



EDITORIAL

Justice for all victims of the US-Duterte fascist regime

The revolutionary forces hold the US-Duterte fascist regime fully responsible for the brazen murder of NDFP peace consultant Randy Felix Malayao last January 30. Malayao's murder follows public pronouncements by Duterte himself just a month ago endorsing mass killings and ordering his death squads to carry out the liquidation of revolutionary forces and supporters of the Party and revolutionary movement.

Malayao's murder signals the escalation of state terrorism and armed suppression against activists who are at the forefront of the broad united opposition against Duterte's tyranny. Malayao is the first high-profile national personality killed by state security forces after many years. The killing of Malayao may well be the signal-fire for Duterte's death squads to carry out similar barefaced acts of murder against mass leaders and

activists as well as all other opposition forces.

Frustrated over its continuing failure to defeat the revolutionary armed movement, the Duterte regime has vented its fascist ire against the legal democratic forces employing assassination squads and flouting laws and legal processes to clamp down on mass organizations and progressive institutions. State agents carry out

"Justice..." continued at page 2

NPA-NEMR mounts 6 counter-attacks

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA) in Northeast Mindanao frustrated the fascist troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) which have been on a 25-day rampage in Agusan del Sur and Surigao del Sur. The said operation was the AFP's reaction to two successful tactical offensives of the NPA in the last quarter of 2018. The relentless military operations were accompanied by aerial bombing and strafing by the Philippine Air Force.

According to Ka Maria Malaya, spokesperson of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)-Northeast Mindanao Region, the NPA mounted six counter attacks against 4th ID troops operating in the communities since the last week of December 2018 up to mid-January. Three of the these counterattacks were most notable:

"BHB-NEMR..." continued at page 3

armed suppression against peasants and workers, as well as teachers, students, lawyers, journalists and other sectors, especially those actively asserting their democratic rights and interests, and critical of Duterte's tyranny.

It is becoming apparent that Duterte is intent on his declaration to carry out the "Suharto-style" of mass killing where at least one million accused of being members and supporters of the Communist Party of Indonesia were summarily executed in 1965-66 under the orders of then Gen. Suharto who would later establish a 30-year bloody military dictatorship.

In his drive to establish himself a fascist dictator and perpetuate the bureaucrat capitalist rule of his family and clique, Duterte is increasingly obsessed with crushing the national democratic forces as one of the key elements to his tyrannical scheme. There is a rising number of cases of extrajudicial killings, massacres, abducti-

ons, surveillance, torture, arbitrary arrests, slapping of trumped up charges, prolonged detention, forcing people to "surrender," illegalization and closure of community schools and other gross abuses.

Under Oplan Kapayapaan and the 2018 National Internal Security Plan, the rights of several tens of thousands of people are being trampled upon by Duterte's fascist onslaught. This is on top of the tens of thousands killed by state forces and state-sponsored death squads in Duterte's so-called "drug war" to control the illegal drug trade, as well as the hundreds of thousands of Moro people whose rights are being trampled under Duterte's war to control the resources of the Bangsamoro people.

As Duterte intensifies the campaign of killings and all-out suppression, the demand for justice resounds across the country and across various democratic sectors. The broad masses demand: Justice for Malayao! Justice for peasants being killed across

the country and those massacred in Sagay, Lake Sebu and elsewhere! Justice for workers attacked for asserting their right to organize and strike! Justice for the hundreds of political prisoners! Justice for the scores of children arbitrarily detained in the guise of "state protection!" Justice for teachers and others unjustly being put under state surveillance and intimidation! Justice for journalists and lawyers who are being Red-tagged and threatened with harm! Justice for the thousands unjustly killed under Duterte's drug war! Justice for the hundreds of thousands of victims of Duterte's unjust destruction of Marawi City! Justice for all women victimized by Duterte's relentless and unrepentant misogyny! Justice for the religious who are under constant attack by Duterte's bigotry and instigation to violence! Justice for the Filipino people victimized by Duterte's tyranny and terrorism!

In the struggle for justice, the Filipino people must intensify their political mass struggles to widely expose, denounce and resist the Duterte regime's fascist attacks. They must be bold, aggressive and always on the offensive in order to make the regime answer for every single act of military and police abuse of power. They must carry out street actions in order to wield the collective power of the masses. At the same time, they must persist in legal struggles in order to assert their rights under international humanitarian law as well as under the reactionary constitution.

The clamor for justice unites the Filipino people in the face of Duterte's reign of terror. It must be echoed in the factories, school campuses, offices, churches, communities and so on. It strengthens and broadens their united front against Duterte's tyranny and fascism. It emboldens them to resist even in the face of murder,



Vol. L No. 3 | February 7, 2019

Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English. Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.

instagram.com/progressiveviews

@prwc_info

fb.com/groups/prwcnewsroomv2

cppinformationbureau@gmail.com

Contents

Editorial: Justice for all the victims of the fascist Duterte regime	1
NPA counterattacks in NEMR	1
Malayao murder rouses condemnation	4
Building PDG in Brgy. Sugar	4
Duterte's attack against children	6
#ChildrennotCriminals	7
State kills 4 peasants	8
State attacks people's NMR	8
Falling coconut industry	10
Prices continue to rise	11
Church, progressives unite	11
Mendiola massacre commemorated	11
Sumifru campout defended	12
Attacks against progressive partylists	12
BOL ratified	12
Luxemburg centenary commemorated	13

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

intimidation and threats.

