary

HUNDREDS OF RED fighters and members of underground mass organizations successfully held 49th anniversary celebrations of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in the last days of December 2017. These despite the ongoing all-out war and widespread terror brought by Duterte and his fascist troops in various peasant communities in the countryside.

In the mountain ranges of Sierra Madre, NPA-Southern Tagalog (Melito Glor Command or MGC) led the celebrations last December 29, 2017. According to MGC, the activity was a great success because it was held amidst intensified military operations after the cancellations of peace talks, "terror" listing of the CPP and NPA and harassment among activists and progressives in the region. Media groups were also invited to the gathering. The NPA-MGC offered a red salute to the martyrs in the region, particularly the 15 killed in Nasugbu, Batangas. Ka Diego Padilla, spokesperson of MGC, said in a statement that the brutal killing of the 15 Red fighters violated international humanitarian law and rules of war.

In Negros, members of NPA-Central Negros (Leonardo Panaligan Command or LPC) celebrated the anniversary last December 26. The LPC reported a

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EDITORIAL

Isolate completely and overthrow the oppressive US-Duterte regime

In 2018, the worsening crisis of the semifeudal and semicolonial system is sure to sharpen the contradictions between the ruling classes, the people's resistance to imperialist neoliberal policies and increasing fascism of the US-Duterte regime, and further intensification of the armed revolutionary movement. Due to the unprecedented killings and repression by its fascist soldiers, police, paramilitaries and death squads, Duterte's isolation will worsen this year.

On the first days of 2018 alone, the ruling classes were already up in uproar due to Duterte and his minions' naked ambition to extend their terms through charter change and push for federalism. Even now, the political opposition is already drumming up the possibility of a "no-el" or no elections on 2019, a scenario that is sure to divide the bureaucrats' ranks. Like his idol dictator Ferdinand Marcos, Duterte will change the constitution for the sole reason of monopolizing political power. He can appropriate for himself the power to create laws, similar

to what Marcos did during the "transition" to a parliamentary system. As for now, Duterte seems to be following legal processes, but his maneuvers increasingly ride roughshod over his own institutions. He has already railroaded the worst laws and schemes in congress and senate, which he keeps in line through patronage and threats.

Prior to this, infighting broke out in the military after officials squabbled over an anomalous contract worth \$16 billion. No grandiose gesture of firing corrupt officials can hide the stench and

rotteness of the regime.

To counteract the people's widespread resistance, Duterte is sure to intensify his wars of suppression against all sectors and organizations who are against his fascist ambitions. Also on the first days of 2018, his lawyers filed the petition to list the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army as "terrorist organizations." This measure targets not only revolutionary forces but moreso the open democratic movement and legal opposition whom he can arbitrarily harass by accusing them of giving financial and material aid to the NPA. In reality, his reign of terror extends throughout the entire country.

In the midst of all of these, prices of goods and services have successively increased due to neoliberal policies of deregulation and privatization. These will increase further due to new taxes which took effect on January 1 as a result of the TRAIN which was passed last December. No amount of deceit by the regime's economists can cover up the fact that prices will rise due to increased costs of transportation

and other operational costs in importation and production of local businesses. Prices of basic goods are sure to shoot up this year compared to last year. The people are aware that this is to offset the state's lost revenues as it gives tax exemptions to the country's richest families and their corporations, as well as to fund its counterproductive expenditures and pay off its debts.

The tax reform is carried out alongside the opening of social services to foreign and private capital that is also sure to drive up its costs, as well as the pro-foreign and pro-bourgeois comprador Build-Build-Build program that is aimed to layout infrastructure for foreign capital.

Contrary to what Duterte would like to believe, no amount of economic growth spurned by neoliberal policies can save his regime. Only foreign multinational companies and their bureaucrat-capitalist cohorts will benefit from such growth. Such schemes will only aggravate the backwardness of the economy and widespread poverty among the people. Duterte has completely stopped mentioning his campaign

promises of ending contractualization, distribution of land, free irrigation and the like.

Thus, objective conditions are ripe for the overthrow of the criminal, corrupt, puppet and oppressive regime. Duterte's foolish ambition to monopolize political power and the people's money for corruption, as well as his countermanding of his numerous promises, will serve to spur the people to resist and overthrow his regime. Duterte's camp is inherently weak. This is further aggravated by Duterte's gangster, deceitful and criminal methods. This was apparent with the failure of his grandiose scheme for fascist reign, his "revolutionary government," to take off the ground due to the lack of support from the people, parts of the ruling classes and even from the military.

