



EDITORIAL

Make big strides, attain great victories

Imbued with revolutionary spirit, the Communist Party of the Philippines is fully resolved to stride and make big achievements in the new year 2023. The party is determined to further consolidate and gain strength and firmly lead the comprehensive advance of the people's democratic revolution across the country.

The new year does not bring any hope of a comfortable or better life for the Filipino masses under the US-Marcos fascist and puppet regime. They are, thus, determined to take the revolutionary path on which alone gives them hope of changing the course of their destiny.

The crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system in the country is ever worsening. While majority of the people wallow in poverty and hunger, the few ruling classes of bourgeois comprador and landlords and their bureaucrat capitalist agents indulge in wealth. Millions of workers and peasants are grossly oppressed and suppressed by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

Every day, the people are confronted by the faces of these three monsters: skyrocketing prices of

goods and services, low wages, unemployment, landlessness, onerous land rent, and rising costs of fertilizer and pesticides. Hundreds of thousands are evacuated to pave the way for mines and plantations.

Public funds are being stolen by a few. They favor cronies and criminal syndicates. Money is wasted on grandiose but irrelevant projects and on excessive spending for the parasitic military and police, leaving even less funds for deteriorating social services. People are burdened by a gargantuan government debt. Tax exemptions are extended to wealthy foreign capitalists, but not to the downtrodden masses.

Neoliberal laws and policies are implemented to favor foreign big capitalists and financial oligarchs, and their big bourgeois compradors and landlord partners. There is full-

swing import liberalization of rice, sugar and other foreign products. Big compradors and smugglers are in full control of supplies and pocket large amounts of profits from overpricing.

China is brazenly seizing Philippine maritime territory and resources, while the US is dotting the country with military bases. The US stokes the civil war in the country to turn the AFP to a market for their weapons. Fascist soldiers pester the villages and unleash brutal state terrorism. Leaders and members of unions and mass organization are harassed, intimidated, arrested, imprisoned, tortured and killed. The attacks against the people are relentless.

All laws and policies that oppress and kill the people are now in the hands of the Marcos regime. Marcos is the epitome of all the evil of ruling classes: greed, indifference to the people's sufferings, subservience to foreign powers, and oppressive against those who stand up for their rights.

While workers and peasant families could barely serve food on their tables, the Marcoses are busy preparing banquets in newly constructed villas inside Malacañang, or pondering which country they will travel to next using the people's money. Marcos is rushing the Maharlika Investment Fund to put into his hands hundreds of billions of public funds for him to plunder and favor his cronies. Charter change (cha-cha) efforts are now being rail-roaded to allow government officials to remain in power for 10 years. Meanwhile, Marcos is playing deaf to the clamor for wage increases, lower prices and other people's grievances.

The people aspire for a significant change in their lives. Thus, the Filipino people, especially the oppressed and exploited masses, look towards the leadership of the Party and its torch that illuminates the revolutionary path towards a bright tomorrow.

The Party firmly believes it can achieve its goal of consolidating its ranks and leading the comprehensive advance of the revolution. Its leading cadres at all levels are determined to give everything to bring the Party's strength, and the energy of the revolutionary movement to unprecedented levels.

The Party should strengthen itself ideologically, politically and or-

ganizationally. Further raise the Party cadres and members' knowledge and grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, its application to the Philippine revolution and to their daily undertaking. A movement to review the basic principles laid by the Party must be carried out. Carry out a widespread study of the writings of our great comrade Jose Ma. Sison to serve as a guide to assess and sum-up our work. Identify our strengths and weaknesses, and lay out a plan for rapid advance. Strengthen democracy and unified action under the leadership of the Central Committee.


Grasp more firmly the theory and practice of mass line. In the city and countryside, the oppressed and exploited masses are eager to unite under the Party's flag. They are ready to rise up and march as one. Turn the factories, campuses, communities, offices, hospitals and other places into centers of mass struggles. Establish the broadest unity against the anti-people, puppet and fascist Marcos regime. Let the din of the people's march shake the foundation of the rule of exploitative and oppressive classes.