At the same time, the broad masses must be roused and mobilized to transform their social discontent into struggles to advance their economic rights and the cause of social justice. They must persevere in their demand for wage and salary increases, jobs, land for the tillers, housing for the homeless, and so on. The people must be roused to denounce the regime for its imposition of onerous taxes and failure to control rising prices of food and other basic commodities. They must expose the falsity of the regime's so-called "welfare programs," denounce the utter lack of social services and condemn the corruption and plunder of state resources by the few big bureaucrat capitalists and big bourgeois compradors.

In the face of the Duterte regime's increasingly relentless attacks, the broad mass organizations must fight wisely to elude and frustrate the campaign of arrests and killings and be ready to apply the necessary tactics, including building a deep and wide underground network, counter-intelligence, unmasking of secret state operatives in social media and so on. Targets of liquidation can always go to the countryside where they can be provided safe haven in the revolutionary base areas or join the New People's Army.

Duterte's brutality against the people must be exposed for serving both his pursuit of absolute power and the aim of defending the interests of the big landlords and big bourgeois compradors. The people keenly understand that their demand for justice is linked to the struggle to put an end to the US-supported Duterte regime and ultimately to the revolutionary overthrow of the ruling oppressive and exploitative system. AB

> On December 23, the NPA set off explosives against 26th IB troopers operating in Sumulon, Barangay Padiay, Sibagat, Agusan del Sur. On January 5, the 3rd Special Forces Battalion (SFB) was harassed in the mountains of San Juan, Bayugan in the same province.

> On January 7, Red fighters also blasted operating troops of the 36th IB in the mountains of Manhulayan, Barangay Bolhoon, San Miguel, Surigao del Sur.

These AFP operations demonstrate the AFP officers and the Duterte government's disregard for the safety of their 15 troopers (two soldiers of the 3rd SFB and 13 CAA men) currently being held as prisoners of war (POW) by the NPA, according to Ka Maria. Their release is being delayed by the said operations.

The POWs were captured on December 19 in an NPA raid on the CAA detachment in Barangay New Tubigon, Sibagat, Agusan del Sur. The NPA seized 23 firearms in that raid, including an M60 light machinegun.

Meanwhile, in the Southern Mindanao Region, NPA-Mount Apo Subregional Operations Command spokesperson Isabel Santiago reported a Philippine National Police (PNP) official and 11 others were wounded in an NPA demolition operation last January 28 in Purok 4, Sitio Kabisig, Barangay Poblacion, Magpet in North Cotabato. The casualties were all troopers of the PNP Provincial Mobile Company. Killed in this tactical offensive was PO3 Christopher Anadon.

On the previous day, an NPA unit frustrated attacking forces of the 19th IB and the Bagani paramilitary group in Sitio Salingsing, Barangay Amabel, Magpet. On the other hand, Red fighter Ronnie Awe

(Ka Dindo), 44, was killed, while his son Ka Wingwing suffered grave injuries.

Both incidents belie military claims that the revolutionary forces have waned in the said area, said Santiago.

Meanwhile, in Negros island, two soldiers were killed in separate NPA offensives.

Two troopers of the 94th IB were killed in sniping operations by NPA-Negros against soldiers stationed in their camp in Barangay Trinidad, Guihulgan City, Negros Oriental last January 29 at 2 p.m. Residents celebrated the said offensive against the 94th IB which have been conducting "peace and development" operations in the said barangay.

The 94th IB is responsible for the killing and illegal arrest of peasants last December 27, 2018, and for the illegal search of homes in at least six sitios in the said barangay. This caused fear among hundreds of residents, forcing them to flee their homes.

A 15th IB soldier was killed while another was wounded when they encountered an NPA-Negros unit in Sitio Pacama, Barangay Magballo, Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental last January 18.

In Quezon, the NPA-Quezon incapacitated the destructive equipment of the Pacific Summit Construction Group, Inc. in Sitio Pandarawan, Barangay Maragondon, Real, Quezon last January 21. Among those equipment were three dump trucks, two backhoes, a generator set, transit mixer and loader.

The operations of this company is destructive to the environment. Its construction of a hydroelectric plant has caused the displacement and loss of income of hundreds of residents. AB



People's democratic government established in Barangay Sugar

A people's conference was launched in Barangay Sugar, not a real name of a barangay in the Caraga region, to establish the barrio revolutionary committee (BRC) last December 2018. The BRC is the basic unit of the people's democratic government (PDG). Barangay Sugar consists of seven sitios and has a mixed population of 1,000 Lumads and non-Lumads.

Around 120 members of the local Party branch and mass organizations attended the conference. Several barangay officials and well-off individuals also attended. Party cadres from the guerilla front, Red fighters and invited observers were also in attendance. To ensure the delegates' security, the people's militia and the barrio defense units conducted round-the-clock patrols. The area's guerilla front committee served as the conference host.

"The delegates ensured their attendance to the conference even

though they were busy with their farms," Ka Tabli, one of the delegates, said. Mothers even came with their toddlers. Red fighters served as babysitters while the conference was in session.

Before the conference started, sitio representatives relayed their social investigations and class analyses. Discussions where neighbors determined their class status were particularly lively. Most of them are farmworkers. "There was a bit of confusion," a delegate admitted, "since there were farmers



who had their own lands but because they earn so little, they often work for landlords. Are they small farmers or farm workers? Some don't want to own up to being from the middle classes."

"Sugar..," continued at page 5

NDFP consultant killing rouses widespread condemnation

THE REVOLUTIONARY movement, human rights and progressive organizations and broad sectors of the people condemned the killing of Randy Felix Malayao, 49. Malayao was a consultant to the peace negotiations of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

He was shot twice while asleep in a bus on pitstop in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya last January 30, at 2:30 a.m. The gunman fled in a motorcycle with his accomplice. Various groups, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, condemned the killing, believed to have been carried out directly by Duterte's death squad.

