

EDITORIAL

Defend the country's sovereignty amid imperialist discord

Inter-imperialist discord is escalating as US war-mongering against China continues. While intensifying, the Philippines is increasingly being drawn into the growing vortex of their conflict. The Filipino people faces the increasing possibility of becoming a battleground once more for inter-imperialist conflict, similar to what happened in World War II when the country became US and Japan's battlefield.

This possibility is a result of the Marcos regime's betrayal of the country's independence amid the heightening and aggressive military interference of imperialists to use the Philippines as a fortress of their conflict. Marcos insists on the policy of being "no one's enemy" to justify the plan to allow the US to construct more military bases in the country, and its servility to China's expanding claim of economic and military dominion in areas within the West Philippine Sea.

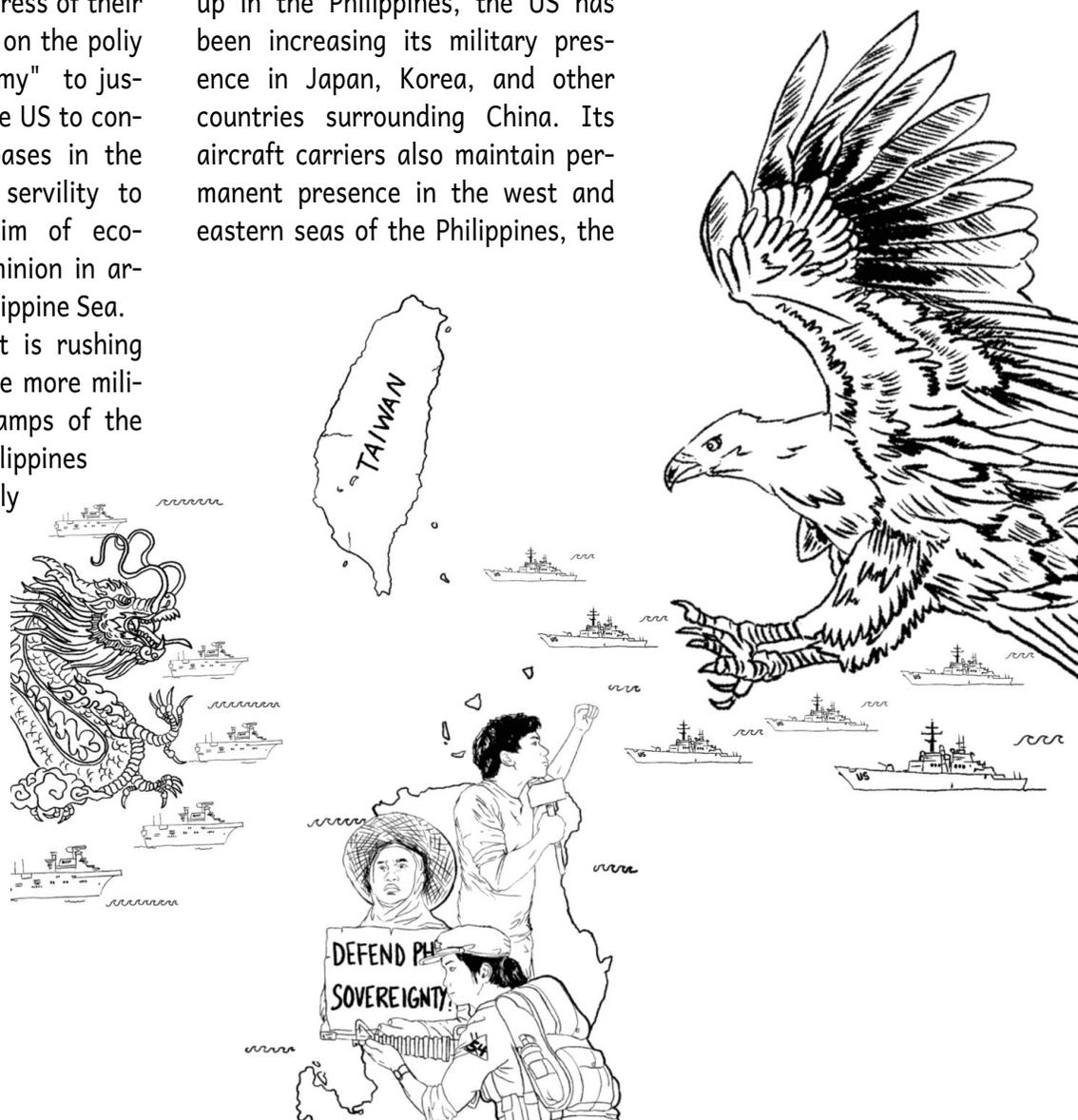
The US government is rushing to construct four or five more military facilities within camps of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). This is supposedly for providing assistance during calamities, but is clearly part of the preparations to establish the region as a "theater of war" and is aimed to raise the level of armed tensions against China. Its plans to carry out a series of joint war exercises, including the planned deployment of at least 12,000 American troops for

the Balikatan exercises, on the pretext of preparing to "defend the archipelago" seems to be taunting China.