This year, let us carry out a vibrant and colorful celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Democratic Front (NDF) to promote its achievement in uniting the Filipino people and advancing the struggle for national freedom and democracy.

Marcos, Duterte and all the terrible fascists tremble with fear in the face of masses' resistance. Together with the New People's Army, they will bring the people's war to unparalleled heights.

Let us honor our great heroes. They are models of selfless service to the people, the Party and the revolution. They were like giant trees that provided shade and comfort to the forest. Where they used to stand, the sun's rays now penetrate, giving warmth to thousands of new trees nurtured by their legacy. The forest of the revolution is filled with life and vigor.






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ang.bayan@cpp.ph

[@angbayan1969](https://twitter.com/angbayan1969)

Marcos to railroad cha-cha and neoliberal policies this 2023

Marcos' lackeys in Congress are determined to rush the "cha-cha" (charter change) under the current regime. According to the head of Lower House committee on constitutional amendments, they will stage "marathon hearings" starting this month to "expedite" the approval of eight proposals and resolutions that all seek to amend the 1987 constitution. Back in December, the committee head, Rep. Rufus Rodriguez (Cagayan de Oro, 2nd District) said hearings will "immediately" begin on January 26, and every two weeks thereafter.

Congress representatives want to remove constitutional provisions prohibiting a sitting president from running again, and senators from running for more than two terms, and representatives for more than three times. A proposal to set each term to five years was put forward, and allowing everyone to run for two consecutive terms. This means all elected government officials—from president, vice president, senator, congressman to town councilor—can hold office uninterrupted for 10-years.

Apart from term extension, there is also a push to fully liberalize the remaining sectors of the local

economy protected for Filipino-owned businesses. This is in line with the all-out liberalization program of the Marcos regime. Like a broken record, its proponents insist that it can attract new foreign investment, even after promised benefits to the local economy have repeatedly been proven hollow and false.

Another proposal is to call a Constitutional Convention or con-con in December. Initiators want to have con-con delegates (one per congressional district) elected simultaneously with the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections in October.

Apart from charter change, the



Marcos regime's officials and henchmen have also pushed other neoliberal measures. This includes the privatization of the EDSA bus carousel that provided free rides to a daily average of 400,000 commuters in the past two years. Another is the push to privatize the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, using the new year's day "glitch" as excuse to reopen contract negotiations with the favored bourgeois-compradors.

Meanwhile, last January 1, Marcos extended Executive Order 171, an order issued by Rodrigo Duterte that eased remaining restrictions on the importation of meat, rice, corn and coal. Set to expire at the end of 2022, the order will now cover all of 2023. Along with this was the order to import 64,050 metric tons of sugar and 3 million metric tons of rice for 2023. It also allowed 25,000 tons of imported fish to be sold to local markets from November 2022 until this January.

In the first days of the year, Marcos Jr, along with his family and minions traveled to China to beg for loans and renew old contracts for the benefit of his cronies.

Among the things the regime bragged about was a new \$201.8 loan from China for contracts to build bridges and other infrastructure in Metro Manila. The rest are all "memorandums of understanding" that are no different from the agreements boasted by the past Duterte regime.

For sure, these are just the beginning of the oppressive measures and programs that the disastrous Marcos regime will implement this year.

Teachers, parents drive out 68th IB

A PARENTS-TEACHERS Association or PTA recently drove out the soldiers of the 68th IB who were encamped around the Redhills National High School of Calintaan, Occidental Mindoro.

Teachers and parents filed a complaint before the village captain of Barangay New Dagupan demanding the removal of the 68th IB's camp established since July 2022 in the school's vicinity.

The military camp was built a month prior to the opening of face-to-face classes. Fascist soldiers have built 68 of 100 structures planned in the camp at the time the petition was filed.

Drinking and the soldiers' lack of consideration for civilian welfare are among the many reasons that intensified the desire of teachers and parents to drive them away.

