

LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL

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Youths protest against government corruption. Photo by CJ Chanco; Arkibong Bayan.

Anti-corruption protests target Aquino clique

By **Ang Bayan**
with a report by **Roselle Valerio**

Over the past several days, the Filipino people have continuously been expressing their disenchantment over widespread corruption in the use of pork barrel funds and the rottenness of the entire ruling system. They have launched protest actions nationwide, marking the breadth of their disgust and disappointment with Aquino's failed promises of "good governance."

Disclosures about the Aquino regime's creation and use of the so-called Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) have only succeeded in further stoking the fires of the Filipino people's anger. The DAP is a system of releasing public funds that is not in accordance with the approved budget and is dependent solely on the president's discretion.

Aquino used the DAP to provide hundreds of millions of pesos to senators who sided with him in convicting and ousting former Supreme Court chief justice Renato Corona. The DAP was also used to accelerate the release of funds for congressmen and senators to secure their support for bills that Aquino personally campaigned for.

The DAP and Aquino's other pork barrel funds have been met with a swarm of criticism. A number of lawyers have already petitioned the Supreme Court to put a stop to this illegal system and others are now seeking Aquino's removal from power either through impeachment or resignation.

All this proves that the people are no longer fooled by Aquino's "good governance" slogan, which so obviously serves as a thin veil for widespread corruption. His endless accusations and constant hoopla about the former Arroyo regime's corruption now

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rankles the people. These are all clearly aimed at shouting down criticisms of corruption against his own regime.

The Aquino government is now scrambling to deflect and stifle people's protests against the pork barrel even as it maintains the corrupt system of budgeting, which accommodates huge unprogrammed funds directly under Aquino's control. In the face of increasing protests against the pork barrel and corruption, Aquino has been frenziedly maneuvering politically to cover up the fact that he is at the top of the totem pole of the rotten pork barrel system and corruption. Nonetheless, he could hardly conceal his annoyance at being aptly dubbed the "pork barrel king".

Aquino continues to exploit the big scandal involving Janet Lim-Napoles to selectively persecute political rivals, especially those who are set to challenge the ruling clique in the 2016 elections. To further infuriate the people about Napoles, Aquino has exposed her transactions with anti-Aquino politicians even as he closely controls her to prevent her from disclosing her dealings with politicians within the Aquino clique.

After the Department of Justice's much-publicized move to file plunder cases against key opposition politicians failed to silence the people's protests, the Aquino regime slapped Gloria Arroyo and Napoles with an additional complaint for squandering the Malampaya funds. But this is all a grand publicity gimmick. The ruling Aquino clique has yet to prove that it is capable of seriously subjecting members of its own class to criminal prosecution and punishment.

The Filipino people, however, are keenly aware that corruption involving the pork barrel funds goes beyond the Napoles scandal. Politicians from the reactionary ruling classes have been routinely engaged in bribery, kickbacks and other pork barrel-related corruption long before Napoles came into the picture. Aquino himself received pork barrel funds in 2005, when his clan was still in good terms with the Arroyo regime. Since 2010, it has been Aquino's turn to use the pork barrel as an instrument to ensure political support for his regime. His use of these funds emboldens Aquino to immediately preempt any move by Congress to impeach him.

The Filipino people have clearly expressed the conviction that the Priority Development Assistance Fund (the congressional pork barrel), the Presidential Social Fund, the DAP, and all other unprogrammed funds whose disposition is entirely in the hands of the ruling clique in Malacañang must be abolished.

They have spurned the so-called new budgeting system which still grants congressmen the privilege of identifying infrastructure projects to be implemented by the Department of Public Works and Highways – a system long ridden with

corruption in the form of kickbacks and manipulated bidding. As before, it is a system that promotes patronage politics.

In advancing their struggle against the pork barrel and corruption by the ruling state, the Filipino people must train their sights on Benigno Aquino III. Not only does he sit at the top of the rotten state, he is first and foremost its main beneficiary and apologist. Aquino uses his control over billions upon billions of pesos worth of funds to buy the support of politicians and secure his rule. After three years of corruption under Aquino, it has become clear that he merely rode on the people's rage against the rottenness of the former Arroyo regime in order to conceal his own filthiness.

The Aquino regime's corruption must be exposed in more detail. We must show how he used the pork barrel funds to obtain political support in the last elections. Aside from the pork barrel, we must likewise expose how Aquino has been using his power as president to cancel contracts entered into by the Philippine government under the past regime, only to create new contracts favoring his close relatives, family members and cronies.

We must expose information regarding the clinching of big public infrastructure contracts, tax incentives and other privileges to the detriment of the people. A striking example is the demolition of urban poor communities to give way to projects of Aquino's big businessman-cohorts.

The ruling system presided over by Aquino, his fellow big landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie is inherently corrupt and rotten to the core. The socio-economic system is backward and decaying. It is unproductive and incapable of sustaining itself except through capital infusions from foreign debt and investments. The ruling classes are anti-progress and parasitical and rely merely on their political power to sustain their profligate lifestyles.