In addition to US military build up in the Philippines, the US has been increasing its military presence in Japan, Korea, and other countries surrounding China. Its aircraft carriers also maintain permanent presence in the west and eastern seas of the Philippines, the

Japanese sea and in the waters around the Taiwan strait. It sold two nuclear-powered submarines to Australia that aim further expand the military presence of US and its subalterns in the South China Sea.

The US claims that all these are part of its "military deterrence" strategy, but are in fact, calculated to provoke China to take military action. It is constantly stoking Taiwan secession contrary to the long



existing One China Policy. The US is waiting for China to “own the starting pistol” and use the pretext of “defending Taiwan” to justify US armed intervention, similar to how it used Ukraine to provoke Russia.

The Chinese embassy in Manila recently issued a veiled threat that the plan to allow the US to construct more military facilities in Luzon “will seriously harm Philippine national interests and endanger regional peace and stability.” Such threats do not help lower the tensions. It outrightly violates the dignity of Filipinos as it presumes that it knows what is best for the Philippines, when China itself maintains

large military facilities in the South China Sea which encroaches on Philippines maritime territory and deprives Filipino fisherfolks their livelihood.

The Philippines is now in the middle of a crucial time in history, in the face of the heightening possibility of the inter-imperialist discord erupting into armed conflict. It is now time for the Filipino people to rekindle their love for the country and strengthen their resolve to defend the country's sovereignty. The country's freedom and dignity today are recklessly trampled upon by imperialist powers who use the Philippines as a launchpad for flexing their military might, military maneuvers and war preparations.

Freedom- and peace-loving Filipinos must unite. In the face of intensifying inter-imperialist conflict, the Filipino people must condemn US and Chinese saberrattling, denounce their war preparations involving Philippine territory, uphold Philippine sovereignty and fight for genuine national independence and non-alignment in the rivalries of

imperialist powers.

The Filipino people must oppose plans to build more US military bases and facilities in the Philippines. They should call for the pull-out of all US troops in the country. Similarly, they should demand for the pull-out of all Chinese warships that encroach on the country's maritime territory and take away the source of livelihood of Filipino fisherfolk. They should oppose plans to hold large scale war exercises, and demand the dismantling of all foreign military bases, whether American and Chinese.

The Filipino people must continue to link up with other peoples of Asia and other parts of the globe who are resisting imperialist military intervention in their countries. A united front to fight imperialist wars must be established and strengthened and stop these from erupting into a conflagration.

Rising US and China conflict are among the manifestations how inter-imperialist conflicts are rapidly worsening amid the acute global capitalist crisis. As a result of deepening and prolonged economic slowdown and falling rates of profit, leading capitalist countries are driven to protect and expand their own economies and spheres of investment, leading to wars and conflict to change the existing division of the world between the imperialist superpowers.

The revolutionary movement opposes imperialist wars, direct or using countries like pawns in chess game. These only serve the interests of the monopoly capitalists and suppresses the interests and welfare of the these countries and the toiling masses. The broadest united front against inter-imperialist war should be established. And if the war erupts, it should be transformed into a revolutionary war or intensify the people's wars to end imperialist domination and advance socialism to establish a new system that would end all wars in the entire world.



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News program of the people's army in Camarines Norte

Did you know that Ka Joma was in isolation for 18 months?" This was the opening question of a Red commander in a question and answer portion the morning meeting of a unit of the New People's Army in Camarines Norte under the Armando Catapia Command (ACC). The trivia was part of the topic to fully know the great leader of the present Philippine revolution—spanning Jose Maria Sison's debates with the officials of the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, up to his dark experiences of incarceration, and even his favorite mango fruit.

From the onset of 2023, the discussion of Ka Joma's life and struggle became a regular part of command meetings in different units of the NPA. They referred to his autobiography "A Leader's View." This aims to refresh and introduce the important contributions of the founding chairperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The discussion of Ka Joma's life and struggle is part of the NPA-Bicol's efforts to advance revolutionary work in the region. The article "The Filipino People's Democratic Revolution Is Invincible," Ka Joma's last written statement, was part of the documents cadres and Red fighters studied.