In addition, soldiers were poisoning the minds of the youth to make them accept mandatory ROTC. Soldiers meddled in the career orientation held at the school. They made students who had no uniform for their desired college course to wear combat fatigues.

Meanwhile, the NPA-Negros conducted another action against landlord Teotimo 'Tim' Ballesteros. On December 26, 2022, they paralyzed three more trucks of the notorious landlord in Sitio Carbon, Barangay San Isidro, Toboso, Negros Occidental. This followed the earlier sanction on December 14, 2022.

Farewell and highest tribute to Ka Joma

On December 17, 2022, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines ordered all units of the New People's Army to conduct a 21-gun salute on the Party's anniversary on December 26, 2022, by way of bidding farewell and paying highest tribute to Jose Maria Sison.

Ka Joma, founding chairman of the Party and founder of the people's army, passed away last December 16, 2022 at the age of 83, after several weeks of hospitalization in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

Seven-person squads conducted the gun salute through a three-time volley as the highest form of military salute. These were performed in high mountains, in forests, in the plains and areas near villages. By the first week of January, units of people's army in Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Lanao, Batangas, North Negros, South Central Negros, Southwest Negros and Panay, as well as others Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol and North Central Mindanao have reported their compliance.

Special gatherings of the army and masses were also reported in Batangas and Panay. In Bicol, gatherings were held in two places in the Rinconada area in Camarines Sur attended by 200 people. In the

cities, the revolutionary organization such as the Liga ng Agham para sa Bayan (LAB or League of Science for the People) and Makibaka so held clandestine tribute gatherings. On December 21, 2022, members of the Kabataang Makabayan staged a lightning rally to pay tribute to Ka Joma, who was also the group's founding chairperson.

On December 28, 2022, a special tribute was held at the University of the Philippines-Diliman campus in Quezon City to celebrate Ka Joma's life and contributions to the open mass movement and peace talks. It was attended by hundreds of people and viewed by thousands on Facebook and Twitter. Prior to the program, mass organizations marched around the campus.

Overseas

An emotion-filled but militant International Day of Tribute on December 23, 2022, and a revolutionary farewell ceremony before the cremation of Ka Joma's remains on

December 27, 2022 were held in Utrecht. Representatives of Marxist-Leninist political parties and organizations, progressives, anti-imperialist groups and individuals, European organizations, Filipino migrants and close friends and comrades of Ka Joma attended the tribute. Among them are representatives of organizations from Australia, Belgium, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Kurdistan, North Kurdistan, New Zealand, Palestine, Suriname, The Netherlands, Turkey and Ukraine.

Tributes also poured in from hundreds of organizations and individuals in various parts of the world who form part of the International League of Peoples' Struggles, which Ka Joma established and led for quite some time. International organizations also conducted various activities in their countries to give recognition to Ka Joma as a revolutionary and internationalist. These were launched in Germany, China, France, Mexico, Austria, Australia, Canada, US, Ireland and many other places.

54th anniversary of the CPP

The farewell and tribute to Ka Joma were held on the Party's anniversary under the banner: Consolidate and further strengthen the Party! Frustrate the counterrevolutionary war and state terrorism of the US-Marcos regime! Comprehensively advance the people's democratic revolution!

In the annual message of the Central Committee, it directed all the leading committees and cadres to exert all efforts to consolidate and strengthen the party ideologically, politically and organizationally. It revealed plans to issue a new 5-year program for 2022 to 2027 and extended the current 5-year Party program to allow all regions to complete and submit their summing-up documents.



The 402nd IBde's dirty war against infants and pregnant women

The 402nd IBde under the 4th ID in Northern Mindanao reached a new level of abomination when it abducted, disappeared, and held hostage infants, pregnant women and civilians. In 2022, at least four pregnant women, an hors de combat and a civilian were abducted and disappeared by military agents with the aim of using them against the NPA. Two were able to get out of military custody, while a baby was recovered by her family. Others remain hostage to this day.