Meanwhile, officials of the Negotiating Panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines based in the Netherlands called for a "moral regeneration" and regime change, amidst the widespread indignation against government corruption. In a video interview released at press time by *Liberation International*, Prof. Jose Maria Sison, founding Chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines and NDFP Chief Political Consultant, explained that most of the top officials in the Aquino regime are rotten and are involved in misappropriating billions of pesos of public funds. (*go to <http://www.ndfp.net> to watch the interviews, in Tagalog*)

Prof. Sison stressed that president Aquino himself has been exposed as rotten, his so-called "righteous path" exposed as an "immoral rut". The same goes with his vice president Jejomar Binay, Senate President Franklin Drilon, and Supreme Court Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno. There is

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SONA 2013: Aquino covers up intensifying poverty, corruption, people's resistance

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

The fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA) delivered by Philippine president Benigno Aquino III on 22 July 2013 attempted to present a glossy picture of the state of the Filipino nation. But this was frustrated by the tens of thousands of people who poured onto the streets that day, not only around the parliament complex where Aquino delivered his lies, but also in many other cities around the country.

As Aquino enters his fourth year in power, intensifying

and increased people's protests have marked the state of the nation, wherein poverty, unemployment, bureaucratic corruption, political killings, disappearances, fascist abuses by state security forces, and surging social injustices remain the hallmarks of a regime hyped as "daang matuwid" (righteous path).

Since the beginning of this year, demolitions and violent attacks of urban poor communities by the Aquino regime have intensified on the false claims of solving the perennial

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SONA protest, 22 July 2013. Photo by Arkibong Bayan.



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thus nobody whom the people can trust, and constitutionally authorized, to replace the corruption-tainted ruling clique.

History has shown that the Filipino people are capable of overthrowing corrupt and dictatorial regimes, explained Prof. Sison.

"A National Council for Moral Regeneration should be convened, composed of representatives from the peasants, workers, middle classes, academics, former top government officials, and supported by the religious and the military," Prof. Sison added.

Also interviewed were Luis G. Jalandoni, Chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel, Fidel V. Agcaoili, Chairperson of the NDFP Human Rights Committee, and Coni K. Ledesma, Chairperson of the NDFP Special Office for the Protection of Children.

Jalandoni pointed out that the people can rise up and topple the Aquino regime. The people's democratic government, established by the revolutionary movement in 70 provinces across the country, will lend its support to the formation of a Council for Moral Regeneration, and also provide advice

in running after the plunderers in the Aquino regime, he declared.

The NDFP officials pointed out that the protest movement should spread out across the country, targeting the entire Aquino ruling clique. Agcaoili added that Filipinos working overseas should also be involved with the protests because their dollar remittances, amounting to more than US\$21 billion in 2012, have been a major source of corruption for Aquino officials.

"These corrupt government officials have robbed the people and our children of a future," Ledesma stated.

Prof. Sison added, "The new government should investigate and punish these PIGS – Plunderers In Government Service – in order to show the people that all who are culpable should be put behind bars."

The Filipino people must put a stop to the pork barrel system. They must likewise demand the end of the bureaucrat capitalist corruption of the ruling classes of big landlords and big compradors. The Filipino people must overthrow the rotten semicolonial and semifeudal system that is at the foundation of this system of corruption. ■

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flooding of Metro Manila. The demolitions affect dozens of urban poor communities and more than one million residents. However, behind these demolitions are about 50 so-called public-private partnership projects (PPP) that would convert the real estate to commercial purposes and would only benefit big business and Aquino's political henchmen.

Corporate totalitarianism has taken over health, education, public utilities, transportation and communication services. Aquino's own family-owned agricultural estate Hacienda Luisita, has yet to be distributed to the farm workers and residents of the hacienda. The Supreme Court had earlier recognized the right of the beneficiaries to the land but its implementation has been met with various legal stumbling blocks and the militarization of the hacienda by the Aquino family.

While Aquino hyped about economic accomplishments that benefited his big business cronies and foreign transnationals, 11.88 million of the population were jobless in 2012. Unemployment even rose to 7.5 percent in April this year from last year's 6.9 percent, according to the latest Labor Force Survey. These conservative estimates do not even include the more than 20 percent underemployment rate for 2012. These all mean increasing poverty and misery, and panic for survival, as even more Filipinos join the diaspora to find survival abroad.

More than a million undocumented Filipino migrant workers could now be found working under worse labor conditions in the US, Europe and the Middle East. They are deprived of any substantial support from their embassies and the Aquino regime, which earns billions of US dollars from migrants' remittances.

Further hyping his supposed holy crusade against corruption, Aquino publicly berated officials of the rotten Bureau of Customs for their failure to stamp out corruption in the agency. At the same time, however, he avoided mentioning his regime's failure to prosecute the mafia godmother herself, former president Gloria Arroyo and her henchmen and relatives. He was equally mum about the corrupt deals of his own relatives and friends – these were exposed prior to the presidential address but were painstakingly “fixed” by presidential spin-doctors.