They reviewed the "The Specific Characteristics of Our People's War" by way of applying it to their actual experiences in the province. They also studied select articles of Zhu De, regular and special issues of

Ang Bayan and the Party's statement for its 54th anniversary to guide commanders and fighters in the most recent situation of the Philippine revolution and bring it to unprecedented levels.

The ACC's political department led the study campaign. In collaboration with political instructors and guides, the daily political discussions were systematically given to different formations.

"The life and struggles of Ka Joma is also the history of our beloved Communist Party of the Philippines which right now is at its 54 years of serving the interests of the Filipino people," the Red commander ended in his trivia that day.

News sharing and performances

To further arouse and encourage officials and fighters of the ACC in the study movement, they launched the programs "Kape-

han" (Coffee Break) and "Sigaw ng Bayan (Cry of the People)."

"Kapehan" is a cultural program which aims to raise the consciousness, views and principles of cadres and Red fighters as weapons in advancing the revolution. Past sessions featured topics on the NPA's Tres-Otso (Three-Eight), three democracies inside the people's army, proletarian love inside the movement and giving importance to our tasks. The Kapehan, which they also called "Gabi ng Walang Tanggihan" (A "No-refuse" Night), became exciting as they asked everyone to showcase cultural performances, especially the new recruits.

The "Sigaw ng Bayan" is a news program inside the Red headquarters of the ACC which regularly aired in the month of January. This was divided into two parts. The first part is the reporting of new recruits from news they gathered over the radio and the nearby community. The news program also includes reports on health, trivia for additional knowledge and song or poem performances.

While the second part is the editorial called the "Sulo sa Koprasan" wherein it analyzes and expresses the position of the revolutionary movement and oppressed people on news and social issues. This aims to train comrades in public speaking, analysis and train propagandists in the ranks of commanders and fighters from the peasant class.

The provincial Party committee is determined to develop the knowledge and understanding of cadres and Red fighters in the basic principles for them to lead different lines of work. AB



Youth's contribution to the NPA's anniversary

Teams of Kabataang Makabayan (Patriotic Youth or KM) members in the Northeastern Mindanao Region painted calls in more than 15 towns of Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur in the past weeks. They filled walls and streets with calls such as "NPA 54", "Viva CPP-NPA-NDF" at "Sampa sa NPA" (Join the NPA).

The activity is part of the "operasyong pinta and operasyong dikit" (painting and postering operation) or the OP/OD of the KM in celebration and preparation for the upcoming 54th anniversary of the New People's Army (NPA).

Before the actual activity, KM members in the region came together to meet and plan and establish systems, modes and coordination for the activity. After identifying areas to be covered by the activity, chapters were assigned to villages and towns.

They formed 2-3 people teams to paint and put up posters. There were also teams designated for reconnaissance and survey. These ensured the security of the areas where they will perform the painting and postering operations.

The youth who participated were filled with spirit. "At first, we were nervous but despite this we felt excited too because of what these will contribute to the upcoming anniversary," according to one youth participant. "We became even

more excited for our next task which involves the distribution of leaflets and postering."

"We are happy with our contribution to the celebration of the anniversary of the NPA. Even if this was small, it is equally important for propaganda work to advance our struggle," according to another participant.

A KM member expressed his intent to serve full time for the NPA after the said activity. Others promised to follow suit in the future. The OP/OD became a known form of propaganda during the US-Marcos dictatorship. These were mounted by activists to express their views on issues and condemn the rotten ruling system while evading arrest by fascist troops of the dictatorship. The OP/OD, *perydikit*, posters with different sizes became widespread and were commonly seen on walls, *tambayans* (centers), inside buses and jeeps and other places.

KM in Southern Tagalog

It is undeniable that Red fight-

ers come mostly from the youth, aged 18 to 35. They give the people's army a distinct vigor and advantage. They are testament of the the army and the revolution's deep roots among the people.

Before working full time in the people's army, many of them were first members of the KM in their respective areas. Among them are Ka Arnold and Ka Mabolo, youth fighters in a guerilla front in Southern Tagalog (ST).

They realized that the situation then and now is no different. "The youth's dire situation is evident, especially during the pandemic," he said. So when he was invited to join the KM, he immediately said yes.

"Cool!" was Ka Mabolo's reaction, a youth from the cities, when he was invited to join the KM. "It feels exciting, and historic too!" He said he was in awe when it was explained to him that the KM was one of the first and biggest in leading the mass resistance against the dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr, father of the current president.

Not long after, both of them decided to serve full time in the people's army.

"Similar to how I decided to join the KM, I underwent the same process when I joined the people's army," Ka Arnold narrated. "After I learned and acknowledged the importance of armed struggle, I realized slowly that there is no other path for us but the countryside."