The suffering of Roselle Polinar, her husband JR, Cherilyn Rebita (Ka Jan) and Jackilyn Egtob (Ka Jane) began on August 26, 2022 when agents of 402nd IBde abducted them from their residence in Surigao del Norte. Polinar and Rebita were both pregnant at that time, while Egtob was wounded. The raiding team which abducted them included Armando Rabanes (Anton/Dagat), a traitor turned military agent, and three other military agents who identified themselves as part of "OPAPP," the now defunct government agency for peace talks.

They did not show an arrest warrant for Polinar, the original target of the abduction. Instead of taking the four to the police station and informing the authorities of their arrest, they were taken to a house in Ata-atahon, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte. There, each of them was subjected to long interrogations. They were told to cooperate and answer questions all pertaining to the conditions of their fellow fighters, their supporters, the location of their units and more.

For more than a month, Polinar, Rebita and Egtob were not given medical attention.

Rebita gave birth in the San Vicente Birthing Clinic on October 10, 2022, and was returned to the military safehouse with her daughter Baby Rhea on October 12, 2022. Polinar gave birth on that day.

On October 28, 2022, unaware

that Polinar was being held by the military, the NPA contacted her to ask for assistance for the care of two other pregnant women: Aurily Havana (Ka Lyza) and Jennifer Binungkasan (Ka Laile). Facing threats to her life, Polinar accepted the request of comrades, despite knowing that the two pregnant women will be harmed.

On November 2, 2022, Baby Rhea was forcibly taken from Rebita and handed over to a man named Jonathan. This was the last time she saw her baby. The next day, Rebita and Egtob were released to implement their "mission." Rabanes ordered them to return to their unit to push others to surrender and steal three weapons. They were warned that Polinar and Baby Rhea might face harm if they did not accomplish their assignment.

On November 3, 2022, 69 days since they were captured, they were brought to a rendezvous along the highway in Barangay Libertad, Butuan City. Military agents took Rebita and Egtob to the area where Havana and Binungkasan would be met. That was the last time the two pregnant women were seen. The infants they would give birth to are now also considered victims of disappearance under military custody.

Protected people

Under international humanitarian law, children and women, especially infants and pregnant women,

are people accorded with "special protections" because of their vulnerability. Whatever their status—civilian or combatant—they are considered "protected people" under conditions of armed conflict. Their rights and the obligations of an adversary holding them are detailed and extensive.

In areas where there is armed conflict, a newborn baby is automatically accorded a "wounded" status. Care for them by institutions specializing in childcare must be given way. It is forbidden to separate mothers from infants who are breastfeeding.

It is the obligation of parties involved in the armed conflict to reunite families separated by the armed conflict. It is highly illegal for any power to change the personal status or status of a child's family.

These are just a few of the provisions that the 402nd IBde and their agents flagrantly violate as they continue hold *incomunicado* Polinar, JR, Havana and Binungkasan. Their families can file cases of abduction and enforced disappearance, illegal detention and hostage taking, coercion and intimidation, denial of medical attention, denial of legal representation, deprivation of communication with family and friends and forcible recruitment and surrender against its officers and all involved. All these form war crimes.

AB

Baby Rhea's happy homecoming

THE REBITA FAMILY was ecstatic when Baby Rhea, the 3-month-old baby held hostage by the 402nd Ibde to force her parents, both Red fighters to surrender, was returned home. Baby Rhea was born on October 12, 2022 and has yet to meet her relatives.

The baby was returned to her family along a highway on December 29, 2022, at 5 p.m. An anonymous woman brought her. Two days earlier, her parents aired video-taped appeals over social media to surface her.

Baby Rhea is the daughter of Cherilyn Rebita (Ka Jan) and Ka Logan, fighters under the New People's Army command in North Central Mindanao. Their statements were released along with the appeal of other victims of the 402nd IBde's violations of the international humanitarian law. They directed their demand specifically to Colonel Adonis Ariel Orio, commander of the 402nd IBde and its agents Armando Rabanes (Anton/Dagat), Jonathan Bautista, Jeffrey Munez and a certain Ondoy. The Red fighters made it clear that they had no intention of surrendering and causing harm to the people's army and the masses, as the military compelled them to do.