In this light, the revolutionary forces should lead in launching campaigns, both armed and unarmed, to deal strong blows to weaken and eventually overthrow the regime. Mass movements defending the livelihood and welfare of the people should be strengthened alongside the resistance against the regime's fascist measures and triple wars of suppression. The regime's disregard for the people's welfare while defending the imperialist interests and those of the ruling classes should be thoroughly exposed and opposed.

Duterte's overthrow is the most important task at present for the revolutionary forces. It is crucial to the rapid strengthening and growth of the revolutionary forces in order to defend the people against the regime's relentless attacks. The revolutionary forces should take advantage of the cracks among the ruling classes. They should ally with other sectors and groups to create the widest anti-Duterte alliance, including groups with existing sharp contradictions with the revolutionary movement. While these contradictions will not be swept aside, it is imperative that the sharpest blows should be aimed at the semifeudal and semicolonial system's representative, the US-Duterte regime. **AB**



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30% increase in the number of Red Fighters in their front. Majority of these new fighters are intellectuals and/or from the petitbourgeois class. They were also able to form platoon-sized militia and guerrilla units to serve as defense units in their communities. Mass base also grew in numbers even under the continuous attack of the US-Duterte regime among revolutionaries and democratic forces under Oplan Kapayapaan. Based on their statement, the LPC launched more than 20 armed actions since 2017. They were able to confiscate 30 firearms, thousands of rounds of ammunitions and various military equipment.

Meanwhile, hundreds attended the NPA-Ifugao celebrations under Nona del Rosario Command in a municipality in the Cordillera region. The program included a short skit depicting the lives of the NPA and the constant support of the

masses to the people's army. The NPA unit also offered a red salute to revolutionary martyrs Ruben Gumabay, Elorde Miguel and Marcos Aggalao. CPP-Kalinga also slammed the persistent landgrabbing of ancestral lands under the Duterte regime. Through dam constructions in Lucog, Tabuk; Tanudan, Lubuagan and Pasil and geothermal projects in Tinglayan, Lubuagan and Pasil and the implementation of National Greening Program, bourgeois compradors and landlords were able to grab larger portions of ancestral lands in the region.

In Davao City, members of the National Democratic Front also led a lightning rally in Magsaysay Avenue last December 27, 2017. NDF-Mindanao called on revolutionary forces to intensify the struggle against fascist threats of the US-Duterte regime. The group also criticized Duterte's triple wars of



death and destruction and the ongoing martial law in Mindanao. Amidst all these, Ka Joaquin Jacinto, spokesperson of NDF-Mindanao, praised NPA units in Mindanao for launching successful tactical offensives.

According to Jacinto, the New People's Army and the Communist Party of the Philippines are ever ready to face Duterte's full-scale war in 2018 and beyond.

Along with these celebrations, revolutionary organizations from Italy under Front Popolare and Freedom Road Socialist Organization from the US extended solidarity greetings. AB

Duterte's federalism: A ploy for fascist dictatorship

Rodrigo Duterte's federalism scheme is a ploy for fascist dictatorship. This was the statement made by Comrade Jose Maria Sison in an interview last December. According to Sison, Duterte has no plans of establishing a federal form of government. The reality, he wants to build a centralized system of presidential dictatorship over the regional governments run by dynasties, including warlords and the most corrupt bureaucrats like him.

His "supermajority" in congress, who supports this scheme, is now preparing to railroad the resolution to transform congress and senate into a constituent assembly (con-ass) for charter change (cha-cha). Congress has already started deliberation on House Concurrent Resolution No. 9, the proposal to establish "con-ass," last December. The hearings will resume when Congress opens session on January 15. Under the "con-ass" scheme, representatives and senators will create amendments to the constitution within four months. The amendments will then be presented for ratification during the May 18 barangay elections.

