



EDITORIAL

Make Duterte pay for bloody crimes against the people

The families of tens of thousands of victims of the sham "war on drugs" welcomed the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor to continue its investigation of Rodrigo Duterte's "crimes against humanity" over the thousands upon thousands of police killings from 2016 to 2019.

To be convicted and thrown into jail by the ICC is one of Duterte's worst nightmares. Thus, if victims were elated by the ICC move to pursue the cases against him, Duterte was thoroughly irked by it. It was denounced by Malacañang and declared it would never cooperate with the investigation into the tens of thousands of police killings since 2016.

Victims consider the development in the ICC case as a step forward in their quest for justice and to make Duterte pay for his systematic attacks and rampant killing of civilians under his tyranny. Democratic forces also consider this as part of efforts to put the regime to account for widespread abuses of human

rights in its war of suppression against the Filipino people and war against the Moro people.

In addition to the ICC announcement, the democratic forces also welcomed the Philippine Human Rights Act filed by some US representatives. This proposed bill will compel the US government to suspend military aid to the Duterte regime over widespread violations of human rights.

It is correct that the ICC cases against Duterte be pursued and to make him account in different ways. Killings perpetrated with impunity behind the veil of the "war on drugs" has served as foundation for his tyranny where police and sol-

diers are incited to kill and kill without fear of punishment. He used his fake "narcologist" to make his rivals (such as Sen. Leila de Lima) appear involved in drugs, to force them to bow, or be repressed or assassinated.

Over the past five years, the police's justification that victims of killings "fought back" has daily become a trite excuse in the "tokhang" operations of the Philippine National Police (PNP), typically conducted late at night or early morning. In almost all cases, stories woven by police are contradicted by families and witnesses who prove that victims were cold-bloodedly killed in liquidation operations. There are also thousands upon thousands of murders perpetrated by death squads believed to be directly controlled and funded by Duterte and key military and police officers.

What is claimed to be a "war on

drugs" is in fact a war to make the local syndicates bow and pay for "protection," and get their supplies from Duterte's cohorts in the Chinese syndicates. Duterte has controlled the smuggling of drugs and other contraband by placing the Bureau of Customs under military control.

If Duterte used his "narcolist" in his "war on drugs," he has employed "red tagging" to depict activists as "involved in the armed movement" and thus subject them to armed oppression. Police and soldiers have adopted "tokhang"-style liquidation or extrajudicial killings in their "joint operations" against civilians since 2018.

Such is the case in Negros, Panay, Southern Tagalog, Bicol and other places where police openly target known mass leaders and activists for mass murder. Across the country, the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) used "tokhang" methods to claim that murdered community leaders, activists and members of mass organizations "fought back" as they were being served warrants of arrest. Death squads are also employed to

kill activists, human rights defenders, lawyers, witnesses and critics of the regime and the AFP and PNP.

After five years, Duterte-ordered killing operations remain unabated. Expect this to intensify as the 2022 election approaches targeting the political opponents and rivals of Duterte and his minions, such as what happened in the police killing of the Calbayog City mayor (a leader of the Liberal Party in Eastern Visayas) behind the veil of "counterinsurgency." There is also information of plans at the very top of the AFP and PNP to mount false flag operations or killing operations that will be blamed on the New People's Army. There can also be more rounds of mass murder and arrests against activists in the desperation to paralyze the legal democratic movement.

Duterte's five-year regime is five years of terrorism in the form of widespread killings and abuses of human rights in the name of the "war on drugs" and in the context of the dirty war against the people. Because of this, the Filipino people

aspire for justice and to see Duterte pay for his direct role in the campaign of killings, as well as for his corruption, betrayal of the country's sovereignty and other crimes against the people.

Duterte's mortal fear of being made to account for his crimes after his term as president is one of the biggest reasons for his desperation to cling to power. He wants to die sitting on top of the throne and not chained to a dungeon. Thus he is busy with various schemes to perpetuate his hold on power, directly or through his daughter or minions.

The Filipino people must continue to unite and amplify the demand to have Duterte account, prosecuted, tried and punished for his biggest crimes against the people. They must vigorously carry forward the struggle to frustrate his schemes to remain in power and evade accountability, and to end his bloody tyrannical rule at the soonest possible time. AB

NPA mounts 3 armed actions in a week

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA) mounted three armed actions in Camarines Sur, Negros Occidental and Agusan del Norte from June 9 to June 15.