Weeks after the presidential SONA, the biggest exposé is now revealing the gravity of the plunder of public funds

International contingent at SONA protest. Photo by ST Exposure.



by the highest officials of the Aquino government. Aquino and his henchmen are scampering to prevent the threat of an EDSA-type people's uprising, as the people's anger and disillusionment heat up to a boiling point.

As more than 20,000 protesters from militant people's organizations marched towards the parliament building where Aquino delivered his prattle on 22 July, the regime ordered hundreds of its police forces to block the main roads. But the protesters stood their ground and asserted not only their right to assemble, but also their right to expose and condemn the Aquino regime's pro-elite, pro-US and pro-big business economic and social policies, and its dirty war against the Filipino people.

Scores were seriously hurt as the armed police attacked the protesters, who resisted and secured their ranks and valiantly held a lengthy program. Joining the protesters' ranks were about 100 foreign nationals from the US, Canada, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. They joined the SONA demonstration to be in solidarity with the people's movement to uphold human rights and peace.

Majority of the international contingent had joined the International Conference for Human Rights and Peace held in Manila the previous weekend. Among the topics discussed were the gross human rights abuses being committed under the Aquino government – 142 extrajudicial killings, 16 enforced disappearances, 164 frustrated extrajudicial killings, and more than 200 political prisoners. Aquino's “counterinsurgency” war against the Filipino people remains in force, targeting indigenous communities, landless peasants, workers unions, militant students, professionals, and church workers, whenever they assert their individual and collective rights. (*see story on page 5*)

The State of the Nation Address of 2013 showed the Filipino people and the whole world that Aquino does not comprehend the country's basic problems. Nor is his regime interested in defending the country's sovereignty and patrimony, and in developing the country through genuine agrarian reform, national industrialization.

Aquino's SONA shows clearly that the people should not sit idly and wait for crumbs from the local ruling classes, but instead surge ahead in waging democratic mass struggles and armed resistance, in order to assert their nationalist and democratic demands. The people's aspirations for national independence, democracy, and economic development are their biggest motives for advancing the People's War to the next strategic stage. ■



Conference delegates join press conference (left to right): Rev. Chris Ferguson (Colombia); Ron Gochez (US); Atty. Azadeh Shahshahani (US); Atty. Anna Claire Morris (UK); Prof. Gill Boehringer (Australia); and Rep. Teodoro Casiño (Philippines). Photo from www.humanrightphilippines.net.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE IN THE PHILIPPINES

International conference condemns US-Aquino regime's brutality

By Isah Antonio

Uphold People's Rights! Work for Peace! Fight for Justice! Build Solidarity and Resistance with the People of the Philippines and the World!, these were the clarion calls to action of more than 280 representatives of people's organizations, religious institutions, human rights advocates, defenders and victims, people's lawyers, and peace advocates who participated in the International Conference for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (ICHRPP) on 19-21 July 2013 in Quezon City, Philippines.

Coming from 26 countries from North America, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, Oceania and Europe, the delegates and observers engaged in five panel discussions and ten workshops covering in-depth topics on human rights, people's struggle for national and social liberation, and peace.

The International Conference was organized by the International Coordinating Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines with KARAPATAN (Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights), the Ecumenical Voice for Peace and Human Rights in the Philippines, Peace for Life Network, and the International League of Peoples' Struggle.

Among the prominent guests of the conference were: Jeanne Mirer, President of the 700-strong International Association of Democratic Lawyers; Azadeh Shahshahani, President of the National Lawyers Guild in the US; Anna Claire Morris, Vice-Chairperson of the Haldane Society of Socialist

Lawyers (UK); Jan Fermon, Co-Head of the Progress Lawyers Network (Belgium), and Bureau member of the IADL; Prof. Gill Boehringer of the International Association of People's Lawyers, and former Dean of Macquarie University Law School (Australia); Marta Benavidez of Siglo XXIII (El Salvador); David Wildman of the General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church (US); and Antonio Tujan, Co-Chair, CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (Philippines).

The Conference identified, examined, and analyzed the social, economic, political, and the geopolitical context of the worsening violations of collective and individual rights in the Philippines. It identified the Filipino people's commonalities with progressive forces in various countries confronting people's and human rights issues, and on these bases sought to develop, expand and consolidate the Philippine movement of international solidarity to defend, uphold and advance human rights and people's rights.

The participants also assessed the significance of the combined domestic and international human rights solidarity campaigns concerning the Philippines since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship, and drew up a plan for an international solidarity campaign for peace, human rights and people's rights culminating in the next international conference in 2016, the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Marcos dictatorship.

Under a semicolonial and semifeudal system in the Philippines, human rights of the basic masses of workers

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Justice denied to Edita Burgos and family

By Ed Ladera

The Department of Justice (DOJ) of the Aquino regime on 3 September 2013 cleared General Eduardo Año and other top military officials of charges implicating them in the enforced disappearance of activist Jonas Burgos. Jonas, son of press freedom icon Jose Burgos was abducted on 28 April 2007, and remains missing until now.