Duterte, with the aid of his cohorts, will solely craft the amendments, including the provision in establishing a pseudo-federalist government. According to early reports, one of the featured amendment is the term extension of all incumbent officials, including Duterte, up to 10 years. House speaker Alvarez admitted that the extension could be longer. Duterte has no credibility in his repeated denials of spurring term extension and saying that he will resign immediately if the federal system is approved. He is an expert in playing hard-to-get, which is fueled and exaggerated by his paid propagandists and spokespersons to make him appear that he is not

power-hungry. At the same time, Senator Francis Pangilinan expressed alarm that Duterte can sneak in an amendment like the Amendment No. 6 passed by then Ferdinand Marcos to give himself legislative powers. With this, he can speedily enact policies and programs pushed by his regime, including the complete liberalization of the local economy to imperialist plunder, in exchange of loans worth billions.

In the absence of genuine revolutionary social change, the country will be getting more of the same ruling families of big compradors, landlords and bureaucrat-capitalists at all levels of government, according to Ka Joma. Corruption will continue to run rampant on top of excessive expenditures for establishing and elaborating on the regional level of government. To gain the support of US and other imperialist powers for federalism, the puppet Duterte regime offered the removal of the restrictions for foreign investment in the sectors exclusive for local business. AB

Group denounces fare and price hikes

REP. ARIEL CASILAO of Anakpawis Partylist denounced the outright lies of the Duterte regime and the Department of Trade and Industry that fare and prices of basic commodities will not surge due to TRAIN (Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion), the regime's tax reform program. This January, even businesses selling pork and chicken refuted the statement that prices will not increase because of the new taxes. They said that meat and chicken prices will increase by at least P3.00 per kilo. These will further increase due to their additional expenses in storage that uses electricity.

According to some economists, not only will prices of commodities and services increase, these will rise more rapidly compared to 2017. From 2016 the annual inflation rate already doubled in 2017, from 1.8% to 3.2%. In general, these were due to price increases of food and beverages (3.7%), liquor and cigarette (6.2%), transportation (3.3%), and other home expenditures (2.1%). Prices of meat and fish increased the most, followed by corn and fruits. National Capital Region has the highest inflation, with the average increase of 4% for 2017, faster than 1.9% in the previous year.

For 2018, prices of petroleum products are expected to rise due to the anticipated increase of crude oil from \$53 to \$56 in the world market. Agricultural products will generally increase due to the shortage in global supply. AB

NPA armed actions in Mindanao exceed 700 in 2017

An average of two armed actions each day was launched by the New People's Army in Mindanao last year in response to the US-Duterte regime's all-out war. These include more than 180 in North Eastern Mindanao, 131 in North Central Mindanao, more or less 80 in Western Mindanao, 219 in Southern Mindanao and more than 100 in Far South Mindanao. Initial reports indicate no less than 266 firearms confiscated from these actions.

Also resulting from the armed actions in the island for the previous year, the Duterte regime's armed forces suffered casualties of almost two battalions (more than 500 killed and more than 200 wounded). More than 11 elements of the AFP, PNP and their paramilitaries were also held prisoners by units of the NPA.

In addition, a number of plantations and companies gravely exploiting and oppressing workers, peasants and Lumads and destroying the environment were meted with punishment.

In a statement by Ka Joaquin Jacinto, National Democratic Front-Mindanao spokesperson, he said that in confronting an AFP military campaign gone berserk, NPA units in Mindanao maintained a forward-looking and offensive posture. As a result of this, the NPA was able to sustain a high morale in its commitment to serve and defend the masses.

Likewise, no NPA unit in the island was wiped out despite the AFP's use of airstrikes, prolonged focus operations and drone strikes. Also in combination with these are constant black propaganda, bogus peace caravans and the incessant parade of fake or recycled surrenderees. In fact, Jac-

into said, the number of NPA platoons and companies increased from the previous year.

NCMR's march

With CPP-NCMR spokesperson Ka Norcen Mangubat at the lead, the Party lauded the region's revolutionary forces and the people for their victories in 2017 in building the people's army, expanding the mass base, launching mass campaigns and furthering the advance of the region's armed struggle. These victories were achieved despite the reactionary state's widespread and intensified attacks in the region.

In the span of one year, villages covered by the revolutionary movement increased by 17%. Alongside this is the simultaneous increase in the number of organized masses by 21%. Twenty two campaigns were launched, including for agrarian revolution and mass struggles for the people's rights to land, livelihood, decent living and the like. These campaigns were launched up to inter-municipal level, benefitting thousands of families.

Forty-three batches of the Basic Party Course were held in the region,



as well as two batches of the Advance Course. Party membership rose by 13%.