"Joining the Army is a huge challenge for the youth, but there have been many young people who came before us who paved the path we will be taking," he said.

"As Ka Joma said, the best in the youth shall emerge from struggle!"



Marcos Jr's cha-cha: a copy of his dictator father

In Philippine history, a Constitutional Convention (Con-con) was assembled to change the reactionary constitution (charter change or cha-cha) in 1971 under Ferdinand Marcos Sr. Like what his dictator father, Ferdinand Marcos Jr is now shoving down the people's throat his planned Con-con.

This March, Congress, filled with old and new minions of the Marcoses, unashamedly railroaded two measures for a Con-con. The Resolution of Both Houses No. 6 was passed on March 6 which set its creation. On March 14, it approved the Constitutional Convention Act (House Bill 7352) which outlined the means to hold the convention.

Under this, Con-con delegates will be elected in conjunction with the barangay elections on October 30. A representative per district will be elected who will then serve from December 1, 2023 up to June 30, 2024. They will be paid ₱10,000 per day for participating in committee or plenary sessions. A plebiscite will be held to vote on the proposals crafted by the convention. It is estimated that a total of ₱15 billion will be spent for the whole scheme.

Cha-cha for foreign powers and political dynasties

The Marcos clique, together with its allied Duterte, Arroyo and Estrada cliques are pushing for a neoliberal and authoritarian constitution. This includes the extension of presidential terms and beyond that, legalization of fascist structures. What Marcos Sr and his wife Imelda did in the past like the bribing of the 1971 Constitutional Convention delegates, now known as the Quintero payola, is not far from being repeated. After the imposition of martial law, the 1973 Constitution was approved through the anomalous national plebiscite which was done through raising of hands in barangay assemblies.

Claims that the charter change will only be limited

to changing economic provisions are deceptive. Con-con (as with constitutional assembly) proponents themselves said that nothing can limit its powers in changing the whole constitution. Saying that the country will develop if the restrictions to foreign ownership and control of land and other protected parts of the economy will be removed is a bigger deception. This will only heighten further the plunder of the country by imperialists and their big bourgeois comprador, landlord and bureaucrat capitalist cohorts.

The 1987 Constitution is reactionary because it maintains and strengthens the systemic exploitation and oppression by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. But the ruling class was forced to give concessions due to the strong patriotic and democratic movement after the EDSA Uprising in 1986. Included in these concessions are the term limits of elected officials, limitation on the imposition of martial law, bill of rights, representation of marginalized sectors in the party list system, protection on some parts of the national economy, prohibition of foreign military bases, nuclear arms

and war policies.

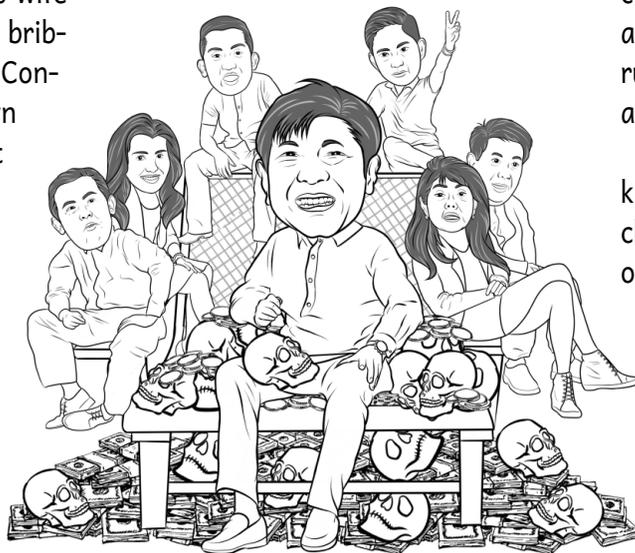
Anti-people scheme

The Marcos Jr cha-cha scheme is anti-people, anti-poor, anti-national and anti-democratic. This scheme is extremely dangerous for the people and the country.

It has four clear objectives. First, remove the existing term limits to perpetuate the Marcos clique and political dynasties in power. Second, strengthen and cement neoliberal policies and remove restrictions to fully allow imperialists and foreign companies to own and further plunder the country's land and economy which will worsen the loss of people's livelihood. Third, weaken protection on human rights and restrictions against martial law and return of the fascist dictatorship. Fourth, erase the prohibition of foreign military bases, nuclear arms and war policy in favor of the imperialist US.

The American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, the US government and imperialist finance institutions have long pushed for charter change. However, there are few groups of big businesses who have expressed concerns on the true political motive of the scheme. They deem that there is no need for the immediate amendment of the economic provisions as the laws have been enacted to permit its further opening. They are concerned of the possible instability and unrest it could cause to the ruling political system brought about by the new term limits.