The groups likewise condemned the AFP and PNP for circulating intrigues against Malayao and the revolutionary movement to cover up their crime. The fact is, Malayao has long been threatened, alongside other revolutionary personalities. He was listed in the proscription case filed by the regime last February 2018, though his name was delisted when the case was amended this January 18.

Malayao has been an activist since he was a student at the University of the Philippines-Miag-ao, Iloilo. He served as vice president for the Visayas of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines before moving on to organizing peasants in Cagayan Valley where his family resided. He was arrested in 2008 under the Arroyo regime and imprisoned for four years over trumped up charges.

After his release, he was taken in by the NDFP as consultant even as he continued working with mass organizations. In particular, he was a member of the Reciprocal Working Group on Political and Constitutional Reforms.

Here, he exhibited acuity and deep understanding of the people's conditions borne out of decades of revolutionary work among their ranks and enthusiasm for his work, as he did for all his other past responsibilities and tasks.

The NDFP remembers Malayao as a "a multifaceted man who is revolutionary to the core—an exceptional student, excellent writer and journalist, scientist, peasant and worker organizer, internationalist and peace and justice warrior."

To condemn the killing of Malayao and other victims of the regime, teachers, students and human rights organizations gathered in front of Quezon Hall in UP Diliman. There were similar protests in the University of Sto. Tomas and Far Eastern University, as well as protests by members of Courage and Kilusang Mayo Uno. Progressive groups also launched protests in Panay, Baguio and Laguna.



The conference was held amidst intense AFP combat operations. In fact, soldiers were on a rampage in the next barrio when the conference started. In spite of this, the conference pushed through and the agenda was set. It started with reports on the enemy movement and steps to ensure the safety of all the delegates, followed by presentations and reports of mass organizations, elections and planning.

During the formal meeting, the conference reviewed important Party guides and documents like the Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform and studies on how to establish organs of political power. Discussions on this topic were also lively, especially on the topic of the people's court. An example was on how to deal with thefts of carabaos and other farm animals like chicken, pigs and others. There were also discussions on the AFP forcing civilians to surrender, E-CLIP and Red-tagging. To enliven the discussions, young delegates offered a cultural presentation.

One of the conference's agenda dealt with ways to advance the agrarian revolution and uplifting the residents' standard of living. Even before the BRC was organized, Barangay Sugar has been successful in some of its campaigns. It had successfully raised farmworker wages from P250 to P300/day. This was achieved through a dialogue with two rich peasants and two landlords.

"The rich peasants immediately complied while the landlords dismissed the agreement so the farmworkers decided to hold a second round of campaign against them. They complied only then," Ka Jina, one of the hosts, related.

During that time, a memorandum was drafted and signed by third parties to make the agreement effective. Barangay officials, church people and teachers of the barangay served as witnesses. The farmworkers

also managed to reclaim 10 hectares of land after they were driven away by a despotic landlord. The revolutionary mass organizations supervised the land distribution.

Elections for the KRB leadership, the local organ of political power, was conducted on the last day of the conference. "The delegates immediately knew whom to vote for," Ka Tabli related. Among those elected have been tempered by revolutionary work. Most of them were poor peasants. During the elections, democracy was exercised.

"The results of the elections are very acceptable as all of the nominees are able to lead the people's government," Ka James, a member of the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid, said.

The newly-elected committee studied and resolved past problems on how mass organizations in the area operated. "One of our weaknesses is that we only hold meetings when the people's army is in our area. Thus, we are not able to carry out our tasks when they are not here," Ka Mel, newly-elected BRC president, chided. "We should be able to resolve our own problems so that the people's army can perform its other tasks."

Ka Lapi, a Makibaka chapter member, was also elected to the BRC. Three out of her four children are Red fighters. One of them was martyred recently which saddened her but did not weaken her resolve. Her youngest, who is only 17-years old, is raring to join the people's army.

Barangay Sugar is the first in its cluster to establish a BRC. Thus, one of its tasks is to help other

chapters in establishing their own BRCs. Presently, most of the barangays in its cluster have chapters where 70% of the residents are already organized, but some are still in the organizing committee level.

After the elections, the conference concentrated on drafting ordinances and resolutions on issues and problems of their barangay. This includes an agreement to put up a cooperative, strengthening the people's militia, security and ordinances regarding drinking alcohol, theft of carabaos and other farm animals, and other anti-social activities.

The BRC also drafted a one-year plan and program to carry out their tasks even without the presence of the people's army. Among this is the task to complete the investigation so that they can launch the campaign against the false ancestral land certification (Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title or CADT) and the granting of mining concessions to big companies this year. These companies are set to come into Barangay Sugar and seven neighboring barangays. These barangays are rich in gold, copper and other minerals so its forested areas were deceptively covered by CADT to make mining the area easier.

The BRC also set the schedules for all committee meetings (economy, health, education, defense and organization). Its general plan included trainings and discussions per committee. These will be conducted during the members' free days.

"The delegates' joy that the their BRC had been established was plain to see," Ka Tabli related. "They felt democracy and their power as a people during the conference."

For the Lumads, farm workers and small famers who have long been oppressed and exploited under the present social system, the establishment of the BRC was on



RATED X: The Duterte regime's worsening attacks against children

If Duterte's reign was a television show or movie, it would come with an X rating—evil and harmful to children.