Apart from Baby Rhea, there are other children in other parts of the country whose basic rights have been violated by the military on suspicion of being a "child of the NPA." One of them is 4-year-old "RJ," who was kidnapped by the 203rd IBde and 41st IB from his caregivers in Occidental Mindoro in 2021. RJ was the son of health worker Emilia Marquez who was arrested in 2017.

94th IB ransacks 7 homes

SIXTY TROOPS OF the 64th IB forcibly entered, searched and ransacked seven homes of different families in Sitio Dangalon, Barangay Hilamunan, Kabankalan City in Negros Occidental in the morning of December 26, 2022. The military did not show any warrant for the search.

The fascists entered the homes of Albert Ramos, Leticia Sablaon, Eida Tingal, Benjie Teruel, Ramon at Analisa Tingal, Edgardo at Jonjelyn Tingal, Eddie at Vivian Teruel, Jimbert at Helen de Leon, and Kompol de Leon.

Arrest. Police illegally arrested Melanie Sumayang, organizer of Kadamay-Rizal, on December 23, 2022 in Barangay Mayamot, Antipolo, Rizal. She was charged with two counts of frustrated murder. She is currently detained at the Antipolo City Jail and needs ₱64,000 bail for her temporary release. The police officer who arrested Sumayang posed as a Meralco employee. Sumayang is an urban poor leader and has been at the forefront in the 2010 anti-demolition struggle in Peña Francia, Barangay Mayamot.

In a related news, activist Marites Pielago was temporarily released on bail on December 27, 2022 after more than five months imprisonment. Pielago, founder of Bicolana Gabriela and official of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Bicol, was arrested on July 28, 2022 based on fabricated murder and frustrated murder charges.

Meanwhile, Bonifacio Ilagan, playwright and victim of the US-Marcos I dictatorship, received threats on his life last January 2 from suspected state agents.

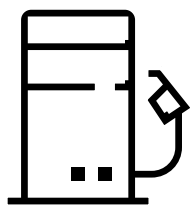


Kaliwa dam construction, opposed. Indigenous people, environmental defenders, and other groups staged a protest last December 28 at the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) office in Quezon City to demand an immediate stop to the New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa dam project being constructed in parts of the province of Rizal and Quezon.

Tumandok Massacre 2nd anniversary. Various organizations led by Sandugo-Movement of Moro and Indigenous Peoples for Self-Determination staged a candle-lighting protest in Philcoa, Quezon City on December 30, 2022 to demand justice for the massacre of nine Tumandok minorities perpetrated by soldiers and police in Panay on December 30, 2020.

Protest against water taxes in Bacolod. Members of Bayan-Negros and AMLIG Tubig trooped to the Bacolod Government Center on January 4 to demand Bacolod City Mayor Albee Benitez to remove the 12% value-added tax on water under the Bacolod Water District (Baciwa)-Primewater partnership. Groups have long expressed grievances in relation to the Joint Venture Agreement of Baciwa and Primewater owned by the Villar family.

Fight for union rights. Workers led by the Kilusang May Uno and Federation of Free Workers staged a picket at the RTWPD Region 6 office in Iloilo City to demand wage increases and fight for workers' rights to organize.



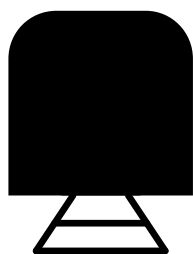
244 times gasoline prices increased in 2022

resulting in a net increase of ₱13.25/liter; a ₱24.60/liter net increase in diesel and ₱19.15/liter in kerosene was also noted.

Source: Department of Energy

24 tunnel boring machines

at \$20 million each were acquired in 2020, even when only 4 were needed for the Metro Manila subway project.

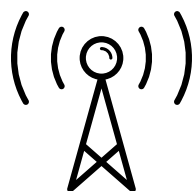


704



number of journalists **killed, hostaged, detained or missing** in 2022

Source: Reporters Without Borders



12,966 cell towers

were sold by **Smart** and **Globe** to foreign companies in 2022.