The NPA-South Central Negros mounted a sniping operation last June 9 against the 62nd IB at Purok Dalaupan, Barangay Carabalan, Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental. A soldier was killed and another was wounded.

The-West Camarines Sur (Norben Gruta Command) also mounted a sniping operation against the 90th IB on June 12 in Barangay Salvacion, Pasacao, Camarines Sur. A sergeant was killed during the military action.

Three intelligence agents of the PNP-Butuan, including a sergeant, were killed in a raid mounted by the NPA-Agusan del Norte at Purok 5 Tagulaje, Barangay Antongalon, Butuan City on June 15.

<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Vol. LII No. 12 June 21, 2021</p> <hr/> <p>Ang <i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray, English and Spanish. Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p> <p>  @prwc_info  fb.com/editorsofAB  cppinformationbureau@gmail.com </p> </div>	<h2 style="text-align: center; text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <p>Editorial: Make Duterte pay for bloody crimes against the people 1</p> <p>NPA mounts 3 armed actions in a week 2</p> <p>ICC to pursue investigation vs. Duterte 3</p> <p>NDFP to investigate Masbate incident 3</p> <p>Arrest of 5 farmers, pastor 4</p> <p>Protests 4</p> <p>3 farmers abducted and murdered 4</p> <p>Duterte is subservient to China and US 4</p> <p>To be gay in the NPA 5</p> <p>Key information on the PH oil industry 6</p> <p>In short 7</p> <p>Worsening conditions in the sugar industry 8</p> <p>Negros sugarcane farm workers' victory 9</p> <p>US is using G7, NATO against China 9</p> <p>No vaccines for non-allies 10</p>
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ICC to pursue investigation against Duterte

Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda of the International Criminal Court (ICC) formally requested authorization to open the investigation on Duterte regime's "war on drugs" in response to victims' complaints. Bensouda retired on June 15 and was replaced by Kharim Khan who will take over the case.

This is the second stage in the trial process of the ICC on criminal complaints. The preliminary examinations (first stage) has been completed and Bensouda stated that "there is reasonable basis" to believe that the crime against humanity of murder has been committed between July 16, 2016 (Rodrigo Duterte's first day in power) and March 16, 2019 (day when the Philippines left the ICC) in the context of the regime's "war on drugs."

According to Bensouda, the ICC

has the authority to probe the crimes perpetrated by the regime when the country was still its member before formally leaving 2019.

The ICC has the jurisdiction to try individuals charged with four types of crimes—genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression committed by member countries. The next stage after the investigation is the pre-trial stage, followed by the trial stage, appeals stage and the enforcement of sentence. AB

NDFP to investigate Masbate incident

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is investigating the involvement of civilians in the armed action mounted by the New People's Army (NPA)-Masbate on June 6 in Barangay Anas, Masbate City.

According to the NDFP, such investigation is its obligation under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) which it signed with the the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). The investigation is being conducted under the laws and regulations of the people's democratic government and the people's army. Should there be a criminal charge (whether intended or not), those involved can either be court-martialed or tried by the people's court.

The NDFP clarified its jurisdiction after the AFP and the Duterte regime insisted the NPA to "turn over" those responsible. It said that the GRP has no legal and moral right to investigate or try any member of the revolutionary movement, even if proven guilty. The appropriate mechanism for this should be undertaken by Joint Monitoring Committee which the NDFP has long demanded the GRP to respect.

Earlier, the NPA-Masbate and NPA-Bicol expressed their deepest

condolences and self-criticism over the death of cousins Kieth, 21, and Nolgen Absalon, 40, and the wounding of Nolgen's 16-year old child. While expressing self-criticism, the NPA-Bicol asked the Absalon family for forgiveness and expressed its willingness to extend appropriate indemnification. According to initial reports, the victims were riding their bicycle when a landmine exploded on their way. They died on the spot. The younger Absalon was a student while his cousin worked for an electricity cooperative in the city.

Amid this, the NDFP criticized the AFP for using the incident to peddle false information regarding the legitimate use of command-detonated landmines under international laws.

The leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the NPA also expressed its sincere apologies to the family. It said that the NPA unit must critically probe the incident and identify its weaknesses and errors during the incident in order to correct these. AB

State forces arbitrarily arrest 5 farmers, pastor

STATE FORCES ARBITRARILY arrested five farmers and a pastor in the past two weeks, while a political detainee died in jail.

In Sorsogon, three copra farmers were abducted by the 31st IB in Donsol on June 6. The victims were identified as Etoy Magdamit, Jr. and Antonio Razo, Jr., residents of Barangay San Francisco; and Salvador Moscoso, resident of Barangay Cabugao. They were surfaced and are currently detained at the 31st IB headquarters.

In Zamboanga del Norte, state forces arrested Benjie Gomez, pastor of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines in the town of Mutia last June 6. He was slapped with trumped up charges of murder and frustrated murder. Earlier in 2014, the court has junked similar charges against him.

In Negros Occidental, elements of the 62nd IB and 94th IB illegally arrested farmers Kenneth Nabong and Jayson John Gazon in Barangay Buenavista, Himamaylan City on June 9 at midnight. They were tortured and planted with evidences of firearms.

Meanwhile, political prisoner Jesus Alegre, 75, died in the New Bilibid Prison last June 13 after succumbing to diarrhea, diabetes and lung complications. He was detained for sixteen years based on trumped up murder charge filed against him by a landlord who grabbed his land in Sagay, Negros Occidental. His 74-year old wife Moreta and 47-year old son are still imprisoned on the same case. Last month, two other political prisoners (Joseph Canlas and Maximo Redota) also died in jail due to the negligence of the regime and its refusal to release sick and elderly detainees.

3rd SFB massacres minor and 2 Lumads

Elements of the 3rd Special Forces Battalion (SFB) indiscriminately shot at six Lumad-Manobos in Barangay Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur in the afternoon of June 15. The victims were identified as Willy Rodriguez, 32, Lenie Rivas, 21, and her 12-year old sister Angel Rivas. The victims are believed to have been tortured before being killed in cold blood. The Rivas siblings are also believed to have been raped before their genitals were repeatedly shot. Three other victims were able to escape.

The younger Rivas was a 6th grade student under the Alternative Learning System (ALS) of the Department of Education. Lenie Rivas and Rodriguez are members of Lumad na Malahutayong Pakigbisog alang sa Sumusunod (MAPASU). They were all residents of Sitio Panukmoan.

The 3rd SFB attempted to cover up by claiming that the victims were members Red fighters. Soldiers of the

3rd SFB and 48th IB have long been occupying Sitio Manluy-a in Diatagon to evict residents from their communities to pave way for the entry of big mining companies in Andap Valley.

Progressive groups protested in front of the Commission on Human Rights in the afternoon of June 17 to condemn the massacre. This is the 25th massacre under the Duterte regime, and second in Diatagon. **AB**

PNP-Masbate abducts and murders 3 farmers

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Masbate condemned the 2nd IB and Philippine National Police (PNP)-Masbate for abducting and killing three farmers to claim the reward offered by PNP Chief Guillermo Eleazar for the capture of the NPA fighters involved during an offensive last June 6.

State forces abducted Ailyn Ekit Bulalacao, 38, Ramon Boy Valenzuela Brioso, 58, and Antonio Poligrates, 61, from various towns in the evening of June 7 and brought to Barangay Anas, Masbate City where they were massacred on June 8. Soldiers claimed that the victims were NPA members and were killed during the encounter. Relatives of the vic-

tims however said that they were civilians. In fact, Poligrates was a watchman of Barangay Villahermosa, Cawayan.

They also abducted two youngsters identified as Joseph Dalera and Judy Serapin in Barangay Guiom, Cawayan, Masbate on June 19. They are yet to be surfaced by their abductors.



Washington protest. Filipino-Americans protested in front of the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C., US on June 16 days prior to the 75th year of the bogus independence granted by the US to the Philippines. The demanded support for the Philippine Human Rights Act which is pending before the US Congress.

CARP33. On the 33rd anniversary of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program last June 10, farmers protested in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City to condemn the absence of genuine agrarian reform. They also criticized the agency for implementing policies to railroad the use-conversion of agricultural lands and the splitting of collective certificate of land ownership of beneficiaries.