The regime's attacks against children have been relentless this past weeks and months. This January 30 alone, police and military forces arrested two innocent— a 1- and 2-year old—together with another minor, in a raid on the office of the Misamis Oriental Farmers Association (MOFA). Alongside other members of the MOFA, the children were arrested and separated from their parents and guardians.

The MOFA members were jailed while the children were sent to the Region 10's Social Welfare and Development Office. (*Read related article on the crackdown in the Northern Mindanao Region.*)

In other areas of Mindanao, shootings, militarization and bombings against Lumad schools are prevalent. Because of this, students—many of whom are very young

children—have repeatedly evacuated and had their studies interrupted. In the cities, there have been 100 cases of drug war-related or "Tokhang" killings of minors. Around 18,000 children have been orphaned due to Tokhang killings of the parents since 2016.

Sharpening the fangs of the law

The regime is also sharpening

the fangs of the law, aside from indiscriminate killings and direct attacks, to damage children.

This past weeks, Congress rail-roaded the bill to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR) from the present 15 to 12 years old. If passed, even a 12-year old can then be sentenced as a criminal and jailed.

This comes directly from Duterte, who have declared that there are scores of child criminals. He ordered former president and now House Speaker Gloria Arroyo to compel Congress to pass the bill, even though Arroyo herself sponsored, in 2006, the Republic Act No. 9344 or the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, which set the MACR age at 15 years old. When Arroyo was asked why she bulldozed the bill, her only reply was, "because the president wanted it." The Senate is also hard-pressed to pass the bill, even though hundreds of specialists and studies have asserted that at 12 years old, children can not fully discern the consequences of their actions, and sentencing them as criminals will invariably destroy their lives. During a Senate hearing, Arroyo's foolishness was furthered by Senate President Vicente Sotto III who said that the bill had something to do with the



Baylosis freed

RAFAEL BAYLOSIS (Ka Raffy), NDFP consultant, was ordered released in January 15, almost a year after he was detained, after trumped-up charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives against him were dropped. He was freed, together with Roque Guillermo Jr., in January 18.

According to Presiding Judge Editha Mina Aguba of the Regional Trial Court-Branch 100-Quezon City, the case against Baylosis had insufficient evidence. Baylosis and Guillermo were arrested by military and police intelligence operatives in Quezon City last January 31, 2018.

In related news, the Free Bob Reyes Movement picketed in front of the Quezon City Hall of Justice while his case was being heard. Reyes, a member of Sandigan ng Manggagawa in Quezon City, was illegally arrested by four armed men last June 2, 2018. He was held incommunicado for 12 hours in the CIDG detention in Camp Crame. The group says that Reyes' arrest is similar to cases of other political prisoners jailed on planted evidence. They also condemned the continuous killings and filing of trumped-up charges against activists and NDFP personalities.

war against drugs. He said that since they had no capacity to file cases against heads of syndicates, they will just hold their child victims responsible.

This measure is in line with the regime's other anti-poor and anti-people schemes which targets the victims of criminal syndicates, young and old. It has no intention of running after its leaders and other big personalities. This is not a surprise as Duterte himself is the number one protector of these syndicates.

Fascist indoctrination

Aside from lowering the MACR, Congress likewise railroaded a bill to impose compulsory training and fascist indoctrination of minors under the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) for grades 11 and 12. This is despite the junking of ROTC in the college level after the 2001 killing of Mark Welson Chuan, a UST student, who exposed the corruption within the program.

Imposing ROTC in high school violates even reactionary laws. One of which is the Republic Act 7610 which prohibits the use of schools and hospitals for military activities. This is also against international laws and treaties, including Rules 22-24 of the International Humanitarian Law, which prohibit militarization of schools.

Aside from imposing compulsory ROTC, the bill "Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Act," which was passed by Congress last year, is now only awaiting Duterte's signature. The said bill is deceptive, as its sponsors claimed that it will stop rebel groups, including the revolutionary forces, from using child soldiers. In truth, this will only serve as an additional tool for the regime to file cases of using child soldiers against the leaders of communities they are occupying.

A notable incident involved the illegal arrest of Satur Ocampo and his companions when they came to

the rescue of Lumad children who were being harrassed by the AFP and its paramilitaries last year in Talaingod, Davao del Norte. Ocampo and others were slapped with kidnapping charges after they rescued the students and their teachers from their school to bring them to a safer place. Ocampo et al were jailed while the children were virtually detained in the DSWD offices. The agency required the parents and guardians to present papers before they can claim the students.

The Party's rules on children

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) belied allegations from the military, Congress and other groups that it is using children in its war, one of the reasons why the aforementioned bill was passed.

The Party, New People's Army and National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) have issued numerous documents and rules to strictly observe the rights of the child. In August 30, 1999, the Party's Military Commission issued the document On the NPA's Alleged Mass Recruitment of Child Guerillas, which was followed by a document from the Committee Central of the CPP on October 15, 1999 entitled Memorandum on the Minimum Age Requirement for NPA Fighters. Under said document, NPA membership is strictly set on a

minimum of age. The document also put into place mechanisms on how the Party will monitor this regulation.

The NDFP also issued the Declaration and Program of Action for the Rights, Protection and Welfare of Children, wherein aside from the minimum age requirement for NPA members, it also stated that the revolutionary forces will adhere to international conventions such as the 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In the said document, the NDFP ordered its committees under the organs of political power to ensure child education and health, especially those 15-years old and below. It also encouraged revolutionary mass organizations to establish children's organizations as a way in respecting their right to defend and advance their own rights and participate in social transformation according to their capacity. The NDFP also vowed to respect the rights of the child in accordance to the Geneva Conventions and Protocol 1.