This act of the DOJ contradicted the decision of the Court of Appeals on 27 March 2013 holding the same officials accountable for the crime which Jonas' mother, Edita, has tirelessly campaigned against since 2007. The DOJ also

ordered the dropping of murder charges because the corpse of Jonas has not been produced.

To add insult to injury, the regime's Commission on Appointments on 25 September approved President Aquino's earlier appointment of General Año as the new Chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP).

Ms. Burgos presented strong evidence that General Año was implicated in the abduction and covered it up. She and human rights organizations in the Philippines and abroad vehemently condemn the Aquino regime for this blatant case of injustice. ■



Panel speakers on "Struggle for Just and Lasting Peace". (left-right): Anna Claire Morris, UK; Azadeh Shahshahani, USA; and Jose Enrique Africa, Philippines. Photo from www.humanrightspilippines.net.

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and peasants, and even the middle class, are violated daily through their exploitation and oppression by the ruling classes of landlords, comprador bourgeoisie, and foreign monopoly capitalists. The present Philippine reactionary state headed by Benigno Aquino III is an instrument of oppression and exploitation that violates the guarantees of civil and political rights as inscribed in the bill of rights of its own constitution and also in the United Nations instruments on human rights.

The Conference condemned not only the inaction of the Aquino government but its perpetration of the continuing state brutality. To date, the Aquino regime has claimed 142 victims of extrajudicial killings, 16 enforced disappearances, 540 illegal arrests, 76 cases of torture, 30,678 forced evacuations, 31,417 cases of threats/harassment/ intimidation, and 31,417 cases of the use of schools, medical, religious and other public places for military purposes. These are aside from the thousands more victims of past regimes, who have yet to see justice for themselves and their families.

The recent promotions of high-ranking military officials who are known human rights violators are a manifestation of the Aquino regime's stand on human rights. (See article above)

The Filipino people and their friends around the world find it imperative to renew their commitment to human rights,

which includes civil and political rights as well as social, economic and cultural rights.

In the General Declaration issued by the Conference participants, they clearly and determinedly manifested their support for the Filipino people's defense of human rights. They declared:

"We salute the determination of the Filipino people in their struggle for genuine sovereignty and democracy.

"We agree to further develop international cooperation to put a stop to state repression that breeds a culture of impunity in the Philippines and elsewhere; to pursue justice for the countless victims of human right violations in the country and elsewhere, and to build a strong solidarity network for human rights, peace and justice in the Philippines that supports similar struggles in other countries.

"We extend our solidarity to peoples of other countries and nations resisting neoliberal globalization, military expansionism and aggressive wars pushed by the US, its allies and client-states."

The participants all agreed to further advance the people's struggle in the Philippines and in the world to uphold the fundamental rights of the people, fight for social justice and against all forms of inequality, and work for genuine peace in the Philippines and in the world. ■

People's protests on the rise

By Ed Ladera

Besides the massive and widespread protests against government corruption in the Pork Barrel scandal, other people's protests are on the rise in different parts of the country.

Anti-feudal struggles in Southwest Negros, in central Philippines, starting in 2012 have benefited 1,500 families or 15,000 individuals. At the start, the masses were mobilized to campaign for driving away the destructive foreign mining companies. At the same time, the New People's Army carried out tactical offensives against Philex and Maricalum mining corporations. Subsequently, the campaign to raise farmworkers' wages in the sugar industry was launched and the raising of prices for agricultural products such as coffee and banana. Exploitative practices in the coconut industry were opposed for the benefit of the coconut workers.

The workers under the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU - May First Movement) picketed the office of the National Capital Region Wage Board in Manila on 16 August. They condemned the miniscule wage increase legislated by the Aquino government, and demanded the approval of a separate House Bill proposing instead a 125-peso (US\$ 3) increase in the daily wage.

On 13 August, the KMU protested against the 0.6% increase in their contribution to the Social Security System (SSS), and the changing of the payment sharing scheme with their employers, from 70-30 to 50-50. This means the workers have to pay P60 more per month. They exposed that this additional imposition is made to pay the P1.1 trillion debt of the SSS. They pointed out that in 2010 alone, SSS profits reached P345 million from the workers' contribution. They estimate that the SSS gets P20 billion yearly from workers' contributions, in addition to the P 8.5 billion received from the capitalists. They also demanded that the bonuses given to the SSS management be stopped immediately.

Drivers and operators of 1000 buses in Manila went on strike on 27 August against the Metro Manila Development Authority and Manila City authorities for prohibiting provincial buses from entering the metropolis. This order,

according to the strikers, prejudices the workers and other commuters, as well as the drivers and operators.