Pedal for #HRDay7. Relatives and supporters of the unionists and journalists arrested on December 10, 2020, rode their bicycles from Liwasang Bonifacio to the Supreme Court in Manila on June 10 to protest and demand their release.

On the 123rd Independence Day

Duterte is subservient to China and the US

Democratic sectors commemorated the 123rd Independence Day on June 12 by mounting a protest in front of the China Embassy in Makati City.

They condemned Rodrigo Duterte for selling out the West Philippine Sea to China in exchange for bribes, loans and favors. They also criticized his scheme for charter change to give foreign corporations the power to fully own enterprises in strategic industries, as well as land in the country.

Rallyists covered at Quezon City and Rajah Sulayman in Manila

before going to the embassy. Similar mobilizations were held in Zambales, Cavite, Cebu, Bacolod and Davao.

After two days, Duterte once again suspended the junking of the Visiting Forces Agreement between the Philippines and the US for the third time. This came after the regime's submission of a new agreement which contains more pro-US

provisions. Among these is a key proposal which allows the US to use Philippine territories facing the South China Sea to stockpile its missiles and weapons to purportedly prevent Chinese attacks. This is a component of the Pacific Deterrence Initiative which aims to protect US interests in the region. In exchange to the territories that will be surrendered by the regime are weapons and military aid promised by the US government to the Armed Forces of the Philippines. **AB**

To be gay in the NPA

"When I was young, my father always wanted me to enlist in the military hoping to get rid of the gay in me. Now that I am grown-up—still gay as ever—his wish was fulfilled. However, I became a soldier in a different army, a better one. I'm a Red fighter of the NPA."

Ka Oliver is among many gay and lesbian comrades who embraced the revolutionary armed struggle in the countryside. He likes to joke when he recalls his childhood and struggles of growing up homosexual in a conservative family. But when he explains what he stands for, he is serious and determined.

"The only way the LGBTQ community can find liberation from gender oppression is by ending class oppression." For him, the Filipino LGBTQ struggle should encompass the struggle to dismantle the semi-colonial and semi-feudal conditions of Philippine society that breeds and perpetuates oppression, discrimination, and fascist persecution not only of the LGBTQ community but all oppressed classes.

Before joining the NPA, Oliver's notion of "gay pride" was heavily influenced by bourgeois and post-modernist ideas centered on individualism, and detached from social realities of class struggle. Back then, his understanding was limited to pride and self-acceptance devoid of the material conditions and structures that deny people—gay or not—their democratic rights. "How can we have 'pride' when we are deprived of education, when we are exploited, when we cannot feed our families, or when we are being driven away from our land and our only means of living?" he said.

Ka Oliver believes that being a "woke" gay means firmly grasping the universal truths of the national democratic struggle beyond gender identity politics. "We should unite with other classes and sectors against a common enemy. Gay or not, we are all victimized by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism," he said.

Gay fighter

Living as a gay revolutionary in the countryside has its extra challenges, but for Ka Oliver, the fact that the CPP and the NPA respect and support the LGBTQ community spells the difference.

Once in a while, he experiences vestiges of discrimination and patriarchal notions, although not as vicious and systemic as those which he experienced before joining the the revolutionary movement. "Years in the NPA have tempered me enough to know that these comments are generally not expressed to hurt or embarrass me. Often, these come from the one-sided and demeaning representation of gay people in the mass media. Some others are also just genuinely concern over the welfare of a "soft-mannered petty-bourgeois."

To counter myopic views, Ka Oliver actively engages in discussions to challenge gender stereotypes.

"As members of the LGBTQ community, we must not remain as passive receivers of acceptance. Instead of waiting for the masses to accept us, we must go to them directly and share our experiences and struggles. We can learn firsthand about their struggles and find commonalities."

Oliver is confident that prejudices of some comrades and the masses on gays can be corrected through constant education, proletarian remolding, and criticism and self-criticism. He himself still struggles to reject the individualist and liberal bourgeois ideas of so-called "gay pride," which he has come to realize are being exploited by the ruling class to maintain the status quo, and gloss over the true roots of society's biases against the community.



