

EDITORIAL

125 years of persevering struggle for national freedom

In commemorating the recent 125th year of the declaration of false Philippine independence, let us look back to the Filipino people's more than a century history of resistance to colonialism and semicolonialism and reaffirm our commitment to struggle for genuine freedom and democracy.

The declaration of freedom "under the protection of Powerful and Humanitarian Nation, the United States of America" was made by representatives of the landlord-illustrado class who rode on the victories of the Katipunan armed revolution against the 300-year

Spanish colonial rule. In truth, Spain had already secretly agreed with the US before staging the mock Battle of Manila Bay of October 1898 and the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898 under which the Philippines was sold for \$20 million.

Hundreds of thousands of

American troops were deployed to suppress and colonize the Philippines. More than a decade of brutal war against revolutionary forces—denigrated as "bandits" and "insurrectionists"—was carried out. Not less than 200,000 Filipino civilians were killed by American soldiers, and more than a million (of a population of less than seven million) died as a result of the US war of aggression.

The US employed overwhelming force to rampage through the Philippines, suppress the people and plunder the country's wealth. Millions of trees were felled, hundreds of thousands of land taken from peasants and indigenous people to dig for gold and other minerals, and turn into plantations of sugarcane, pineapples and other crops for export to the US. The US colonized and controlled the minds of Filipinos by imposing an educational system that favor the US to erase the people's memories of their just fight for freedom and imprint the thought of "benevolent assimilation" under US colonialism. The US produced a new generation of bureaucrat capitalists trained in "US democracy" to represent US power and the combined interests of the ruling classes of bourgeois compradors and the old landlord class.

Instead of being suppressed, the spirit of patriotism of Filipino workers and toiling people were further inflamed. At the outset and following decades, they organized and waged mass struggles for free-



dom. They clamored "death to US imperialism!" Since being established in 1930, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP-Philippine Islands) played a crucial role in leading the struggle for national freedom from US colonial rule.

Amid inter-imperialist conflict, the US abandoned the Philippines to colonial Japan. Led by the CPP, an anti-Japanese guerrilla war was waged by the Filipino people to establish revolutionary power in Central Luzon and other parts of the country. Like in China and other countries, the guerrilla forces crushed the Japanese invaders. Before the complete surrender of the beaten Japanese forces (as were the Spanish in 1898), the US forces returned and relentlessly bombed and devastated Manila (like the mock Battle of Manila Bay) to force the country to its knees. Together with its puppet armed forces (predecessor of the Armed Forces of the Philippines), the US carried out a campaign of armed suppression of guerrilla forces marked by massacres and brutal murders.

To placate the Filipino people, the US granted nominal independence on July 4, 1946 to turn over the reins of administration of the client-state to the ruling class par-

ties and politicians. For close to 80 years now, the country has been under neocolonial or semicolonial rule. Philippine politics, economy, military and culture remains dominated by the US. Through semicolonial rule, the US plundered trillions of dollars through unequal trade and investment relations reinforced by treaties favoring the US. The policy of cheap labor was imposed to allow maximum profits for US and foreign capitalists. Economic policies of puppet Philippine governments are dictated by the US through the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other US-controlled banks and agencies, to the detriment of the Philippine economy and livelihood. The US reinforces cultural domination through a pro-US educational system, control of mass media and other agencies that promote a pro-US mentality and viewpoint.

The US perpetuates armed domination of the Philippines through military agreements as the Mutual Defense Treaty, the 1946-1991 Military Bases Agreement, the 1998 Visiting Forces Agreement and the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. The US established the AFP as the main pillar of its rule in the country. It has since been

used for the armed suppression of the Filipino people and their struggle for national and social liberation.

Amid the economic crisis of the US and other capitalist countries, there is push to further tighten US grip of the Philippines. Together with strengthening armed presence in the Philippines, the US is aggressively claiming control of natural resources and business operations in the country to expand plantations and mines resulting in economic dislocation of millions of Filipinos. The people today suffer from the deleterious effects of decades of neoliberal policy dictates of the US: widespread unemployment, low wages, lack of income, rising prices, decrepit social services, land grabbing, and environmental destruction. The country is at the precipice of a financial crisis marked by rising public debt and falling revenue due to corporate tax incentives, and rising costs of maintaining a bloated military and police. The US rush to construct more military bases and facilities across the Philippines, especially in the northern parts, as part of its strategy to encircle China, further underscores the country's lack of sovereignty and puts it in danger of being pulled into a war between imperialist giants.