More than 500 small coconut farmers marched on 20 August from the Department of Agriculture office to the residence of President Aquino in Quezon City. They condemned the use of P305 million of the Coco Levy Fund to set up the agro-industrial estate project in five regions of the country. The Coco Levy Fund was set up by the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1973, imposing a tax on coconut farmers. This fund, which grew to more than P60 billion was stolen from the farmers by Marcos crony Eduardo Cojuangco, an uncle of President Aquino. Members of the Bicol Planters Association, Inc. and United Farmers of Quezon launched the protest to mark the 40th anniversary of the setting up of the Fund.

The farmers also protested against the decision of Aquino's executive secretary Paquito Ochoa's to cancel Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (CLOA) already granted to farmer-beneficiaries. Ochoa used the false claim that these lands were "industrial", and therefore not suited for distribution to farmers.

The urban poor and fisherfolk in Cavite, south of Manila, demanded on 17 August the immediate closure of the depot of oil company, Petron in Rosario, Cavite. The leak of the Petron pipeline on 9 August destroyed the livelihood and damaged the health of the poor community and fisherfolk in the area.

On 9 August, the alliance of pedicab and tricycle drivers in Manila protested against Mayor Joseph Estrada, the former president convicted of plunder. They decried the way that Estrada is treating them like garbage that he wants to throw away.

On 7 August, more than 500 indigenous people rallied in front of the headquarters of the Armed Force of the Philippines Eastern Mindanao Command. They came from Loreto, Agusan del Sur, but are now in an evacuation center in Davao City. They demanded an immediate stop to the food blockade imposed on their communities. They likewise called for the withdrawal of the armed troops from the area.

Because of the intense militarization, many of them have

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"Mining, eco-tourism, militarization, are not solutions to our hunger": Residents of southern Negros. Photo by Defend Patrimony Negros



People's War surges forward in Southern Tagalog

Report from Kalatas
Official news organ of the revolutionary people
of Southern Tagalog

The New People's Army continues to reap victories in the last three months for the People's War in the Southern Tagalog Region. In Quezon province, the NPA brilliantly maintained military initiative, frustrating the attacks of the mercenary troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Meanwhile, NPA units in Rizal province and in the islands of Mindoro and Palawan launched victorious tactical offensives against various enemy units.

The Apolonio Mendoza Command, NPA-Quezon, frustrated the military strike of the 74th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army in Barangay (village) San Vicente Kanluran, Catanauan, Quezon on 16 September 2013. The Red fighters were conducting their morning exercises when the attack began at 06:55.

When the mercenary troops began shooting, the guerrillas immediately launched defensive maneuvers and fired back against the attackers. The NPA unit was then able to seize the initiative, each team brilliantly fighting back, which caused great damage against the enemy troopers.

Seven soldiers were reported to have died in the firefight. No one was injured among the Red fighters and they withdrew safely from the area.

Offensives in Mindoro island

On 7 September 2013, the Lucio de Guzman Command,

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become sick, some needed hospitalization. The military is protecting the New Britain Palm Oil Limited that is expanding to 11 villages in Loreto. The Aquino regime also allowed the Chinese company, Seng Hong Exploration, to operate in 750,000 hectares in the Agusan Marsh, which has rich deposits of natural gas.

The Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) continues to demand a stop to the use of the Philex Mining Corporation of the Philex TP3 Tailings Pond. On 1 August 2012, the TP3 collapsed and 30 million tons of mine waste poisoned the Balog Creek, Agno River, San Roque River, and the surrounding communities. The Tailings Pond is the storage place of the mining waste, from which Philex gets the 40% content of gold.

Philex never cleaned up the areas damaged. Nor had it ever paid compensation. More than 14,000 Igorot citizens suffered damage. Their farms cannot be planted to rice because of the accumulated sand and chemicals. On 1 August 2013, the community residents rallied against the Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) which allowed Philex to again use the TP3.

Meanwhile, the Association of Indigenous Peoples (KAMP) condemned the Aquino regime for continuing to use



NPA-Mindoro, cracked down on the Jomarias International Corporation, a construction company of local politician Jose Villarosa. Villarosa was formerly the mayor of San Jose in Occidental Mindoro and member of the Philippine Congress. Community residents have been complaining about the operations of the company, despoiling Caguray River, and damaging their sources of livelihood.

The Red fighters trooped to the company's premises in Paclolo-Purnaga, in Magsaysay town, and burned down two dump trucks, one payloader, and two mixers.

On 26 August, a unit of the NPA-Mindoro frustrated an armed assault by the 4th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army in Barangay Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro. In the ensuing firefight, one mercenary soldier was killed and two

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government funds to finance the Philex Mining Corporation. The Social Security System owns 20.58 % of the stocks of Philex.

The union in the Filipinas Palm Oil Plantation, Inc. (FPPI) successfully struggled for the return to work of 293 workers. They were dismissed in October 2012 because they gave a report to the Department of Labor and Employment regarding the widespread violations of labor law committed by the management. They exposed the lack of protection for the 600 workers and the denial of worker benefits. The dismissed workers were taken back, but as "casuals". The union declared they will fight for the workers' regularization.

The Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR) condemned the Anti-Child Labor Program of the Aquino regime. The regime could not stop the use of child labor by the Oil Palm plantation. The CTUHR exposed that in 2012, 24% of the workers of FPPI were between 5 and 17 years of age. They received less than the minimum wage and were classified for long periods as casuals, although their work was as heavy as the other workers'. For example, they would be paid P3 for one bundle of palm oil fruit, weighing 15 kilos. They would carry up to 50 bundles, earning only P150 per day, working up to 10 hours. In general, child labor is widespread in agriculture. The International Labor Organization reported that almost 50% of workers in agriculture are children. (*Ang Bayan, 7 September 2013*) ■



On page 8: File photo of the NPA-Rizal on maneuver exercises.
On this page: A unit of the New People's Army on the march.
Photo by Rafael Bernal.

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others were injured, while no one was hurt among the Red fighters.

Earlier, on 14 August, a team of NPA guerrillas launched a sniping and harassment operation against the 4th Infantry Battalion in the same village, injuring one enemy soldier.

NPA-Palawan launches victorious tactical offensive

The Bienvenido Valleber Command, NPA-Palawan, successfully launched a tactical offensive against mercenary troops on 26 August in Barangay Abongan, Taytay, Palawan. Two elements of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 4 were injured in the attack. No one was injured among the Red fighters and they were able to withdraw safely from the area.

NPA punishes fascist troops in Rizal

The Narciso Antazo Aramil Command, NPA-Rizal continues to clobber the fascist troops of the Armed Forces of the

Philippines in Riza province. A three-man team of the NAAC undertook a harassment operation on 14 August 2013 against a detachment of the combined 16th and 59th Infantry Battalions, Philippine Army.

Prior to this harassment operation, a unit of the NPA-Rizal was able to fend off an attack of the 16th Infantry Battalion in Barangay Tinucan, Tanay, Rizal, on 28 July. The 30-minute gunfight started at about 06:30, and resulted in the death of an enemy soldier and injury to another. No one was injured among the Red fighters.

When the guerrillas were all able to withdraw and re-group at around 08:00, the Red unit maneuvered back to the area where they harassed the enemy troops. Three more elements of the 16th Infantry Battalion suffered injuries in that attack.

Earlier, on 20 July, the NPA-Rizal was able to launch a successful punitive operation against a Sergeant of the 48th Infantry Battalion. ■

4 military actions in Misamis Oriental

Report from Ang Bayan

Seven soldiers were killed and three others were wounded in harassment actions by the New People's Army (NPA) under the Eastern Misamis Oriental-North Eastern Bukidnon Subregional Command. According to the command's spokesperson Lorena Mangahas, the military actions were launched successively over a period of four days against the 58th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army, which is conducting operations in Claveria town in Misamis Oriental this August.

A squad of Red fighters figured in an encounter with 58th IBPA troops in Barangay (village) Aposkahoy on 9 August. The NPA took position on higher ground where the mercenary military troops were passing. Two soldiers were killed when the NPA used a command-detonated explosive against the soldiers. Villagers who witnessed the

incident said that the military casualties were loaded on a six-by-six truck.

On the other hand, an NPA reconnaissance team skirmished with another column of the 58th IBPA that had returned to Barangay Aposkahoy at 09:30 a.m. of 10 August.

On 11 August, an NPA team launched a successful military action anew in Barangay Bulahan, at around 06:00 a.m. The guerrillas positioned themselves by the roadside and attacked the military troopers who were passing by. They were a mere three meters from the Red fighters. Four soldiers were killed and three were wounded on the military side.

At around 2:00 p.m. of the same day, in Barangay Parmbugas, an NPA team harassed 58th IBPA troops, killing a soldier, according to partial reports.

The military operation began as far back as April and is ongoing as of August. ■



Anti-war delegation from the US meet with Syrian youths at their "Over Our Dead Bodies" encampment on Mt. Qasioun outside Damascus. US delegates included Ramsey Clark, Cynthia McKinney, John Parker, Sara Flounders, Dedon Kamathi and Johnny Achi. Photo from www.workers.org

IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

US military threat against Syria draws global condemnation

By Ed Ladera

The US threat to attack Syria militarily is being widely condemned throughout the world. Among the latest condemnations came from former US attorney general Ramsey Clark and six-term member of the US Congress Cynthia McKinney of Georgia, USA.

They led a delegation of the International Action Center (IAC) that went on a fact-finding mission to Syria in mid-September. Sarah Flounders, a member of the delegation, described the mood in Syria: "The support for the Syrian government is much stronger now."

She interviewed Syrian journalist Dagrit Dandash, organizer of "Over Our Dead Bodies". This consists of volunteer youth and students encamped in 50 tents at Damascus's Mount Oassion, the center of communications in Damascus. Since 16 August, they have dared to be human shields against any impending US military attack.

Flounders stated that their delegation was in Syria "to bring back reports after talking with and meeting some of the more than 4 million people displaced by the war funded and provoked by the US government. We aim to see some of the enormous damage created by the war."