According to Ka Malem Mabini, spokesperson for the NPA in the region, the increase in membership in the people's army is a result of mass struggles and enlistment programs. These additional personnel of the people's army have helped in expansion work to other areas never before reached by organizing work. Likewise, membership in the militia increased, lending support in launching tactical offensives, safeguarding the people's government and recruitment for the army.

Several batches of the Basic Politico-Military Course were also launched in the region, involving numerous NPA officers and fighters. Part of their training is participating in actual combat in offensives being launched against the enemy through raids, ambushes and others.

Ka Malem added that in 2018, the people in the region could be certain that the revolutionary forces will gather all efforts in order to achieve the strategic stalemate phase of the people's war. "The Duterte regime, along with its paid AFP and PNP, is dreaming that they could wipe out the revolutionary movement. They will fail. The people and the revolutionary forces will not give up victories established in five decades." AB

NPA-SMR launches active defense against the AFP

Units of the New People's Army in Southern Mindanao Region (NPA-SMR) have taken active defense between December 27-30, 2017 in order to thwart attacks by troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and counter its violations of the unilateral ceasefires.

According to Rigoberto Sanchez, NPA-SMR Regional Operations Command spokesperson, enemy troops suffered 26 casualties from five armed actions launched by Red fighters in Davao Oriental during this period. All these offensives were undertaken with utmost adherence to the unilateral ceasefire declaration by the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines from 6:00 p.m. of December 23 to 6:00 p.m. of December 26, and from 6:00 p.m. of December 30 until 6:00 p.m. of January 2.

Sanchez clarified that there is no truth to the 10th ID's pronouncement that the NPA conducted a harassment operation against a CAFGU outpost and "chased" one of its elements last December 25. In truth, soldiers have continuously launched operations in Barangay Tubaon, Tarragona, Davao Oriental since December 23, the start of the AFP's declared ceasefire.

On December 28, in between the two ceasefires, Red fighters ambushed operating troops in sitios Gibaan and Batabato where 16 soldiers were killed and two wounded. On December 30 at 6:00 a.m., hours before the second ceasefire commenced, NPA units again harassed combined troops of the 28th IB and Scout Rangers in Sitio Madian, resulting to eight more casualties. One Red fighter was martyred in this battle.

In contrast, the AFP's violations of its own ceasefire were unrelenting. During this period, the AFP aggressively positioned its combat troops and sowed terror in civilian communities in eight municipalities of the region.

Included in these is the militarization of four communities in Barangay Kapalong, Davao del Norte by troops belonging to the 60th IB, 72nd IB and their paramilitaries Alamara from December 19, 2017. The soldiers enforced food

blockade, forcing the Lumads to flee from their communities.

Military operations in North Cotabato were also unremitting. In Arakan, the newly-deployed 15th IB subjected the whole town to intense militarization with its troops launching daily combat operations even during the ceasefire period.

In Magpet town, troops belonging to the 39th IB launched operations from December 23 up to January 2 in Barangay Mahongcog and planned to construct a detachment in the middle of the civilian community. In Barangay Tiko, 39th IB soldiers and the paramilitary Bagani scoured the Lumad communities from December 21-26. Last December 21, at 3:00 a.m., the AFP shelled the said community using fighter planes. They also launched no less than 10 rounds of mortar shelling that lasted until noon of the same day. Following this, farms were destroyed and civilian houses were ransacked by the soldiers.

In Compostela Valley, troops from the 46th IB and 71st IB launched offensive operations in the communities of Tapan and Mascared; in Malamodao, Panibasan and Panganan in Maco town; and in Lawaan, Pangasan and Palo in Pantukan town from December 23-26.

These operations are futile attempts by the AFP and the regime to prevent the people and the NPA from holding celebrations for the CPP's 49th anniversary, Sanchez said. This proves, like in the past, that the AFP has no intention of abiding by its own ceasefire declarations.

The NPA in the region will continue to defend the masses and the political authority of the People's Democratic Government, added Sanchez. These offensives serve to underscore the people's growing demand to overthrow the US-Duterte regime.