Only a regime desperate to remain in power will vent its anger and use innocent children. All revolutionary forces champion the rights and welfare of children, and will never put them in danger.

AB

#ChildrenotCriminals

CHILD RIGHTS advocates protested in front of the Senate during its hearing of the lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility last February 4. The proposal was earlier approved by the Congress.

Prior to this, Gabriela Partylist and Salinlahi Alliance for Children's Concerns launched a series of protests against amendments to the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, which would allow children who are 12 years old to be arrested.

According to Rep. Arlene Brosas of Gabriela Partyist, the arrest of children will not solve the widespread criminality in the country. Furthermore, the government should focus on other issues which gravely affect the development of a child, such as child labor, malnutrition, education and others.

Youth groups and faculty members from different schools and universities in Metro Manila and Cebu also joined the protest.

State forces kill 4 farmers

Four farmers were killed by agents of the US-Duterte regime this past two months, while its attacks and harassments against the church and other sectors critical to state fascism continue unabated.

In Surigao del Sur, two Lumad farmers were killed by 36th IB soldiers. This is part of the worsening attacks against the people of Northern Mindanao under martial law. (See details in related article below.)

In Zamboanga del Sur, elements of the PNP-Region 9 Public Safety Battalion killed Sergio Atay, 35, member of the Magbabaul-Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas. According to witnesses, Atay was travelling at the border of Sapang Dalaga, Misamis Occidental and Rizal, Zamboanga del Norte in January 28 when he was stopped at a checkpoint, arrested and interrogated by police. The next day, he was found dead in Barangay San Roque, Rizal. He sustained five

gunshot wounds in the head, was hogtied and bore signs of torture. Atay and his wife have long been accused as members of the NPA.

In Camarines Sur, Rowena Gavina was killed by soldiers of the combined forces of the 96th and 97th Military Intelligence Company, 5th Intelligence and Security Unit, and 83rd IB when her house was raided in January 30, at 6:00 a.m. in Barangay Tierra Nevada, Tinambac. The soldiers later presented Gavina as an NPA member.

Intimidation and harassment of priests. Six priests of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente were harassed in successive days.

Last January 30, around 17 soldiers and police intimidated and harassed Rev. Fr. Marco Sulayao.

At 9:00 a.m., while Fr. Sulayao was travelling from Iloilo to Bacolod, three uniformed policemen crowdedly sat near him. Upon arriving in Bacolod, seven soldiers in full-battle gear sat next to him as he was eating. When he arrived in San Carlos City at 4:00 p.m., seven uniformed police watched him and took pictures.

The next day, two state agents spied on Fr. Christopher Ablon, Fr. Marciano Carabio, Fr. Jerome Lito and Fr. Arnold Abuel at the IFI National Cathedral in Taft Avenue in Manila. The two remained in their position the entire day. They followed the tricycle which carried the priests aboard a motorcycle.

Harassment of activists. In January 23, at 4:30 p.m., three state agents tailed Reylan Vergara from Barangay Tagbak to Jaro in Iloilo City for almost half an hour.

"Farmers..." continued at page 9

Worsening attacks against the people in NMR

The US-Duterte regime's attacks are worsening against the people of Mindanao, especially peasants and national minorities, under martial law. In Northern Mindanao, in particular, cases of extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests and detention, intimidation, harassment, forced surrender and militarization of entire communities have risen.

These aim to silence the people's struggles for land, ancestral land and the right to self-determination. These also seek to serve the interests of corporations which own big plantations and plunder the environment.

Reports of human rights defenders show that from the time martial law in Mindanao was imposed up to December 2018, there have been at least five cases of frustrated murder, one case of disappearance, 10 victims of torture, 100 cases of illegal arrest and detention, 465 cases threats, harassments

and intimidation, 245 victims of indiscriminate firing, 727 victims of bombings and 1,827 victims of forcible evacuation.

The number of cases of fake and forced surrenders in Bukidnon has also risen, particularly in San Fernando, Quezon, Pangantucan, Sumilao and Impasug-ong. The group documented the murder last September 15, 2018 of Rex Hangadon, a Lumad peasant, fired upon by 23rd IB troops while resting in his hut in Sitio Bulak, Lower Olave, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte. Meanwhile, his father, who was with him at that time, remains missing.

At the outset of 2019, the regime has conspicuously used civilian institutions and agencies for military purposes under the "whole of nation approach" and the 12 Pillars of the NISP. The following are the most recent case of killings and intimidation:

Killings. Two Lumad peasants, Randel Gallego and Emel Tejero,

"NMR..." continued at page 9



Vergara is Karapatan's national vice-president. A week earlier, a certain Lt. Ronaldo threatened Panay peasant leader Elmer Arlao. Ronaldo told Arlao to stop organizing peasants or he would end up like a Tokhang victim.

Meanwhile, student leaders Khim Russel Abalos of University Student Council; Jose Mari Callueng, national president of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines; Raoul Manuel, general secretary of the National Union of Students of the Philippines and Ivy Joy Taroma, Student Regent of University of the Philippines received threatening messages last January. They were all accused of being "NPA recruiters."

Forcible evacuation of communities. Residents of entire communities were forced to leave their homes and livelihoods due to relentless AFP militarization and bombings.

In Samar, 34 families from Barangay Bay-ang, San Jorge are now staying at the municipal health clinic for fear of military operations conducted by the 63rd IB and indiscriminate aerial strafing since January 15.

In Sulu, more than 300 residents of Barangay Latih in Patikul were forced to leave due to continuous military airstrikes against their community.