The broad masses of the people know the evil plan of the Marcos cha-cha. They denounce the waste of time and public funds for the scheme instead of facing and addressing the severe economic crisis of the people. Their unity and collective action and resistance is their weapon to derail, stop and push back against the Marcos cha-cha.



Demands on Women's Day

ON WOMEN'S DAY last March 8, thousands of women, together with various democratic sectors, marched in different cities. They demanded wage increase and lower commodity prices, and other urgent social concerns such as land reform.

In Metro Manila, women held a program at Mendiola in Manila City. They bludgeoned an effigy of Ferdinand Marcos Jr until it was destroyed to symbolize their anger against the inept and puppet regime. Similar protests were held in Bacolod and Davao City and in Hong Kong and Canada.

In Bulacan, women of Calumpit danced to protest against abuse of women and children. The activity was held at the historic Bagbag Bridge. The bridge is part of the Filipino soldiers' armed resistance in the Philippine-American War wherein Filipinos blocked Americans entering Pampanga and Malolos.

NPA blasts newly built detachment in Negros Oriental

RED FIGHTERS OF the New People's Army (NPA)-Central Negros launched two rifle grenades at the 62nd IB detachment in Barangay Malangsa, Vallehermoso, Negros Oriental on March 15. Two 62nd IB soldiers were killed while two others were wounded.

According to the NPA unit, residents have complained about the stationed troopers of the 62nd IB in the said barangay. Residents of Barangay Malangsa reported different human rights violations such as forced labor, and baseless accusations and forced surrender of so called "supporters" of the people's army.

In Canlaon City, Red fighters of the NPA-Central Negros harassed 62nd IB operating troopers at Sitio Batang-batangan, Barangay Bucalan on March 6. A soldier was killed while another was wounded in the harassment operation.

In Camarines Sur, twin harassment operations were mounted by the NPA-West Camarines Sur on February 28 against two military detachments in Ragay town. Red fighters first attacked the detachment in Barangay Bayan and was followed by an attack against the detachment in Barangay Pantalunan.

Meanwhile, two elements of the police's Special Action Force (SAF) were killed in active defense by the NPA-Mindoro against a column of an operating unit of the 10th SAF Battalion and 203rd Brigade at Sitio Naksib, Barangay Sta Cruz, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro on March 15. There were no casualties among the Red fighters who safely withdrew after the 5-minute firefight.

NPA's seizure of 14 firearms from drunk soldiers in Eastern Samar

ON OCTOBER 7, 2022, 14 firearms were seized by Red fighters after they attacked and overran the barracks of the 52nd IB soldiers and police encamped in Baranagay Dorillo, Jipapad, Eastern Samar.

Residents have long complained of the presence of the soldiers and police under the Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP). Their violations include occupation of the barangay hall and indiscriminate firing. The masses gladly supported the tactical offensive.

Red fighters mounted the raid on the day of the barangay's fiesta. Soldiers were drunk and sleeping when Red fighters attacked. After an 11-minute exchange of fire, soldiers and police surrendered. Two soldiers were killed while three others were wounded. The wounded were immediately given first aid.

Fourteen firearms, nine of which high powered-rifles, were seized from the raid. These included seven R4 rifles, an M203 grenade launcher, a Galil assault rifle, three .45 calibre pistols and two 9mm pistols. Comrades also seized several ammunitions, eight ammunition pouch, nine military packs, two radios and a Harris radio. They also seized cellphones, powerbanks and other military equipment.

As response to their defeat, soldiers shelled farmlands along the border of barangays Dorillo and Cagmanaba. Not less than eight columns of enemy soldiers scoured the contiguous places but failed to chase after the fighters.

Protest in Batangas. Workers and small sugar farmers protested in front of the Central Azucarera de Don Pedro Inc (CADPI) office in Taguig City on March 17 to protest the closure of its milling plant in Batangas. They demand immediate financial aid.

Anti-dam movement in Kalinga. Indigenous peoples of Pinukpuk and Balbalan, Kalinga protested on March 13 as their leaders submitted a petition against the Saltan E. Hydroelectric power plant. They claim that the agreement the power plant signed with a tribe on February 9 is anomalous and thus must be invalidated.

Anti-reclamation in Cavite. Fisherfolks and residents of Rosario, Cavite staged a fluvial parade on March 14 against the dredging of their fishing grounds which began in 2021.