Revolutionary relationship

"In terms of relationships, my generation is also being fed the notion that 'pride' means being able to engage in anarchic sexual encounters with multiple partners, with no compunction about its consequences. Inside the movement, the Party's policy on courtship and marriage aims to ensure that women and sexual minorities are protected from violence, harassment and sexual opportunism."

In the 1990s, the Party institutionalized that all LGBTQ relationships must be under collective knowledge and development like heterosexual relationships. All LGBTQ couples have equal rights within the relationship, and they shall enjoy all the support and care of the Party, just like those in heterosexual relationships.

"The Party's unconditional acceptance and protection of the LGBTQ community is no mere lip-service but a matter of principle."

"Since I am now part of a larger collective, of a larger struggle, the way I maintain discipline is not simply a form of repressing my sexual urges but an aspect of my proletarian remolding," concluded Ka Oliver.

As we celebrate Pride month this June, gay revolutionaries proudly wave the flag for the national democratic struggle. "There can be no pride if there's no liberation for all of us." AB

Key information on the Philippine oil industry

The situation of the Philippine oil industry is indicative of the backward economic conditions in the country. Because of its low production and refining capacity, the local oil industry is tightly dependent on the importation of finished products. It will further become dependent because of fierce competition among large oil refining companies, especially those from China.

A huge part of the local oil industry consists of the importation of finished petroleum products (gasoline, diesel, kerosene and others), storage and distribution. The country also imports crude oil for local refining which supplies not less than half of petroleum products in the local market. Offshore mining of natural gas in seas in the western part of Palawan contributes minimally to the local supply, and reserves are expected to be depleted within a year or two.

Two giants

The distribution of oil in the Philippines is dominated by two big companies: Petron Corp. which controls 24.88% of the local market, and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. which controls 18.25%, for a combined share 43.85% in total sales. Petron, formerly government-owned, is now owned by the San Miguel Corporation. Pilipinas Shell, on the other hand, is a subsidiary of the multinational company BP-Shell. Both Petron and Shell are always among the top five biggest companies in the Philippines. In 2019, Petron was the biggest company in the country in terms of sales.

Next to Petron and Pilipinas Shell is Phoenix Petroleum Philippines which controls 6.86% of the local market, Unioil with 6.48%, and Chevron Philippines (Caltex) with 6.13%. In sum, these five biggest companies control 62.6% of the total sales of petroleum products.

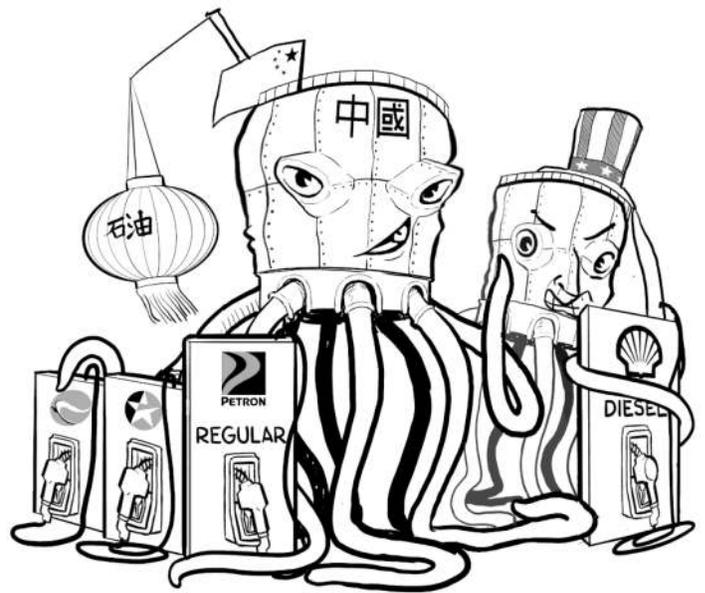
The remaining sales are shared by smaller companies, namely PTT

Philippine Corp. (PTTPC), Total Phils., Seaoil Phil. Inc., TWAInc., Liguigaz, Prycegas, Micro Dragon, IslaGas, Jeti, Eastern Petroleum, Petrotrade, South Pacific, Marubeni, SL Harbour, Rockoil, RK3 Int'l., Insular, ERA 1, High Glory, Warbucks, Perdido, Golden Share and Filoil Logistics Corp. and others.