Meanwhile, on February 4, soldiers of the 94th IB, together with CAGFU member Renan Malig-on, went on patrol in Barangay Trinidad, Guihulngan City. They forced their way into the houses of Bebong Alpeche and another identified as "Amay."

Urban poor demolition. Despite having no court order, goons and police destroyed 31 houses in Riverside, Barangay Looc, Mandaue City last January 30, at 9:00 p.m. Two hundred residents lost their homes, as the local government did not offer to relocate them. AB

were killed by 36th IB soldiers last January 24 in Barangay Buhisan, San Agustin, Surigao del Sur. Gallego and Tejero, together with four others, went to Sitio Dilinggion, Km 30 in the said barangay to harvest abaca. Walking home around 2 p.m., Gallego and Tejero with two others came across the soldiers at Km 19. The soldiers immediately fired upon the group hitting Gallego and Tejero. Their two companions survived and reported to the community.

Meanwhile, the two other left in the abaca farm decided to go home upon hearing the gunfire. They encountered the soldiers and were illegally arrested. They were brought back to the abaca farm, restrained and interrogated through the night. They were set free only in the following morning.

After five days, the 401st Brigade reported that Gallego and Tejero were NPA members who died in an encounter.

Soldiers of the 401st Brigade, including the 75th IB, the 36th IB and 16th SFB, are responsible for the attacks against Manobo communities in Lianga, Marihatag, San Agustin and Tago since December 2018.

Illegal arrests. Six activists in Misamis Oriental were successively arrested by soldiers and police last January 28 and 30.

On January 28, soldiers of the 65th IB and operatives of the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group abducted Datu Jomorito Goaynon, chair of the Kalumbay Regional Lumad Organization, and Ireneo Udarbe, chair of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas-Northern Mindanao.

From their office in Barangay Bulua, Cagayan de Oro City, the two were travelling around 10 a.m. to meet with a member organization of Kalumbay and later hold a dialogue with the 65th IB representatives regarding complaints of

harassment and forced surrenders. The two failed to attend the meeting and communication with their family and colleagues were cut off.

The following day, they were presented before the public as NPA leaders and were slapped with trumped up charges based on planted evidence.

On January 30, around 6:30 p.m., the same units of the PNP and AFP attacked the office of the Misamis Oriental Farmers' Association (MOFA) in Barangay Looc, Villanueva, Misamis Oriental. They arrested Jerry Basahon, 48, chair of MOFA; Gerald Basahon, 43, MOFA council members and staffers Marivic Coleta, 22, and Mylene Coleta, 19.

In addition, they also took two babies and a minor and were placed under DSWD custody. The two, who were said to be children of NPA fighters, were kept as virtual hostages. The objective was to compel the children's parents to surface. This trampled on the rights of the children to be free and not be subjected to any form of violence. The state is primary responsible to uphold this right.

Before entering the office, the soldiers and police fired upon the place and aimed their guns even at the children. They planted evidences of guns and explosives and accused the four arrested as NPA members.

Militarization and bombing of Lumad communities. Last January 21, the AFP carried out a series of bombings near Decoy, Panukmoan, Manluy-a and Km. 15, communities in Barangay Diatagon. As a result, 55 families were forced to leave their homes. On January 22, 64 families and 333 individuals from Manluy-a, Panukmoan and Decoy fled due to non-stop military operations and bombings. They are suffering from grave trauma and hunger as a result of food blockade and bombings. AB

The coconut industry's continuous decline

The coconut industry is important to the country's agricultural sector. At present, almost 26% of all farmlands are planted with coconut trees, and provide livelihood to around four million coconut farmers.

The country's coconut industry, however, is in a slump. According to reports, the income of 60% of coconut farmers and farm workers are below the poverty line.

The state of coconut farmers

Due to aggressive land conversion, thousands of farmers have been displaced from their lands and lost their livelihood.

DAR records show that majority of land-use conversion cases are in top coconut-producing regions: Central Luzon, Misamis Oriental and Southern Luzon. Thousands of hectares of coconut farmlands will be converted to tourism spots, infrastructures under the "Build, Build, Build" program, sports complexes, real estate and others.

Also, millions of coconut trees were destroyed by the typhoon Yolanda and by the Cocolisap pest which hit the Visayas and some parts of Luzon. In Leyte alone, the typhoon destroyed almost 33 million coconut trees.

Worse, the coconut industry is controlled by big landlords and businesses—from the land to different coconut products.

In Bicol, the landlord, often also the commercial miller, rakes in up to 58% of the earnings. For instance, for every 1,116 kilos of copra (approximately 18 sacks) bought at P17/kilo, the landlord gets P10,977. Meanwhile, the coconut farmer only gets 17.8% or P3,375 while nine farmworkers split up the remaining 18.4% or P3,500. Thus, the coconut farmer earns only P75/day for a 45-day harvest cycle. Meanwhile, farmworkers earn only P388 or P15.50/day within the same cycle.

Copra prices have continually declined last year. From P40/kilo, it fell to P13. In Sorsogon, the price of

a whole coconut fell from P8-12/kilo to P2-4/kilo. According to coconut farmers, they earn only P4-P7/day, a far cry from their P500-P700 daily cost of living.

The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) has no clear explanation on why copra and coconut prices are falling. The PCA and other agencies cites as an excuse the intensifying international competition of oil producers, such as the cheaper and more abundant supply of palm oil. They also said there is a copra oversupply.

Coconut oil prices, like gasoline prices, are controlled by big US and European corporations. These corporations buy most of the Philippines' coconut products, enabling them to set prices.