Since it was established in 1969, the Communist Party of the Philippines has been at the forefront of the struggle for national freedom and democracy. It has waged people's war since 1969, and will persevere however long it takes to free the country from the clutches of US imperialism.

The Party, all revolutionary forces and the entire Filipino people are ready to shoulder the difficult tasks to advance the nation's struggle to drive away the imperialist monster and attain the Motherland's desire for freedom. With firm resolve, let us tread the path of resistance, however arduous and difficult, because it is the only path towards a bright and prosperous future.

AB

 <p>Vol LIV No. 12 June 21, 2023</p> <hr/> <p>Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray, and English. Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p>	<h2 style="text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <p>Editorial: 125 years of persevering struggle for national freedom 1</p> <p>NPA mounts 9 armed actions in 5 provinces 3</p> <p>10 laid off Wyeth-Nestle workers reinstated 3</p> <p>Protests 3</p> <p>Foreign control of cell towers 4</p> <p>Worsening landlessness of tillers 5</p> <p>Land grabbing intensifies in Masbate 6</p> <p><i>Tampuda</i> used to plunder Agusan provinces 7</p> <p>94th IB massacres Negros family 8</p> <p>Release the oldest political prisoner! 8</p> <p>In short 9</p> <p>A transwoman in the people's army 10</p>
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NPA mounts 9 armed actions in 5 provinces

UNITS OF THE New People's Army (NPA) in Aurora, Albay, Camarines Sur and Norte, and Negros Occidental provinces launched a series of armed actions during the past weeks. These attritive actions are part of serving justice to the victims of militarism and fascist attacks by state forces.

In Aurora, seven 91st IB troopers were killed in an NPA armed action in the mountainous parts of Barangay Diteki, San Luis, Aurora in the morning of June 9. Corporal Noel F. Caya was among the soldiers killed. The 91st IB denied their other casualties.

Simultaneous harassment operations were staged by the NPA-Albay against two military detachments on June 10. One was against a CAFGU detachment in Barangay Pantao, Libon. This was followed by an operation against another paramilitary detachment in Barangay Cuyaoyao, Pio Duran.

On the same day, Red fighters in Camarines Sur staged three armed actions against 81st IB camps. The NPA attacked the military detachments in Barangay Inoyunan, Bula and in Barangay Cambalidio, Libmanan. An NPA unit also launched a sniping operation against troops implementing a Retooled Community Service Program (RCSP) in Barangay Calabnigan, Libmanan.

In Camarines Norte, the 9th IB suffered three confirmed casualties in an NPA ambush in Purok 5, Barangay Canapawan, Labo on June 8. The Red fighters attacked the team of soldiers approaching their position at 1 o'clock in the morning.

In Negros Occidental, the NPA-South Central Negros fired shots against a CAFGU detachment in Barangay Hilaunan, Kabankalan City on June 13.

10 laid off Wyeth-Nestle workers reinstated

THE WYETH PHILIPPINES Progressive Workers Union (WPPWU) DFA-KMU won the reinstatement of not less than 10 terminated workers in the third and last round of negotiations with the company management on June 16 in Calamba, Laguna. The reinstated workers include the union's president and four other officials. In total, only 22 workers still refuse to accept the Enhanced Separation Package (ESP) offered by the management. The original demand was for the company to reinstate 145 laid off workers.

The union also secured a higher amount for the ESP of workers who agreed to be terminated, as well as the expansion of the company's payment for workers with severe illnesses. A "separation package" is a bundle of wages and benefits that a laid off worker receives. This is usually based on the length of a worker's service in a company.

The union expressed gratitude to all those who supported their struggle. "We may not have won the reinstatement of all workers, but this proves yet again that only through unity and struggle can we hope for victory," said the WPPWU.



Workers Protest. Workers from Gardenia Bakeries Philippines and Philfoods Fresh Baked Products led a protest in Sta. Rosa, Laguna on June 6 to denounce the NTF-Elcac for continuous suppression of workers in the

region. They condemned a new series of harassments and military intrusion in factories where seminars are held to red-tag union members. On June 15, workers filed a complaint before the Commission on Human Rights to hold accountable the conniving Gardenia owners and state forces for their harassment.