The sales and profit registered by oil companies during the first half of 2020 plummeted due to lockdown restrictions. However, these companies were able to recover their losses quickly during the second half of the year. Petron registered a profit of ₱1.6 billion during the third quarter, and ₱1.2 billion during the last quarter of 2020. Shell, on the other hand, registered a profit of ₱400 million during the last quarter, after suffering huge losses with the closure of its refinery in Batangas.

Oil importation

Majority of these companies are mere exporters of finished petroleum products and distributors in the local market. Until mid-2020, 60% of the supply of gasoline, diesel and other products in the country were directly imported. This has further increased with the closure of the Shell refinery in Tabangao, Batangas on September 2020. Since January 2021, 100% of petroleum products being sold in the Philippines is imported following the closure of Petron's refinery in Limay, Bataan. The company declared its



plan to reopen the refinery this July after being promised a tax incentive, but prospects for this remain dim as the company is expected to suffer losses amid tighter competition.

China is a bigger giant

China's control and domination over crude refining and exportation of finished petroleum products is growing, especially in the Asia-Pacific region. During the third quarter of 2020, the share of China in Philippine diesel imports reached 64%. From January to November 2020, the volume of gasoline imported by the country increased by 434.1% to 1.7 million metric tons. The Philippines also imports from other countries including Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

China has the second biggest capacity for oil refining, and is expected to overtake the US within several years. It is the biggest importer of crude oil globally and, and has the biggest storage capacity. China currently dominates the sale of petroleum products in Asia. The biggest Chinese oil companies include PetroChina (China National Petroleum Corporation) and Sinopec. Australian and Singaporean refineries (Shell and Exxon) were forced to close down because of the high production capacity of China

AB

#NoTo Demotion

Nurses successfully demanded

the revocation of a **2020 order demoting all nurses with a rank of Nurse 2** and higher. They also succeeded in getting a raise in the salary grade of Nurse 2 in public hospitals. Last year, they won their demand for a raise in the salaries of **Nurse 1** from **P22,000 to P32,000**.

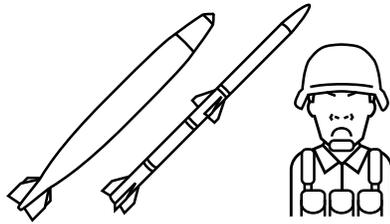


2,196

kilos of shabu were reportedly seized during the regime's anti-drug operations in **2020**.

This is **higher than the 2,071 kilos** of shabu confiscated in **2019**, indicating that the drug trade continues to flourish despite the Duterte regime's 5-year "war on drugs."

Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2021

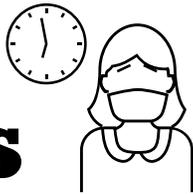


\$2 billion

worth of missiles and bombs that the AFP

will not get from the **US** if the US Congress approves the **Philippine Human Rights Act**. The said bill will suspend arms sales to the Philippines **until it is able to implement reforms to prevent human rights abuses**. This bill was authored by **Rep. Susan Wild** of **Pennsylvania**.

52 days



in overtime

were rendered by teachers under the flexible learning system as of June 15. This is equivalent to an additional unpaid bonus of **P14,109**.

Source: Alliance of Concerned Teachers-Philippines

\$735 million

worth of bombs sold by the US to Israel

amid the latter's bombing campaign in Palestine. This is part of the **\$38-billion** 10-year aid which the US promised to give **Israel**.



Ernesto "Che" Guevara

was born on

14 June 1928

Although an **Argentinian**, he served as a **doctor and commander** during the **Cuban revolution**, and later on appointed as the **minister of industry** by then Prime Minister Fidel Castro. He was killed by US agents in Bolivia, where he also took part in the revolution, on October 7, 1976.

62%

efficacy rate of Soberana 2

the **Covid-19 vaccine developed by Cuba**. It is currently undergoing the last stage of clinical trials in the country and Iran.

In the US, there were approximately

43,000

incidents of gun-related deaths in 2020

This includes mass shootings such as the recent incident involving a worker who killed 9 co-workers in California, drive-by shootings and suicides.