17%

growth in the wealth of Ramon Ang,

owner of the San Miguel Corporation and many other businesses, in 2022.

₱86.74

today's value of ₱100 in 2018.

750



Palestinian children imprisoned

by the fascist Israel state in 2022; 160 of them currently remain in prison.

Many to lose access to telco services

Even before the mandatory SIM card registration was set to be implemented, concerns have been raised regarding disenfranchisement of millions of service users in the countryside. Since December 27 last year, all new SIM card users are required to register. Meanwhile, old SIM card users were given 180 days to register to avoid deactivation.

Among those who expressed concern are Bani and her family who long had a problem with slow internet signal in their area. To get a connection, they need to go out of the house by 100 meters. They live in a secluded barrio in Negros nearly 20 kilometers away from the town center where there is a stable signal. If they travel just to register, they will spend ₱60 per person for their fare.

Bani is a Grade 9 student and relies on her cellphone for communication with her classmates and friends. She uses it for social media and the occasional school research. Her mother Jodi also uses a phone to call her relatives. Her father Boy uses it for coordination with his construction work and other jobs.

Josi, a 22-year old student in

Masbate City had then also expressed concerns. It often takes her five hours or more in a day to finish her studies because internet signal is erratic in their house. Although she has an ID and knows how to register, she struggled with the complicated processes. She knows their connection will not be stable enough because she lives far from the town center.

Tatay Sabat, a farmer from Hima-maylan City, expects that the SIM Card Registration will cause difficulties and distress. He has no valid ID which he can use to register. If forced, he will need to acquire one. Apart from a waste of time, it will cost him double. Dilly from Legazpi City has the same fears who struggles to earn enough because of the damage caused by the pandemic.

According to a report in 2020, 57% or 12.2 million Filipino families are not connected to the internet. During the same period, the country had one of the slowest internet connections (16.76 megabytes per second compared to the 32.01 mbps international average). Although telecommunication companies boast that the country's internet speed will have accelerated by 2021, through the setting up of 5G infrastructure, the general signal connection in the countryside which relies on 3G, if not 2G, remains slow and inconsistent. Even worse, the service is very expensive.

Failed registration system

All the people's fears have been proven true in the early hours of the SIM card registration. Challenges and problems met registrants. Over social media, many expressed their dismay with the slow and confusing, if not outright broken, SIM card reg-

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Rivalry of criminal and corruption syndicates in the AFP and PNP

The stench of the padrino system, corruption and criminality pervades in the Armed Forces the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Generals and their cliques are openly elbowing each other for control of billions of funds reserved for the AFP's modernization and counterinsurgency campaign. Yesterday, January 6, the news story broke out that Lt. Gen. Bartolome Vicente Bacarro has been removed as AFP chief and Gen. Andres Centino who once served as chief from November 12, 2021 to August 8, 2022, has been reappointed.

According to a law passed in 2021, Bacarro should serve a 3-year term. This was set to avoid the "revolving door" policy of AFP chiefs that has been used by previous regimes to reward their most loyal generals.

Bigger still is the maneuvering in the PNP among those in power for control of the big drug syndicates and other criminal operations that are under the protection or directly operated by top police officials. On January 4, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) ordered all general and colonels in the AFP to submit their "courtesy resignation," including its chief Gen. Rodolfo Azurin. The resignation can be accepted or rejected depending on the "review" of a committee. This purportedly aims to rid the PNP of officers involved in drugs. Benjamin Abalos, secretary of the DILG, admitted that the criminality was a deep problem among the police.

It is preposterous that the state is serious about purging the PNP of syndicates involved in illegal drugs and other crimes. In fact, Abalos admitted that this was a "shortcut" to avoid the "long" judicial process of putting to trial corrupt police officers. The temporary resignations will not be immediately acted upon, even as the generals and colonels will remain in their positions while the DILG conducts its investigation.