An added burden is the resikada system where so-called moisture content is arbitrarily set and deducted by big buyers and oil mill owners from their buying price.

Meanwhile, farm workers earn only P200-3000 for every one thousand coconuts harvested, husked, transported and for doing other agricultural work. They are also victimized by widespread contractualization. A Department of Labor and Employment report indicate that all of the 1,500 employees of the Peter Paul Philippines, a coconut-processing plant worked as contractals and received insufficient wages.

Coconut farmers also carry the burden of high prices under the

Duterte regime's TRAIN law. Because of this, coconut farmers almost earn next to nothing. Their yearly income fell from P20,000 to P7,200.

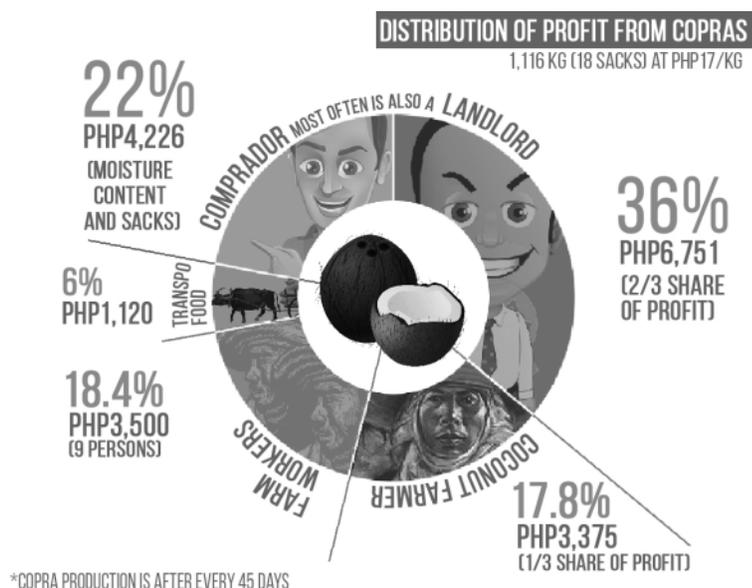
Government agencies turn a deaf ear to coconut farmer's plight. They offer inconsequential subsidies, if at all. They do not have facilities or infrastructure to improve farming methods.

Struggle for coco levy funds

A coco levy was collected from small coconut farmers during the Marcos years. Up to the present, they have not benefited from this fund, which have reached P150 billion.

Previous regimes have used various methods to stop the distribution of the funds to the farmers and legitimate beneficiaries. From then until now, farmers have continually called for the distribution of the coco levy funds.

This January, hundreds of coconut farmers marched to the PCA to demand a dialogue and hold a protest. They demanded that the fund be given back and used to improve their livelihood. They have repeatedly written petitions to condemn the unwarranted deductions to the value of copra prices, raise coconut prices and immediate aid to coconut farmers severely affected by the industry's decline. AB



Church, progressive groups unite against tyranny

VARIOUS SECTORS and groups unite against fascism and tyranny last January. The religious sectors, workers from Sumifru, Lumad students, women and farmers participated in the event.

Church groups and human rights advocates came together to call for justice, truth, and peace in a prayer rally held in Malate, Manila last January 25 which they called "One Faith, One Nation, One Voice." The activity was spearheaded by Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

The groups slammed the insult and discrimination of the Duterte regime against the church and its call to rob or kill bishops. They also condemned the injustice and impunity that are widespread in the country.

Workers from Sumifru and Lumads who are displaced from their community due to intense militarization joined the rally.

They called for peace based on justice. They also enjoined the people to stand in solidarity with their struggle since their fight is for all those who are oppressed.

Bishop Roderick Pabillo, former senator Sen. Rene Saguisag, Bro. Armin Luistro and Sr. Mary John Mananzan joined the protests.

Sr. Mananzan said, the Duterte regime targets the church workers through various government agencies and armed elements to suppress resistance.

Bro. Armin Luistro highlighted that at this time "long prayers and patience are not enough. This protest is for all those who are oppressed, those who are falsely accused and exploited."

Food prices still on the rise

FOOD PRICES continue to rise despite the US-Duterte regime's brag that inflation rate fell to 4.4% at the start of the year from last year's average of 5.4%. The decline did not mean that prices of goods and services have fallen. It only meant that prices and fees rose slower.

Statistics from the reactionary state itself prove that commodity prices remain high. For instance, compared to last year, rice prices are still higher by P3. Also, sugar is still more expensive by P10 and garlic by P20, while other vegetables run from P10-P40. In various Metro Manila markets, prices of pork, beef, chicken and cadfish remain unchanged in January, compared to prices in October when inflation hit 6.7%, the highest in 10 years.

According to Ibon, it is the poorest who suffer the most amid rise in food prices. Patterns of family expenditures of Filipino families show that the poorest families spend 60% of their income to buy food. Thus, when inflation rises, hunger becomes more prevalent.

Ibon likewise mocked the Duterte regime's economic managers' projection that inflation will fall to 2% to 4% this year. "Impossible," Ibon stated, especially since the second series of excise taxes on petroleum products is set to take effect this year. This, coupled with high crude prices in international markets mean whatever slowdown in inflation will be eaten by higher transportation costs. Duterte's officials admitted that they did not include the said new taxes to their calculations.