Last December 22, 2017, in its ceasefire declaration, the National Operational Command of the NPA ordered all its units to stay alert and prepared for any action and movement by units of the AFP, similar to the six-month ceasefire last 2016. The reactionary military exploited the ceasefire in order to occupy and position troops in more than 500 villages in the whole country. Human rights violations by its troops against civilians and their communities were unremitting. From July 2017, AFP troops have already killed more than 129 activists, mainly peasants in areas with disputes on land ownership. There are also mounting cases of illegal arrests of activists and progressives, as well as forced evacuations due to intense militarization, bombings and shellings. AB

NPA releases 2 POWs

AS A SHOW of goodwill for the peace negotiations, Front 16 of the New People's Army-North Eastern Mindanao Region (NEMR) released prisoners of war PO2 Jhon Paul M. Doverte and PO2 Alfredo L. Degamon last December 20, 2017. The two were arrested after Red fighters successfully raided a police outpost in Bad-as, Placer, Surigao del Norte on November 13, 2017.

During the investigation, it was ascertained that the two policemen were involved in peddling illegal drugs and extortion of small-scale miners in Placer. The two POWs were under the care of the New People's Army (NPA)-Front 16 Custodial Force for 36 days. The NPA ensured that provisions under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and international protocols of war were strictly followed, including their security, health and food.

The POWs were earlier scheduled to be released last December 5, 2017, in response to the appeals of the family of the two policemen and the peace efforts of the people in the region and the country. But due to the continued military operations of the AFP's 402nd IBde and PNP Caraga in the municipalities of Surigao del Norte where the POWs were to be released, their release were cancelled on that day.

Through the sincere efforts of the third party facilitators, officials of the local government unit, church people, concerned individuals and with the help of the people, the release of the POWs finally pushed through. Despite the statement of the AFP and PNP that they will not stop military operations, close to 500 people attended the event. AB

Duterte and Aquino regimes should be held accountable for the Dengvaxia crisis

LAST DECEMBER 22, Gabriela, Gabriela Women's Party and the Association for the Rights of Children in Southeast Asia filed a petition in the Supreme Court and Office of the Ombudsman to hold the Aquino and Duterte regimes accountable for the health crisis brought about by the P3.5 billion Dengvaxia vaccine.

More than 70 parents and their children charged the two consecutive administrations in their improbity and lack of research with regards to the effects of the vaccine.

The groups also called for the immediate release of aid to more than 850,000 victims of the anti-dengue vaccine, and free medical services to anyone diagnosed with severe dengue or any known side effects of Dengvaxia.

"The danger brought by Dengvaxia, which was carelessly injected to more than 850,000 students is enough reason for the courts to act," said Rep. Emmi de Jesus of Gabriela Women's Party.

The doctors of Philippine Gen-

eral Hospital are set to review the deaths of 14 children injected with Dengvaxia. Before this, Gabriela held a protest in front of the Department of Health (DOH) office. They called the Dengvaxia fiasco a 'potential health crisis' and the DOH should not belittle and ignore the irregularities in the vaccination.

Confronted by the controversy, Sanofi Pasteur, the company which developed Dengvaxia, issued a statement that only individuals who already had dengue should have been vaccinated. Those who have not acquired dengue will only be made more vulnerable to more serious effects of the disease. AB

Workers' protests

WORKERS OF COCA-COLA FEMSA Philippines in Pulong, Sta. Cruz, Laguna successfully fought for the regularization of 300 contractual workers who were arbitrarily dismissed by the management last year. They held a picket-protest on December 18, 2017 to assert the implementation of the DOLE decision to regularize the workers. Last January 5, the collective bargaining agreement between United Coca-cola Workers Union-Ilaw at Buklod ng Manggagawa-KMU and Coca-cola Femsa was signed. Regularization of the contractuels was among those achieved.

More than 30 warehouse workers in Leyte Home Depot led by Katrabaho-KMU, an organization of warehouse workers in Tacloban, picketed last January 4. They demanded for a P0.50 increase per sack for every sack of cement they move. Currently, the workers are paid P1.50 per sack of

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cement. Warehouse operations were paralyzed for two days due to the management's non-cooperation. The warehouse workers also picketed in front of the DOLE regional office, alongside porters. According to the group, they have no benefits during accidents. Even their *noche-buena* (midnight feast) were taken back after the management took a photo of some food stuffs with the workers in the background.