Source: Gun Violence Archive

Worsening labor and production conditions in the sugar industry

Whenever Tiempo Muerto is nearing, farmers and farm workers in sugarcane plantations typically look for alternative sources income. Tiempo Muerto pertains to the off-milling period between sugarcane planting seasons from August to September. During this period, their incomes plummet drastically, while many others earn nothing at all.

A survey by the reactionary state indicates that sugarcane farmers are the second poorest among all agricultural workers in the country receiving an average daily wage of ₱273. Their actual income, however, is lower according to data by the National Federation of Sugar Workers. According to the group, farmers only receive an average income of ₱1,000-₱1,500 every fifteen days (₱67-₱100 per day) during the milling season, and only ₱200-₱500 (₱13-₱33 per day) during Tiempo Muerto. This is far from the stipulated regional minimum daily wage rates (₱295-₱500) and way lower than the family living wage of ₱1,059.

Sugar barons evade the implementation of minimum wage rates through the *pakyawan* scheme wherein farm workers are compensated based on quota. In a sugarcane plantation in Isabela, farm workers only receive a daily salary of ₱16-₱50 for weeding, ₱150 for fertilizing, ₱94 for taking care of sugar cane plants and ₱225-₱250 for harvesting.

Sugary industry

According to data by the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA), 789,681 Filipinos are currently working in the sugar industry. Majority of them are seasonal farm workers (686,968) and farmers (88,748) who directly participate in the production of sugarcane. Sugar

mills also employ 13,965 workers. Almost 85% of the farmers (75,241) cultivate less than five hectares of sugarcane farm. Land-grabbing and reconcentration of sugarcane farms by landlords are also prevalent in the form of various farming arrangements such as sugar block farming, stock distribution option, *ariendo* system and agribusiness venture agreement.

Sugarcane is the top agricultural commodity produced by the Philippines in terms of volume. In 2019, almost a fourth of the volume of the country's agricultural produce was sugarcane. Nearly two-thirds of this was from Western Visayas.

Sugarcane farms cover 398,478 hectares of agricultural lands in 10 regions across the country. Largest of which are located in the Negros island (approximately 200,000 hectares) followed by Mindanao (80,000 hectares) and Southern Tagalog (20,000 hectares).

Despite this, local sugarcane production is declining. From 28 million metric tons (MT) in 2016, the volume of sugarcane harvested and milled locally decreased to 24.6 million. The decline is attributed to massive use-conversion of sugar farms and the closure of four out of 27 sugar centrals in the country in the past five years. Under the Duterte regime, the total area of



sugarcane farms plummeted by 5% (22,880 hectares). Its sugar milling capacity also declined from 196,000 MT/day to 173,300 MT/day during the same period. Under Duterte, the total volume of sugar produced by the country plummeted by 19% from 3.5 million MT in 2016 to 2.8 million MT in 2020.

Experts also attributed this to high costs of farm inputs such as fertilizer and herbicide, as well as low incomes which push farmers to look for other jobs. The adverse impact of climate change is now also being felt in the industry in the form of more destructive natural disasters such as the flashfloods in Negros Occidental last January which inundated thousands of hectares of sugarcane farms.

In 2020, the country was able to produce 2.1 million MT of raw (brown) sugar and 703,800 MT of refined (white) sugar. According to SRA, the average price of raw sugar in the local market is currently ₱32.42/kilo, which is higher by 2% (₱0.70) compared to its price in June 2019. The increase is primarily due to declining local production and the 13% increase in demand for cheap raw sugar during the pandemic.

"Worsening..." continued on page 9

Successful campaign of sugarcane farm workers in Negros

Paghimakas, revolutionary publication in the Negros island, reported that farm workers will start to benefit this month from their dialogue with a landlord last September 2020 to demand wage increase. In line with their calls, their daily wage was raised from ₱150-₱170 to ₱200.

Additionally, they also won a raise in the daily wage for plowing to ₱300 from ₱250-₱270; ₱900 for planting ten thousand sugarcane tops from ₱700-₱800; and ₱350 for reaping and stevedoring from ₱320-₱330. More than 200 farm workers from 11 sitios in four barrios are set to benefit from this.