Rizal's birth anniversary. In time with Jose Rizal's 162th birth anniversary last June 19, youth and students from various universities in Manila led a protest action in front of Commission in Higher Education. They put forward demands to junk the Mandatory ROTC, Tuition and Other

School Fees Increase (TOFI) in private schools and colleges, and the budget cuts in public universities.

Surface Dexter and Bazoo! On the 40th day of the enforced disappearance of Gene "Bazoo" De Jesus and Dexter Capuyan on June 7, various groups staged protests in front of Camp General Servillano A. Aquino in Tarlac to demand their surfacing. Among the protesters were family and friends of the so-called Taytay 2 believed to be under military custody. The military camp is the headquarters of Northern Luzon Command of Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Day of No Independence. Progressive groups held coordinated protests in Metro Manila, Southern Tagalog, and Davao on June 12 to commemorate the 125th anniversary of false "Independence Day". They condemned the intervention of the two rival imperialists in the country's territory and internal affairs. They said the Philippines is not genuinely independent because it remains subjugated by US imperialist domination.

Foreign control of cell towers

China's 40% ownership of the Philippine's national electric grid system was a hot topic in the Senate recently. Senators said it is dangerous for a service with national security importance to be in the hands of a foreign entity. However, in contrast to how much they were "concerned" with foreign control of power transmission, they are now rushing to pave the way for foreign control of another critical public utility infrastructure—the cell towers that serve as the backbone of telecommunications services.

The reactionary state has actively pushed and supported total foreign ownership of cell towers that serve private and public communications in the country. In 2020, the Common Tower Policy scheme was implemented which allowed foreign companies to construct and operate cell towers. Senator Grace Poe pushed the scheme purportedly to "break up" the Smart/PLDT and Globe duopoly in the telecommunications sector. This was followed by an amendment to the Public Services Act which permitted 100% foreign ownership in the entire sector.

Since 2020, PLDT/Smart and Globe sold their cell towers gradually, primarily to US companies and their partners. They will continue to use them under a "lease back" agreement with the buying companies.

The state allowed the buying companies to expand coverage, amplify the signal and "digitize" cell towers for 5G communications. In addition, they and 19 other companies were granted permits to build up to 50,000 new cell towers. Only five of these companies are Filipino. Today, there are only 22,405 cell towers in the Philippines.

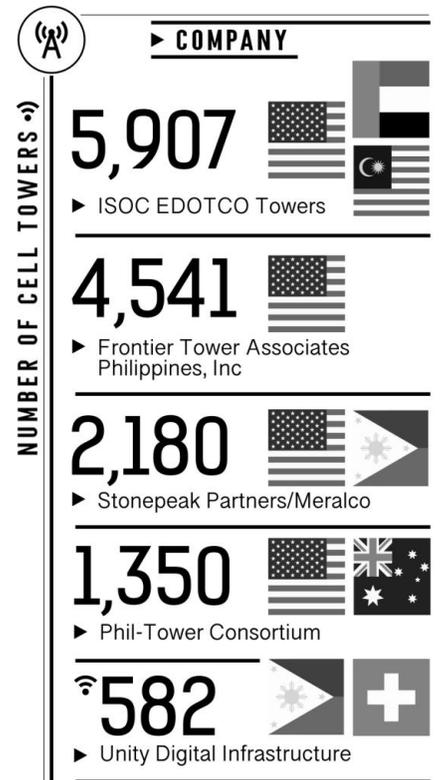
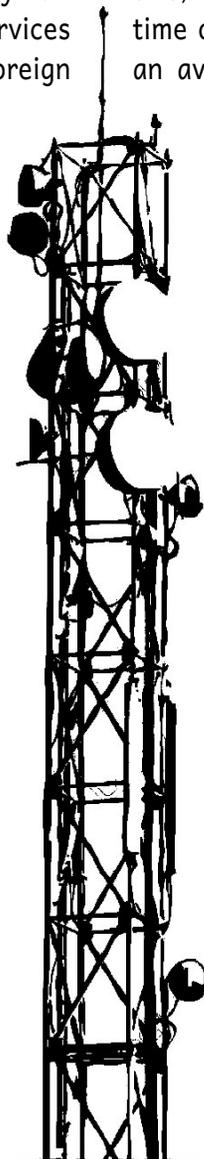
Foreign capitalists,

especially American companies, are drooling over the telecommunications sector because of the enormous potential revenue from its diverse infrastructure.