Meanwhile, KMU-Southern Mindanao and BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) led a liturgy for the 38 fire victims in SSI/NCCC mall on January 3. They appealed for a speedy investigation to the incident. **AB**

Palparan-like horror in ComVal

Under the Duterte regime, the terrorist horror sowed by Jovito Palparan, the butcher of US-Arroyo regime, reigns. Like the brothers Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo of Central Luzon, who were severely tortured and attempted to be killed by the soldiers under Palparan on February 2006, two activists were illegally arrested, tortured to the extreme and were left for dead.

The story started when elements of 71st IB in Tagum City illegally arrested Janry Mensis, 22, and Jerry (not his real name), 16, both small-scale miners and farmers, on November 28. They are members of Kahugpungan sa mga Mag-uuma sa Maco (Kamao). According to Mensis' statement, they were at Jerry's aunt's house in Barangay Visayan Village in Tagum City when they decided to buy *balut* in town. They were eating when four suspected soldiers approached them and accused them of being thieves. Two of the soldiers were identified as Medina and Cantoba.

Medina and Cantoba brought the victims to the police station, where they were interrogated and photographed. Police returned them to the soldiers' custody after the investigation. From the station, the victims were transferred to the 71st IB camp in Mawab, Compostela Valley where they were repeatedly beaten by soldiers Ferol and Cuevas. They were tied for nine days to

a military ambulance parked inside the camp and were fed for only six days.

On December 6, at midnight, they were forced to wear soldiers' uniforms, tied and made to ride a military truck along with 20 soldiers.

They were brought to a deserted part of Barangay Masara, Compostela Valley where they were hog-tied, with mouths wrapped in packaging tape.

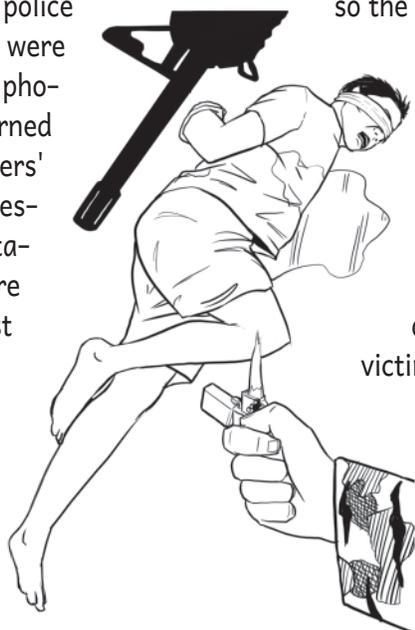
The victims heard the soldiers' plan to kill them. They were brought near the grave dug by soldiers and strangled with a rope. Because of fear, they feigned unconsciousness

so the soldiers had to drag them to their grave.

They were thrown to the pit, covered with wood, crude oil, and set afire.

The soldiers quickly left. When the soldiers were gone, the

victims had the chance to run and save themselves from the fire, but Janry acquired third-degree burns. They reported to Karap-



atan on December 12 and are currently in the custody of their organization.

Arrests, killings continue

A mass-leader and an activist were killed and one was arrested on the last quarter of December, in time for the people's Christmas celebrations.

Last December 21, Flora Jemola, 63, resident of Hacienda Susana, Sagay City, Negros Occidental, was stabbed to death by suspected military agents. Nanay Flora is the chairperson of National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) in Sagay City, active in the struggle of sugar workers in Northern Negros. Her body was found in her farm, a few meters away from her home. She suffered eight stabs in her body. Edwin Magallanes, 38, resident of Purok Juan, Panikian Banay-Banay, Davao Oriental, was shot dead by suspected military agents under the 28th IB on December 21, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. Magallanes is a member of Abanterong Nakigbisog (Aban-tena), he is also one of those opposing the large-scale mining and militarization in the peasant and Lumad communities. On the same day, elements of the Philippine National Police in Abra de Ilog, Mindoro Occidental arrested Junjun Carandang, 18, and Dolores Solangon, 40, residents of Barangay Balao, Abra de Ilog at 7:00 p.m. Their arrest were based on trumped-up charges filed in 2008. Carandang and Solangon are currently detained in Abra de Ilog municipal station.

Last December 15, 1:00 a.m., two unidentified men forcibly entered and terrorized a house of Moro women inside the UCCP compound in Barangay San Isidro, General Santos City. They tried to enter the room of Ali Macalintal, 31, Bayan Soccksargen media liaison. Macalintal was not home during the incident. **AB**