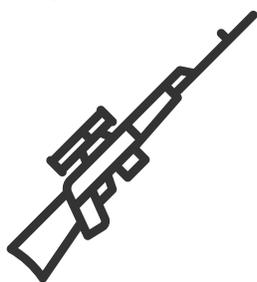
1.37 million recorded **child workers** in the Philippines in 2021.

65% of them, aged 5 to 17, are in "dangerous" jobs which are not suitable for children.

5.1%

global increase of value of arms sales sin the past five years.

The US remains as the leading dealer, while its allied countries in Europe boosted sale by 47%.



1,066

Hermes 90 UAV



small surveillance drones acquired by the AFP worth **\$153 million** or ₱7.65 million each.

These are manufactured by the **Elbit Systems**, leading company involved in genocide and Israel's apartheid against Palestine.

12,000

American troops and 5,000 Filipino troops will take part in the **Balikatan 2023** which is set to be held in Northern Luzon,

including the farthest part of the Philippine Strait which is near the Taiwan Strait. This provokes counter-aggression from China.



ANG BAYAN March 21, 2023

March 17, 1995

hanging of **Flor Contemplacion** in **Singapore** over a murder case.

Her case highlighted the state's abandonment of Filipino migrant women's situation. Of the total 1.825 million OFWs in 2021, 1.10 million are women workers, many of whom are in jobs vulnerable from abuse.

CARHRIHL

signed on **Marso 16, 1998** by NDFP Chairperson Mariano Orosa.

1,700

stalls were razed in the possible arson of the **Baguio City Public Market** on March 11.

It is believed that this is connected to the local government's plan to privatize the market.

800,000

liters of industrial fuel are spilled on the waters of **Mindoro, Palawan** and **Panay** from the sunken **MT Princess Empress** ship on February 28

About 18,000 fisherfolks are affected in Oriental Mindoro and 1,200 in Panay.

AFP bombs and shells Kalinga and Bukidnon communities

Consecutive cases of artillery shelling, aerial bombing and strafing were perpetrated by units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Kalinga province in Northern Luzon and Bukidnon in North Central Mindanao in the past weeks. This caused extreme fear and trauma among residents of the nearby communities. The residents' livelihood was also affected.

In Kalinga, AFP jet fighters indiscriminately bombed the mountainous part of Barangay Gawa-an in Balbalan at around 2:00 a.m. on March 5. According to residents, the blare of the jet fighters resonated up to the towns of Upper Tabuk and Limos. The reconnaissance of surveillance drones also caused fear among residents. The following morning, two helicopters circled over Balbalan.

Apart from this, soldiers illegally detained nine residents of Sitio Uta and Codcodwe in Barangay Gawa-an for seven hours. According to human rights groups, more troops are being deployed to Balbalan town. The military also positioned a howitzer at Sitio Guesang, Poblacion facing Barangay Gawa-an.

Human rights groups once again reported AFP bombing and strafing of Balbalan communities on March 9.

In Bukidnon, many cases of artillery shelling, bombings and strafing were recorded in Malaybalay City from March 13 to March 16. The AFP shelled Barangay Culaman on the early hours of March 13. They also attacked Barangay Kaburakanan on the afternoon and evening of March 15. It was estimated that 16 rockets were dropped by two helicopters and five series of strafing and two series of shelling were recorded. AFP helicopters once again attacked Barangay Kaburakanan on March 16 at 12 midnight.

Killing. 37th IB soldiers indiscriminately fired at four civilians, including two minors, at Sitio 27,

Barangay Sangay, Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat on February 27. To cover up its crime, the AFP claimed that the group were Red fighters.

Victims were identified as Nasyon Gantangan, 30 years old and has three children; Epin Dasol, and minors Waldo Lunon (16) and Verano Matilak (15). Gantangan was killed while Dasol was wounded.

Gantangan was still able to shout "We are civilians!" before he was killed. Despite this, military troops continued firing shots up until morning. According to Gantangan's family, his body was almost severed in half due to the number of bullets which hit him.

Abduction. Agents from the 94th IB abducted peasant organizer Leonardo Sermona Jr on March 16. He was last seen in Barangay Bi-Ao, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental. Serbona was still able to send a message saying "I am being pursued" at around 4:59 p.m. on March 16. His whereabouts is still unknown up to present.

Arrest. Police and state armed forces arrested on March 7 Anakpawis-Rizal organizer Arnel

Bueza at around 12:30 a.m. in his residence at Sitio Tibagan, Barangay Dolores, Taytay, Rizal. Arresting officers did not present any warrant. He was taken to the CIDG Padilla in Antipolo.

The 62nd IB arrested farmer Ricky Elod on March 17 at Sitio Caliban, Barangay Makilignit, Isabela, Negros Occidental. Elod's relatives have yet to locate where soldiers brought him.