Flounders also declared, after interviewing Dadash, that she learned "how the Syrian people mobilized to resist the war and carry out their everyday life, including providing health care."

Before going to Syria, the IAC delegation attended the Arab International Forum Against US Aggression in Syria, held in Beirut on 16 September. Participants to that forum included British MP George Galloway, ambassadors from Russia, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Nicaragua, and various other organizations from Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia.

Despite the diplomatic negotiations between Russia and

the US which have stayed the hand of US President Barack Obama from immediately carrying out an attack against Syria, US Secretary of State John Kerry declared on 15 September that the goal of the US remains to be the removal of Syrian President Assad from power, even if all Syrian chemical weapons are destroyed.

Earlier on 16 August, the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), through its Chairperson Prof. Jose Maria Sison, vigorously condemned the US plan to attack Syria militarily. The ILPS declared that the "US is hell bent on waging a war of aggression on Syria in the interest of the US war manufacturers and the oil companies, despite opposition of the people of the world."

Prof. Sison added, "The US and its imperialist allies are big liars in claiming that they are protecting civilians and conducting 'humanitarian intervention' by launching the most brutal acts of military intervention and aggressive wars. The Syrian government has been winning the civil war. And the US is fabricating the reason for aggression in order to help its losing puppets. The US is thus blatantly violating the UN Charter and international law."

He further stated, "The US is a total hypocrite in making false claims against Syria on the use of chemical weapons. The US is the biggest user of chemical weapons in its wars of aggression. It uses napalm, white phosphorous, depleted uranium tipped artillery shells and bombs and defoliants like Agent Orange. Until now, the US has not apologized to Vietnam and to humanity for the extensive and intensive use of Agent Orange, which continues to victimize the Vietnamese people."

Numerous organizations of the ILPS joined other anti-imperialist organizations in Latin America, North America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East in launching mass demonstrations condemning the US threat of military aggression against Syria. ■



Groups around the world expressed solidarity with the Syrian people in opposing US-led military intervention. (clockwise from top) Photos from: www.ilps.info; MSNBC TV; Migrante-Aotearoa; Arkibong Bayan.

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unity against colonialism and the monarchy. In 1954, Gamal Abdel Nasser led the military elite to seize political power.

In 1968, big mass demonstrations of the youth broke out and demanded democracy and fierce struggle against Israel. Left organizations allied themselves with the Muslim Brotherhood. They continued to support mass protests in 1972 against the Sadat regime and called for the liberation of the areas seized and occupied by Israel in previous wars. In 1972, Sadat succeeded in forging an alliance with the religious organizations against the Left organizations.

In 1977, the Left organizations undertook massive protests because of soaring prices of basic commodities. In 1981, a section of the Muslim Brotherhood assassinated Sadat. Mubarak reacted by waging a campaign of suppression against the Muslim Brotherhood and certain religious groups considered as violent.

The military ruling elite has kept itself in power by presenting itself as a force that balances or plays off the Right and the Left, and touting Egyptian national identity, Arab affinity, and the Islamic cultural dimension, short of departing from the secular character of the state. It put forward the so-called socialism of Nasser in the 1960s and moved on to barefaced capitalism from the 1970s, when Sadat and Mubarak moved away from close relations with the Soviet Union to those with the United States. Since then, the US has propped up and developed a military bourgeoisie with huge amounts of military assistance and foreign loans in exchange for friendly relations with Israel.

The Muslim Brotherhood is the largest and strongest of the Islamic formations. It is not known for a distinct economic program but preaches a mix of reactionary values and social

solidarity. It has received Wahabi support and influence from the Gulf States, mainly from Saudi Arabia, for long periods of time.

The military bourgeoisie has remained intact despite the overthrow of Mubarak by the so-called Arab spring. It has exercised control over the state through the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. It has continued to enjoy the support and trust of the US as the stabilizer of the Egyptian social and political order.

The military coup has been exposed for what it is by the mass arrests of leaders and members of the Muslim Brotherhood, by the massacres of people protesting in support of the Morsi presidency, and repressive measures which are likewise adverse to the broad masses of the people. The Muslim Brotherhood has formed a broad coalition to oppose the coup and the ruling junta by generating civil disobedience, mainly through mass actions.

The military, police, and fascist gangs are violently attacking the protesters. Outside of the mass actions, anti-fascist groups have begun to engage in armed actions. For a long time to come, there will be a bloody conflict between the military bourgeoisie and the Muslim Brotherhood. The US will have a difficult time working out a pro-US solution between the conflicting forces.