In addition, the Philippines is a major market for telecommunications services. According to a study released in February, 85.16 million Filipinos use the internet and 163.3 million have a cellular connection (equivalent to 144.5% of the population). Apart from this, Filipinos spend the longest time on the internet globally, with an average of nine hours and 14 minutes online daily. 5G service is seven times more expensive than the current mainstream LTE and 4G services.

A national security issue (for the US)

The US does not conceal the fact that it considers Philippine local telecommunications a matter of its own national security, especially in terms of cybersecurity. A US embassy in the Philippines claim that 90% of Wall Street's financial transactions pass through the Philippines. The US is pushing a \$33-million BEACON project to build infrastructure, set local cybersecurity policies and train Filipino workers to ensure cybersecurity of American



companies and transactions in the country.

The US is also building its own telecommunications infrastructure as part of its war preparations. It was announced in January that the United States Trade and Development Agency will fund the construction of Now Telecoms as the fourth telecommunications company in the Philippines. The company is said to compete against Dito Telecommunity which is 40% owned by China.

It is extremely ironic that the communications system in the Philippines will be placed under the control and scrutiny of the US government, since the US is one of the biggest states involved in mass surveillance of its citizens. Among the surveillance programs that the US implements is the so-called PRISM project, which collects all emails, images, documents, and other sensitive information in connivance with several large companies. This is in addition to Dishfire, ECHELON, INDECT, and others.

Worsening landlessness of tillers

Peasants from Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog under the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and other peasant groups denounced the inutility of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) on its 35th anniversary on June 10. They marched along the streets of Manila to pound the Marcos regime for the law's broken promises and its inaction amid various issues facing the agricultural sector. Furthermore, they also demanded justice for farmers who have become victims of state repression for fighting genuine land reform.

CARP only served and will continue to serve the interests of landlords and corporations. It made it difficult for farmers to own the land they till, while making it easy for landlords and big business to grab land.

The worsening state of landlessness is undeniable despite the implementation of the law. Based on the data of Census on Agriculture and Fisheries, from 1980 to 2012, the number of farmers who own land decreased by 12%. The struggle continues for peasants nationwide to claim land supposedly placed under CARP but which remains undistributed. The following are just a few:

Hacienda Tinang, Concepcion, Tarlac

After more than three decades of struggle, only now will farmer-beneficiaries be issued titles by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to land in the 200-hectare Hacienda Tinang in Concepcion, Tarlac. Among the 236 original recipients of Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) in 1995, only 90 beneficiaries will receive titles.

They are also calling for the dismissal of criminal cases against more than 100 farmers and their supporters who participated in the collective land cultivation last June 9, 2022.

Mallig, Isabela

Farmers and settlers in Sitio Villa Corazon, Barangay Manano, Mallig, Isabela are call-

ing for the distribution of the 625-hectare public land where they have built their farms and homes. They said the Marcela Uy clan had already benefited from it for 60 years having been granted a permit to use it for grazing. Since the permit's expiry, poor farmers and settlers have cultivated and resided on the land.

Farmers have been tilling the land for 30 years when the government awarded it again to the Uys in 2017. Uy in connivance with local office of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) used the National Greening Program to reclaim the land. Farmers know how the land was reclassified as forest land to deny them the land left idle by Uy. The DENR even filed a case against the farmers.

There is a similar case of

forced eviction and harassment in nearby Barangay Trinidad, Mallig where a reclassified 200-hectare land was divided among big politicians.