Harassment. Soldiers of the 62nd IB ransacked the house of JR Apao at Sitio Binil-iwan, Barangay Calupaan, Guihulngan City on March 17. Soldiers threatened and forced Apao to serve as guide in their military operations.

In Negros Occidental, 62nd IB troopers forcibly entered the house of peasant couple Danila and Libeth Gerunda at Sitio Lower Caliban, Barangay Banog-Banog, Isabela on March 19. The couple was not at the said house but their children were. Soldiers threatened them and forcefully took photos of the minors.

On March 17, operating troops of the 62nd IB forcibly entered the house of Renante Villacapa at Sitio Caliban of the same barangay. Meanwhile, Eyok Diala, a resident of the same village, was interrogated.

Evelyn Bitonga of Sitio Lower Caliban of the same barangay was held at gunpoint on March 20.

In Rizal, the 80th IB and agents of the National Task Force-Elcac gathered and forced residents of 1K2 Kasiglahan Village, Montalban to "surrender" on March 12. Soldiers gathered 400-500 residents.

Meanwhile, state forces continue harassing urban poor organizer Roberto Marquez since March 2. On March 6, police entered his house at Sitio Sumilang, Barangay San Jose, Antipolo and threatened him and his family. AB



Women's perseverance and determination amid war

In Negros' guerilla fronts, like in other units of the New People's Army, women Red fighters have equal rights with men. Like any other member of the people's army, they perform tasks in the military, politics, production, medical, education and cultural fields.

What is deemed impossible for women in a bourgeois and feudal society is undertaken and developed inside the people's army. Apart from being wives and mothers, they become fighters who resist so as to end women oppression, and the very society which brings about gender-based oppression. They find in the revolution the most liberating space for women under the still semicolonial and semifeudal society.

One of them is Ka Trina, now 20 years old, who worked as a house helper since she was young. She found self-relevance within the NPA because she now serves the oppressed people and not only an individual employer. She was given an opportunity to study, a right she was deprived due to poverty. She improved herself with the help of comrades. "I joined the NPA barely knowing how to read and write," she narrated. "Now, I handle the logistics and management of material support provided by the masses."

Ka Thea, 22, also found her niche in the revolution. "Outside the people's army, I just follow orders at work," she said. "As a fighter, my voice is heard and I am part of the decision-making and planning." Her confidence in performing military tasks was boosted after graduating from the basic politico-military course.

Extreme sacrifice of revolutionary mothers

One of the challenges con-

fronting women, as well as men fighters, is the military's pursuit of their relatives to force them to surrender and use their families in its surrender campaign against members of the NPA. The military employs a nefarious tactic in Negros and elsewhere in the country of hunting innocent babies and toddlers, abduct them from the care of trusted relatives and place them under the "custody" of state agencies.

A stark case in the region is the military's kidnapping and continued detention of Baby Marx, child of fighters Ka Jandy and Ka Peeta. Ka Jandy's family has tried for two years to take custody of the child kidnapped by the 79th IB on January 13, 2021 in Barangay San Fernando, Talisay City, Negros Occidental. This was the last time she saw her child. For two years, her relatives, who have been asserting their right to the child, were made to undergo a tortuous process. Even worse, the child's grandparents, who were trying to get Baby Marx, were repeatedly intimidated, harassed and surveilled by the military.

"I try to be strong amid the many sacrifices," Ka Jandy said after she received news that the military once again denied her mother custody of Baby Marx last year. "I recognize the efforts of our families. I draw strength from

them. I am confident that we will get him."