Human rights groups dismissed the step as a mere show to give police involved in criminals syndicates a chance to elude justice. It aims to cover-up the widespread involvement of police in criminal activities and avoid criticism especially of the sham drug war that started during the Duterte regime and continues today under the Marcos regime. **AB**

Dolefil workers' bitter Christmas

The Dole brand is known for its expensive fresh and canned fruit products. They go into favorite dishes during Christmas and special occasions. The multinational company earns billions of dollars annually from fresh fruit sales in the local and export market. This profit came from the land taken away from farmers and from the hard work and sacrifices of thousands of Filipino workers paid with low wages and deprived of decent living. For them, Christmas and New Year are bitter days.

Dole's monopoly

Dole is considered one of the largest exporters of fruit products worldwide. It earned \$6.5 billion in 2021. Its biggest operation is in South Cotabato which began six decades ago. The company's continuous growth is the result of oppressive and exploitative land grabbing and extracting superprofits from its thousands of workers.

According to 2020 data, Dolefil employed 20,000 workers in Polomolok, South Cotabato, or 52% of Dole Plc's 38,500 workers worldwide. Only about 7,000 are regularly employed by the company. In recent years, the company continually lays off regular workers on the pretext of "losses" from its operations. However, this is contradicted by the fact that it continues to employ contractuals.

Exploitation and enslavement of workers

Some workers have been working for the company for 10 years but

are still not regular. This is because they are under a labor cooperative contracted by Dolefil. They are only paid ₱340.00 per day—8% less than the already low wages of regular workers who receive a minimum (₱368 per day in Socskogargen).

Dolefil partners with cooperatives in recruiting and managing contractual and seasonal workers. Through this, the company systematically avoids obligations to pay proper wages, provide benefits and recognize the right to form unions.

Other than contractuals, the company employs pickers and relievers who are "employed" by cooperatives. They receive the lowest wage among all workers. They only work for three or four days. They are under the "quota" system and the cooperative cuts a portion of their wage. They usually get only ₱700 every pay day.

Workers cannot complain because they lack job security. Some of their complaints include non-remittance of their contributions to SSS,

PhilHealth and Pag-ibig, and occupational hazards. Harvesters are also forced to work even under the rain to reach the high quota. They are exposed to toxic chemicals.

Christmas inflation and crisis

Even before receiving their 13th month pay and bonus last Christmas, workers have already spent it in their minds. One of them is contractual worker Boyet. He planned to use a part for school expenses and school supplies. Another part will go to paying debts. He also planned to prepare a delicious meal for his children for *noche buena*, which comes only once a year.

But due to high prices, Boyet and his fellow company workers' wages and bonuses were not enough. To supplement their household expenses, one of his co-worker sold the canned goods given by the company, though strictly prohibited.

To ensure their *noche buena* meal, they bought meat on credit that will be paid for on the next payday. This adds to their debts which have been piling up the entire year due to their meager salaries. Often, they are forced to pawn their ATM card and rice bonuses to Polomolok usurers to keep up with very high cost of living. AB

"SIM Registration..." from page 8

istration process. Many said it took them a few hours just to register. According to others, the registration page of telecommunication companies were slow.

Around 11 a.m. on the first day of registration, the company Smart announced that their registration website encountered a problem caused by an overload of registrants. The Globe website experienced the same problem.

Others complained on social media "*ayusin niyo naman!*" (fix this!)

"*anyare???*" (what happened???) "*anu na? Since 3am pa ako naghihintay makapasok sa websites*" (what now? I Have been waiting since 3am just to access the website) and several other complaints and frustrations.

Meanwhile, technology experts and digital and privacy rights advocates criticized the policies of telecommunication companies which asked for a "selfie" or a self-portrait upon registration.

They also criticized the inserted "agreements" where companies sought the subscribers' consent to

have their personal information "sold" or commercialized by the company. Because of the criticisms, telecommunication companies argued this was only "optional" but later removed them from the list of agreements.

They said that the SIM Card Registration violated several privacy rights, in addition to the glitches and causing widespread disenfranchisement from telecommunication services. They continue to demand: Junk SIM Card Registration! Fight for the people's right to privacy! AB