Angandanan, Isabela

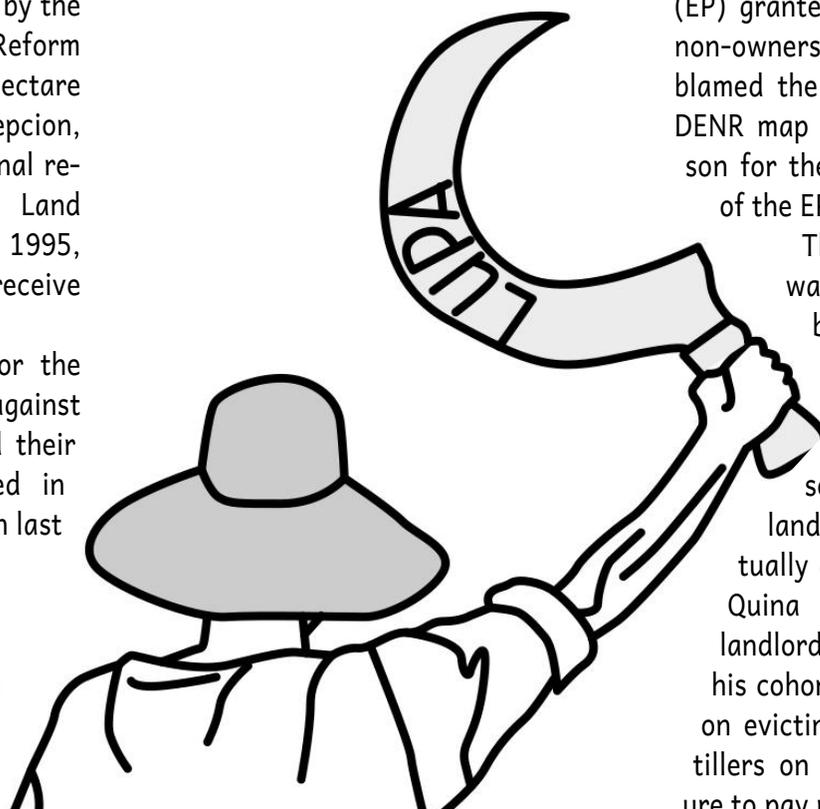
Hundreds of tenants in Manolito Arellano Tombo Estate in Cauayan City, Isabela were evicted from their farmlands by the armed goons of the estate's landlord on July 2021. This happened after they refused to sell land already distributed to them.

The 23-hectare land in the said area was placed under CARP in 2012. DAR took seven years to finish identifying the legitimate beneficiaries of the program yet the land remains undistributed. Instead, the local office of the agency issued a fake Certificate of Non-Coverage to legitimize the sale of the land to others.

Tumauni, Isabela

Aging farmers in Tumauni, Isabela have been waiting for almost a decade for DAR's resolution to issue titles for the land they have been tilling and to repeal the emancipation patents (EP) granted by the agency to non-owners of the land. DAR blamed the burning of the old DENR map in Region 2 as reason for the mistaken issuance of the EPs.

The 43-hectare land was originally owned by Abelardo Quina. Since 1960, he has allowed some farmers to till some parts of the land. Instead of eventually granting it to them, Quina sold it to another landlord with the DAR as his cohort. They are now set on evicting the decades-long tillers on the pretext of failure to pay rent.



Land grabbing intensifies in Masbate

At the onset of 2023, Masbate farmers faced intensified land grabbing by the province's big ranchers, bourgeois compradors and bureaucrat-capitalists. Among them are old and new cronies of the Marcos family.

Masbate Governor Antonio T. Kho evicted peasants from Rantso Pecson's 550-hectare land in Cawayan town. Even nearby private lands were not spared from the governor's extensive land grabbing. Sitio Calman, Barangay Madbad in the said town was fenced off and a military detachment built to prevent farmers from returning.

The D.M. Consunji Inc. (DMCI)'s hybrid solar energy power plant also took over several hectares of land in the province.

In Dimasalang and Palanas towns, Empark company continues to grab land for its 1,854-hectare Masbate International Tourism Enterprise and Special Economic Zone ecotourism project.

In addition, many farmers in the province have been compelled to sell or mortgage the land they till to pay usurious lending and microfinance companies. Many small and independent farming families have become semi-proletarian or

farm workers.

To suppress peasant resistance, the 2nd IB built a new headquarters in Barangay Panician, Uson. It will serve to secure the planned expansion of the big foreign mining company Filminera. The company will cover 1,755 hectares of mountain land in Mobo, Milagros and Uson towns.

Fake and militarist land distribution

The counterrevolutionary agrarian program is now being implemented in Masbate through Executive Order No. 75, series 2019 (EO 75, s. 2019), and the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling or SPLIT program.

Up to 3,000 hectares of the target 9,000 hectares have been distributed under the SPLIT program. This includes the land of the Triple A ranch earlier targeted for the failed Masbate Agro-Industrial Growth Corridor or MAGIC and the

Deagan island. Titles were split and distributed to make it easier for interested businessmen to seize land from individual farmers.