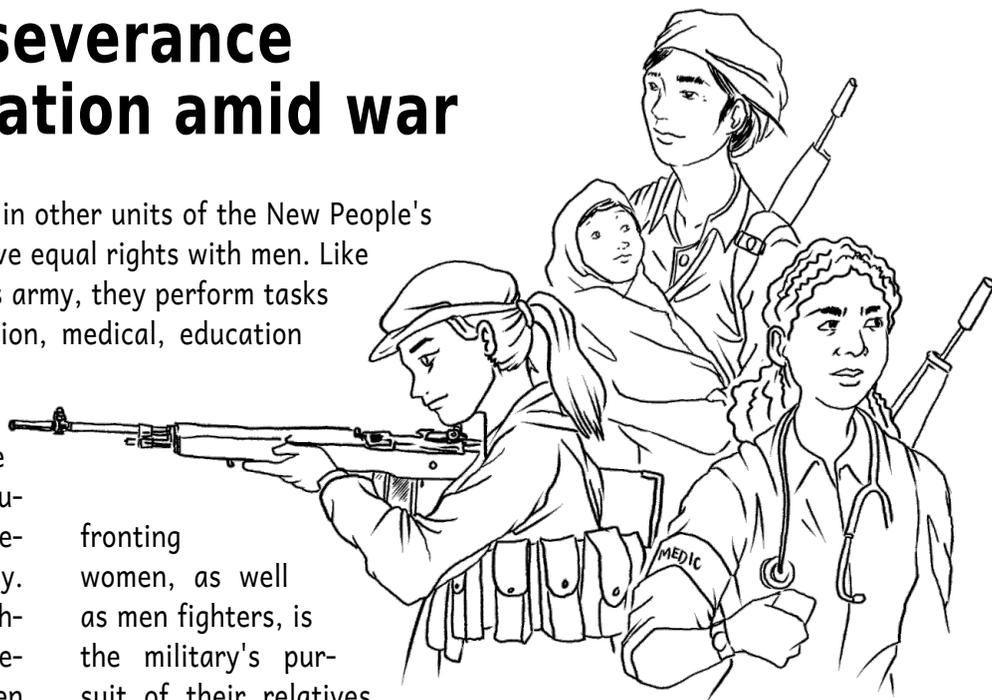
Her message to soldiers: "You kidnapped my child and you expect me to surrender? After inflicting on me extreme anguish when you kidnapped Baby Marx, you still expect me to cooperate with you?"

She demanded to the people detaining Baby Marx: "My child is innocent. Return him to his relatives for his best interest."

"Because of the brutality of the war, I and Baby Marx were not given the opportunity to be together for a longer period. I just gave birth to him when soldiers took him away, and he has never known my care nor his grandparents' even for a brief moment."

Baby Marx may not understand the situation at his young age, Ka Jandy sends him her love and their excitement to have him back under the custody of his grandparents.

"For you, our child, as your father and mother, please do not think that we abandoned or neglected you. You were stolen from us, in violation of your rights and best interest. We are doing our all so you can come home to your grandparents." AB



Workers' struggles advance

Consecutive strikes, protests and collective mobilizations were mounted by unions and labor groups in the past weeks. The mass actions highlighted their struggle for living wage, decent jobs and union rights.

The Kowloon West restaurant union in Quezon city successfully negotiated a wage increase, benefits and regularization of workers after a three year intensive negotiation with the management. The union and the restaurant management signed the agreement on March 15.

The recent public transportation strike scored victory after Malacañang was forced to hold a dialogue with transport groups Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng TsUPER at Operator Nationwide (Piston) and Manibela on March 7. The government was forced to promise a review of the current Omnibus Franchising Guidelines (OFG) before December 31. Driv-

ers, operators and commuters will be involved in the said review. The groups warned of another transport strike if the revised measures will not be favorable for them.

Drivers and conductors of Admiral Transport Inc. plying the EDSA Carousel route continue their strike at the company's garage in Quezon City. Workers held a strike after the management denied their demand for wage increase and benefits during negotiations.

Union members in the Ateneo de Manila University on March 10 voted in favor of staging a strike. They decided to hold a strike after the university administration refused to grant them substantial wage and benefits increase for

2019 up to 2024.

The workers' union of Sky Cable Davao has been protesting for two weeks demanding wage increase, ending of contractualization, and union recognition.

Workers of Toyota protested at the Japanese Embassy in Manila on March 16 against the 22-year old dispute with the foreign company. They demand justice for the 227 workers illegally terminated in 2001 who since then faced state intimidation and violence.

Labor groups and the Makabayan Bloc filed a bill at the House of Representatives to increase workers' wages in the private sector by ₱750 in the entire country. The bill is supported by the Kilusang Mayo Uno, Federation of Free Workers (FFW), and Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino. AB

FFPS' global campaigns

THE FRIENDS OF the Filipino People in Struggle (FFPS) is set to lead global campaigns this March in support of the revolutionary people of the Philippines.

The group relaunched its campaign to demand an end to aerial bombing, artillery shelling and strafing of civilian communities in the Philippines. More than 200 cases of these were perpetrated by the Armed Forces of the Philippines under the US-Duterte regime, while several tens were recorded under the US-Marcos regime.

The FFPS also launched a year-long campaign to highlight the importance of the National Democratic

Front of the Philippines (NDFP) to the Filipino people's struggle in relation with its upcoming golden anniversary on April 24.

The group is also campaigning for the removal of the NDFP, the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and other progressive personalities from the list of the "terrorists" of the reactionary government of the Philippines.

The FFPS is a global solidarity organization supporting the national-democratic movement in the Philippines. It has member organizations from North America, Europe, Asia and Oceania. AB