A research by Paghimakas revealed that the said plantation has a capacity to produce 230 metric tons of sugar for every 20 hectares within

two planting seasons which can be sold for a total of ₱5.98 million. Before the dialogue, 45% of this (₱2.7 million) went to the landlord, and 30% went to the sugar central (₱1.8 million). The remaining 20% (₱1.2 million) is shared by the farm workers.

In a related story, hundreds of members of the Unyon ng Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA) in the town of Sta. Maria, Isabela filed a complaint at the City Council of Isabela last May to oppose "slave-like



wages" and inhumane treatment in plantations. According to the group, farm workers in one plantation in the area receive less than ₱200 daily.

They also demanded the reinstatement of 287 farm workers who were laid off last August 2019 after sugar barons in northern Isabela and southern Cagayan into a contract with Green Future Innovations-Ecofuel for the production of bioethanol covering 1,696 hectares of sugarcane plantations. **AB**

US uses G7 and NATO against China

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the rivalry among imperialist countries is set to further escalate after the meetings held by the Group of Seven (G7) and NATO during the second week of June.

The three-day G7 Summit in Southwestern England ended on June 13 in which a resolution was passed to prevent the growing economic and military influence of China across the globe.

During the meeting, the G7 which is comprised by the United States, United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, Italy and Japan reviewed key global developments in the past 40 years. It pointed out that China's economy in 1979 was smaller than that of Italy. Currently China is now second among the richest countries globally which control global politics.

To counter this, the G7 plans to implement its grandiose infrastructure program dubbed as Build Back Better World (B3W) in poor and developing countries. The B3W

aims to counter the China's trillion dollar infrastructure project dubbed as Belt and Road Initiative.

Aside from threats posed by China, the G7 also pledged to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and other future pandemics, and to limit carbon emissions. However, critics pointed out that its \$1-billion climate fund is gravely insufficient to address climate change. Activists also noted that its promise to address environmental destruction is bogus as it has not devised a detailed plan of action for this.

On June 14, the US urged its allies during the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Summit in Belgium to pass a resolution to strengthen the alliance of the European Union against China and support the anti-Russian regimes in Georgia and Ukraine. **AB**

"Worsening..." from page 8

From 2016 to 2019, the total value of sugar products exported by the Philippines amounted to ₱33.7 billion, more than half of which was exported to the US.

Compared to this, the volume of sugar products imported by the Philippines is way higher at ₱116.7 billion during the same period, 36% of which was from China.

To push for all-out importation, the regime's economic officials are proposing to dismantle tariffs (up to 50%) on sugar products, as well as the 64,050 MT-minimum access volume (MAV) on raw sugar. This move is being opposed by farmers and even sugar barons as this will flood the local market with cheaper imported sugar which will pull down local prices, and ultimately cause the demise of the entire industry. **AB**

No vaccines for non-allies

During a congressional hearing last June 14, Mindanao lawmakers raised their concern over the criminal negligence and favoritism of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) in the distribution of vaccines against Covid-19.

They blamed vaccine czar Gen. Carlito Galvez for the deaths of patients in the island for neglecting the lawmakers' urgent demands. The regime delivered vaccines to Mindanao a week earlier but majority of the supplies were given to the province of Davao and Davao City wherein Rodrigo Duterte's daughter Sara is mayor. Data by the Department of Health indicate that the region received 210,000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines. On the other hand, two other regions only received 30,000 doses each. These

include provinces in Region 10 and Cagayan de Oro City wherein a number of politicians openly oppose the Dutertes' scheme to remain in Malacañang.

Majority of the vaccine supplies were given to the National Capital Region despite rising cases in Mindanao and Visayas. Even then, Manila City Mayor Isko Moreno, who also happens to oppose the younger Duterte's candidacy, complained against the sluggish distribution in the region.

Data as of June 17 indicate that

14 million of vaccine doses have been delivered to the country. Only 1.7 million of these were distributed in Mindanao. Of the 1.7 million residents of Manila City, only 354,000 have been inoculated.

Nationwide, only nearly 7 million individuals have been vaccinated, with only 1.8 million inoculated twice. Among ASEAN countries, the Philippines is the third slowest in inoculating residents.

Meanwhile, the IATF refused to publicize where the ₱82.5-billion budget allocation for the procurement of vaccines went. All of the vaccines received by the Philippines are donations from the Covax Facility of the World Health Organization. **AB**