To implement EO 75 (issued in 2019) under Marcos Jr, land already granted to genuine beneficiaries are being seized to be redistributed to "rebel returnees" and families of retired military and police. Hacienda Yulo in Barangay Matagbac, Milagros is one of those subjected to the militarist program.

The government targets to include under the fake and bogus land reform the lands that Masbateño farmers have defended against local landlords and ranchers in the province. These are the same lands that the government have sequestered from the Marcos family that Marcos Jr plans to take back and use.

Ranchers reign

In the course of the 35 years of bogus land reform in the province, landlessness among Masbateños worsened. The province's local ruling class used the program for large-scale agricultural land conversion and declaring productive land as pastures, timberland and forests. As a result, Masbate has one of the lowest land distributions under CARP.

Ranching remains as the primary scheme for the local ruling class to maintain land control. More than half of Masbate's 400,000 hectares are covered by ranches, owned by only 150 families.

Most of these ranches, being exempted from distribution, are operated as coconut plantations. Pastures serve to disguise mining operations, quarrying, ecotourism, power plants and agribusinesses. **AB**



Sacred ritual used to smokescreen plunder of Agusan's ancestral lands

The reactionary military and state defiled the *tampuda*, a sacred ritual of the indigenous Higaonon people, to falsely portray "Lumad unity" and smokescreen its scheme allowing expansion of foreign plantation and mining.

On May 12, the 402nd IBde spearheaded a fake *tampuda* to "reconcile" the Namatindong clan of Esperanza, Agusan del Sur and the Manhumusay-Pinakitob clan of Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte. Lumad "representatives" from five nearby provinces attended.

The activity was an affront to the sacred Lumad ritual which in the past served to unite different tribes in their defense of the ancestral land and forest resources. In contrast, the AFP used the *tampuda* to sanction the encroachment on thousands of hectares of Higanonon resource-rich land and forests in the Agusan provinces.

The two provinces are rich in land, forest, mineral and ocean resources. This is the reason why there is a swarm of foreign companies that plunder and destroy the environment and livelihood of its people. They connive with active and retired military and local government officials.

In Agusan del Sur, not less than three mining companies operate. One of the biggest is Co-O Mining which control almost 1,000 hectares and is owned by the Australian company Ten Sixty Four Ltd (X64). The X64 partners with Philsaga Mining Company which was established by a retired colonel.

Meanwhile, not less than eight mining companies operate in Agusan del Norte. Four of these have permits to operate, including the Agata Mining Ventures which is 60% owned by Canadian company TVI Pacific. Four other companies



run by Filipino-Chinese partnerships are allowed to operate without permit to mine gold, nickel, cobalt and manganese. These cover the Taguiba Watershed which is Butuan City's source of drinking water.

Apart from mining, expansion of commercial plantations is planned in the two Agusan provinces. One is the Las Nieves-Buenavista-Nasipit-Carmen (LasBueNasCar) Sustainable Agro-Forestry Development Project in Agusan del Norte. This targets the ancestral land of the Higaonon, as well as small rice and corn fields. Part of the project is the construction of road networks in interior communities and other infrastructures to facilitate the entry of local and foreign companies. The state allotted ₱61 million and the military focused its operations in the area to suppress any opposition to the project. Adjacent communities were dotted with detachments to suppress the people.

One of the project's biggest beneficiary is Nestlé, manufacturer of Nescafé, which promotes the production and sale of green coffee beans (raw coffee) in Las Nieves town. The project is supported by

the Department of Agriculture and World Bank, which funded it with ₱19 million. This aims to expand coffee plantations in the said town, monopolize the farmers' produce and dictate farmgate prices. Nestlé, one of the biggest international companies, is notorious for short-changing coffee bean farmers not only in the Philippines. (In a most recent study, farmers earn only 1%-3% of the price from every cup of coffee sold in the US by big companies because of extreme undervaluation of their produce.)

Like other provinces of North Mindanao, the Agusan provinces have long been militarized. Military harassment and red-tagging, forced surrenders, trumped-up criminal cases against leaders and members of farmers associations, illegal arrests, CAFGU conscription and other military abuses are rampant here. Not less than two leaders of the local peasant organization Unyon sa Mag-uuma sa Agusan del Norte were killed by state agents, one escaped an attempted murder and one was illegally arrested. All oppose the expansion of mining and plantations in their area. AB

94th IB massacres Negros family

Soldiers of the 94th IB massacred a family, including two children, on the evening of June 14 in Barangay Buenavista, Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental. Soldiers fatally shot 50-year old Emilda Fausto and her children Raben Fausto, 11, and Ben Fausto, 15, in their sleep. The family's father Roly Fausto, 52, was found dead outside of their house.