Peasants commemorate 32nd year of Mendiola Massacre

FARMERS FROM Bulacan, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bataan, Zambales, Pangasinan, Laguna and Batangas gathered in front of Malacañang last January 22 to call for justice for the victims of the January 27 Mendiola Massacre. Thirty two years have passed but not one has been charged of the bloody crime. Thirteen farmers were killed while hundreds were wounded after police and soldiers strafed the 20,000 farmers who demand genuine land reform during the incident.

The KMP also lambasted the increasing number of cases of killings among farmers and fishermen under the Duterte administration. According to the group, more than 170 farmers have fell victim to political killings.

In Bicol, more than 1,500 farmers and supporters joined as they commemorate the brutal massacre. Around 700 were gathered in Albay capitol in Legazpi City, while 800 joined the protest in Sorsogon City. On the same day, Anakpawis held its regional congress in Naga City where about 500 members participated.

In Negros, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Negros and National Federation of Sugar Farm Workers led the march from Capitol Lagoon Park to Fountain of Justice in Bacolod City last January 21. Rallyists demanded justice for the nine victims of Sagay massacre last year and the brutal murder of farmer leader, Alexander Ceballos. Similar protests were held in Cebu, Davao, Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon.

Sumifru workers defend campout in Manila

SUMIFRU WORKERS under the Nagkahiusang Mamumuo sa Suyapa Farms (NAMA-SUFA) successfully defended their campout in Liwasang Bonifacio, Manila last February 4. Their protest camp, now at its second month, began last November 27 to demand DOLE and Sumifru to recognize their union and regularize their workers. Their strike was launched last October 1, 2018.

Manila City local government threatened to demolish the campout to pave way for the supposed renovation of DPWH but failed to present papers to prove the plan. Threats of dispersal persist.

Before this, workers held a protest to end martial law in Mindanao last January 29 in front of the Supreme Court. Their protest was held in time for the court's hearing on martial law extension. They were joined by students from different universities in Metro Manila.

Despite rains, members of Samahan ng Maliliit na Mangingisda sa San Miguel Bay held protest last January 20 in front of the municipal hall of Tinambac, Camarines Sur. They opposed the planned demolition of their *biyakos* (a structure made of bamboo and net for fishing) by the local government in Look River. According to Leo Velarde, chairperson of SMM-SMB, the Tinambac mayor disregarded their petition last December 2018 which led to the loss of the livelihood of about 60% of fishermen in the said town.

Duterte attacks progressive partylist groups

THE COMMISSION ON Elections (Comelec) successively disqualified last January the candidacy of democratic and progressive partylist groups while favoring groups headed by political dynasties, including Rodrigo Duterte's family.

These include the Mangagawa Partylist, Aksyon Health Workers and People's Surge Partylist, which are all members of the Makabayan coalition. The said groups protested in front of the Comelec offices to criticize the decision last January 23.

At the same time, attacks against known progressive groups under the Makabayan bloc continue. The Court of Appeals recently junked the ACT Teachers Party's appeal to stop the Philippine National Police (PNP) surveillance and harassment activities against their members. This was in relation to an order to identify and investigate its teacher-members which the PNP considers as "enemies of the state."

On the other hand, progressive

groups called for the disqualification of fake groups run by Duterte. These include the AA-Kasosyo and Duterte Youth. The AA-Kasosyo is headed by Mocha Uson while the Duterte Youth is run by Ronald Cardema, head of the National Youth Commission.

Meanwhile, the group Kontra Daya identified fake partylist groups which the Comelec allowed to run in spite of clear indications that these do not represent any marginalized group and are, in fact, connected to officials of the current government and political dynasties.

This includes current officials and Duterte's close allies like the Marcoses, Alvarezes, Arroyos, Villars and Piñols. AB

BOL approved in plebiscite

THE BANGSAMORO ORGANIC Law (BOL) was approved in a plebiscite last January 21 in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Pursuant to BOL, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) will be created to replace the ARMM. Cotabato City will be included in the BARMM, as well as some municipalities of North Cotabato, with Lanao del Norte voting against the province's inclusion.

The BOL was ratified by the reactionary congress following the negotiations between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). After the BOL's approval, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority will be created, composed of Duterte appointees and will function as the government in BARMM. Meanwhile, after declaring the end of the war, the MILF will disarm in stages.

However, according to Suara Bangsamoro, the creation of BARMM "will not automatically mean that lasting peace will be attained in the Bangsamoro areas" and that "the Moro people must continue demanding their right to self-determination."

Meanwhile, the AFP continues to intensify its offensives in different parts of Lanao and Maguindanao against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, which did not support the BOL. These offensives are aimed at controlling the resources of Liguasan Marsh.

Groups mark Luxemburg and Liebkecht's death centenary

A WEEK-LONG commemoration of the death centenary of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebkecht was held in Germany last January 12-19. Luxemburg and Liebkecht were founders of the Communist Party of Germany in 1918 and leaders of the November 1918 uprisings which called for the end of the German empire during World War 1. They were arrested by the Freikorps rightist militias in January 15, 1919, subjected to extreme torture and eventually killed.

The commemoration in Germany was launched by various groups, including the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany, Juggenwiderstand and Rot Front (Red Front). In Jose Maria Sison's message on January 22, he encour-

aged revolutionaries in Germany to learn the correct lessons from history to mobilize the toiling masses for reform and revolution to organize the revolutionary movement, seize political power and establish a socialist republic.

He called for them to "unite under the flag of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and struggle for unity to contribute their utmost to the building of the revolutionary vanguard party of the proletariat and the resolute and militant mass movement for democracy and socialism." He also called on the groups to "exert all efforts to arouse, organize and mobilize the youth, the proletariat and all other people in Germany to fight fascism, win the battle for democracy and advance to socialism."