At the same time, the real revolutionary communists and democrats can stand for the national and democratic rights and interests of the people, take advantage of the conflict between two reactionary forces and strengthen the anti-imperialist and democratic forces of the people. Even as it waves the flag of democracy and the secular state against the Muslim Brotherhood, the military bourgeoisie and its civilian collaborators will serve the interests of US imperialism and the local reactionaries. ■

On the growing violent conflict in Egypt

Excerpts from an article
by Prof. Jose Maria Sison,
Founding Chairman,
Communist Party of the Philippines

Before the so-called Arab spring of 2011 seemingly swept into Egypt from Tunisia, Egyptian workers and their trade unions had manifested their grievances and demands against the worsening economic and social conditions in Egypt as a result of the bankruptcy and crisis of the world capitalist system and the Egyptian ruling system, under the US-dictated neoliberal economic policy.

The forces of the Left and liberal democracy, especially among the workers and the youth, stood out in the mass struggle. But the Muslim Brotherhood also participated in the mass actions and was in fact the biggest organized force against the Mubarak regime.

When the military bourgeoisie could no longer stop the huge mass actions which began on 25 January 2011, it followed the US instruction to sacrifice Mubarak and made him step down on 12 February 2011.

Subsequently, the Muslim Brotherhood formed the Freedom and Justice Party and won all national votes since 2011, including the election of Mohamed Morsi as president in 2012. For a while, the US thought that it had enough handle on the Muslim Brotherhood directly and through certain Gulf states which had Wahabi affinity with the brotherhood, and could offer financial help to the ailing Egyptian economy.

But the military bourgeoisie became wary of the moves of the Muslim Brotherhood to apply the strict Sharia law, retool the army and police, and maintain close relations with Hamas. The military bourgeoisie secured US permission for the ouster of Morsi and the formation of an interim presidency

under military control. The US and its puppets disregarded the popular election of Morsi as president and considered as far more important the maintenance of servility of the Egyptian state to the US and Israel.

While the US favors the military bourgeoisie and calculates that Saudi Arabia and the emirates can provide support in this regard, the Muslim Brotherhood has its autonomy and is favored by the rise of the Salafi and other Islamic forces, including the Al Qaida, in nearby countries. For a long time to come, the US and other imperialist powers will face an increasingly unwieldy situation in Egypt and in North Africa.

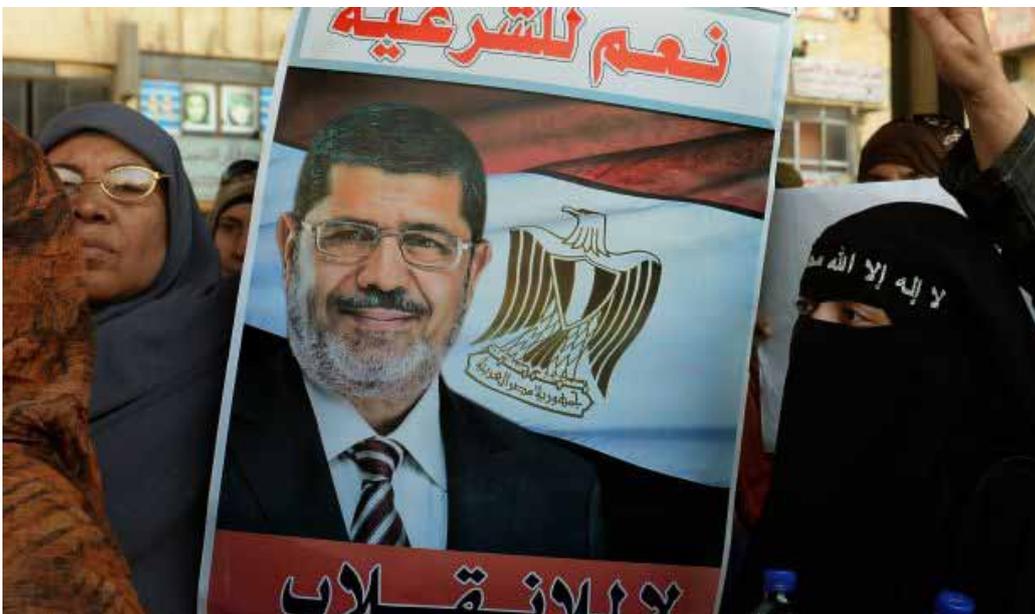
It is necessary to understand the historical and current complexity of the character, changing alliances and antagonisms of major political forces in Egypt (the military bourgeoisie, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the advocates of the secular and democratic state) and how the US tries to get a handle on each of said forces and manipulate all of them in favor of the US-Israeli power tandem. But of course we must make allowance for the broad masses of the people and the still relatively small revolutionary forces of the Left to take advantage of the turbulent situation and strengthen themselves against US imperialism and all forms of reaction in the long run.

In 1952, the "Free Officers" organization overthrew the royal regime, adopted the republican system, and liberated Egypt from British colonialism.

It included those from the Muslim Brotherhood, Communists, bourgeois liberals, and those who constituted the military ruling elite. They were bound by a sense of national

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Supporters hold up a poster of ousted Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi. Photo from www.prestv.ir



The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines. Its goal is to build a society that enjoys national sovereignty, genuine democracy, social justice, progress and peace.

It seeks to unite with all forces willing to achieve these goals.

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