They are active members of the local peasant group Baklayan, Bito, Cabagal Farmers Association (BABICAFa).

Even before the massacre, they were repeatedly harassed by soldiers who accused them supporting the New People's Army (NPA). They reported these incidents to human rights organizations.

Statements of condemnation and calls for justice on the Fausto family massacre mounted. Various groups staged protests in front of the Commission on Human Rights in Quezon City and the AFP Visayas Command Headquarters in Cebu City to demand military accountability. They lambasted the AFP's outright peddling of lies and distortion of facts regarding the massacre.

Apart from them, four other civilians were mercilessly killed by soldiers of the Armed Forces of the

Philippines (AFP) in Negros, Masbate and Albay.

On June 13, the indiscriminate firing of weapons by the 62nd IB killed Benjie Ebarle and Roweno Anubong in Barangay Macagahay, Moises Padilla. The incident took place after the military encountered a unit of the people's army in a nearby sitio.

Also killed from indiscriminate fire by AFP soldiers was 17-year old Carling Belan on June 16 at Sityo Manaybanay, Barangay Calabab, Dimasalang, Masbate. His companion Panoy Pepito was wounded. After the incident, soldiers arrested three of his companions identified as Wengweng Hagnaya, Damang Tumangan and Edlang Tumangan.

Meanwhile, the killing of peasant Zaldy Cañaverl, 40, by the 9th ID was recently reported. He was shot by soldiers on May 24 while



working on his corn fields in Barangay Busac, Ligao City, Albay.

Arrest. Without presenting any warrant, police illegally arrested Danilo Acayin, resident of Barangay Puray, Rodriguez, Rizal at around 1 p.m. on June 5 on charges of murder. He is currently detained in Antipolo City.

On June 16, the 62nd IB arrested construction worker Aldren Valbuena at Sitio Manta-uyan, Barangay Macagahay, Moises Padilla, Negros Occidental. Soldiers claim to have confiscated from him a .45 calibre pistol and a military bag. He is accused of being a member of the people's army.

Police arrested on June 19 four farmers at Sitio Caorasan, Barangay San Agustin, Pili, Camarines Sur on trumped-up charges. The arrested are protesting against the Naga Airport Development project in the province.

Former leader of the Damayan nin Paraoma sa Camarines Sur (DAMPA) and regional council member of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Bicol Artemio Sanchez is one of those arrested.

Shooting. Soldiers of the 62nd IB indiscriminately fired their weapons at Sitio Uyangan, Brgy Budlasan, Canlaon City around 11 p.m. on June 15. This caused trauma and fear among residents.

Assault. In Masbate, soldiers beat-up and mugged Nono Sayson and four other farmers from June 1 to June 5 in Barangay Buenasuerte in Palanas, Barangay Guindawhan in Pio V. Corpus and Barangay Mabini in San Fernando. AB

Release the oldest political prisoner!

KAPATID, A GROUP of families of political prisoners, reiterated its call for the release of Gerardo dela Peñtilde, 84, the oldest of 824 political prisoners currently incarcerated in different parts of the country. The groups said it has been pushing for dela Peña's release since 2019 but no action has since been taken by the state.

Dela Peña, who has hypertension and other ailments, is a farmer from Vinzons, Camarines Norte who was sentenced to life imprisonment over trumped-up murder charges. He has been in prison for ten years. He is a former leader of the Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (Selda) and a member of Karapatan.

Kapatid first appealed for his release on humanitarian grounds in 2019 but was rejected by the Supreme Court which affirmed his sentence.

Meanwhile, a Muntinlupa court dismissed the case against three drivers who took part in protests in Alabang, Muntinlupa City during the transport strike on March 7. According to Piston, the case was dismissed after the complainants repeatedly failed to attend the hearings.

IN MARCOS REGIME'S FIRST YEAR:

97 victims of political killings from June 30, 2022 up to June 15, 2023.

Source: *Ang Bayan, Special Report*

308

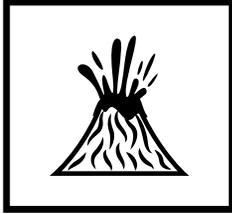
individuals killed in the bogus war on drugs from July 1, 2022 up to May 31, 2023.

Source: *Dahas PH*

75 cases of press freedom violations from June 30, 2022 up to April 30, 2023.

Source: *National Union of Journalists of the Philippines and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility*

37,682



Source: *National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council*

residents from 26 barangays of Albay affected by the eruption of Mayon Volcano since June 8;

17,216 of them needed to evacuate.

25 HECTARES

"donated" by the local government of Calayan Island, Cagayan for the construction of a military camp by the US and the Philippines in the northernmost part of the country.



Source: *Gender Social Norms Index, United Nations Development Programme*

250

WAR PLANES

participated in the anti-Russia war game launched by the US and its allied countries in the **NATO** from June 13 up to June 23 in Germany.

81%

of Pilipinos are "careful" in expressing their political opinions online

due to fear as result of political violence, intimidation, and threats to freedom of expression.

Source: *Digital News Report, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*



A transwoman in the people's army

For more than a year now, Ka Daisy, a transwoman, has served as full-time Red fighter. She joined the New People's Army (NPA) during the pandemic, three years after doing revolutionary work as a member of the Kabataang Makabayan. She recounted how her unit got engaged in an armed encounter on her second day in the unit.

Ka Daisy, also called "Inday" by some comrades, now serves as a squad political guide. As an official, she ensures the strengthening of the organization. She helps outline plans and programs, and ensures its implementation. She also performs daily technical tasks such as fetching water, cooking, and transporting supply.

"I have total respect for Ka Daisy," said Ka Alas, her squad leader. "Apart from being helpful, she teaches well. Since her deployment here, she took to teaching me LitNum (literacy/numeracy). Because I'm quite past my prime, I sometimes forget our lessons, but Inday keeps encouraging me to learn."

Ka Daisy was warmly received by comrades as a new recruit. On her part, she was able to quickly adapt to the NPA's military regulations.

"Even before I joined the unit, comrades were oriented about my gender. They had study meetings about the LGBT struggle," said Ka Daisy. In her unit, instructors include the LGBT orientation when

giving basic military orientation. This aims to correct wrong views and treatment of LGBTs. Some misconceptions still manifest, but these are collectively struggled in a structured and comradely manner.

Like other comrades, Ka Daisy carries a heavy pack. Her bag contains printed reading materials such as *Ang Bayan* and other documents and books, kitchen materials, supplies and gadgets. Thrown in the mix is her make-up kit.

"Whenever we undertake mass work, we distribute documents like AB to update the masses on important social issues," she said.

If asked how many women are in the unit, comrades would include Ka Daisy. It was a far cry from her experiences when she was still studying in a Catholic school. She experienced restrictions and gender-based discrimination. She was prohibited to wear the clothes she prefer and had to cut her long hair short.

Within the NPA, Ka Daisy is happy to be part of forging a society that has compassion and concern for transwomen like her. For

her, gender is a non-issue for one to wage revolution. It is not a hindrance nor is it a basic question. It is not a matter of competing. It is enough for one to dedicate one's heart and time to serve the revolution.

"As an LGBT youth, our role is important in advancing the revolution. To change society's perception, we need to transform society itself," she added.

In waging revolution, Ka Daisy can freely express her true feelings. During the 50th anniversary of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, she led celebrations in the guerilla front. She served as a facilitator of the program and decorated the venue. She was also one of the instructors for the dance and song cultural performances. Because of the special nature of the occasion, Ka Daisy put on some lipstick, face powder and eyeliner.

Hundreds of peasants from nearby barrios graced the occasion.

In the area of responsibility of Ka Daisy's unit, there are a few LGBT members who belong to basic Party organs in the barrio. They actively took part in cultural performances and were open to socialize with the Red fighters.

Ka Daisy was so surprised to find someone like her, an LGBT, who is also a Red fighter.

"I have long known that the NPA accepts LGBT people like me. I am delighted finally to have met someone who came from the community. I thought I was alone here," she jokingly said.

Indeed everyone has equal rights and responsibilities in the movement. In a society that oppresses and judges LGBT people, it is only in the revolution that they can experience genuine freedom to be themselves. AB

