

EDITORIAL

Resistance is the only recourse under the US-Marcos regime

The Filipino people suffers worsening oppression and exploitation amid aggravation of the basic problems of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism under the US-Marcos regime. The next five years is bound to see unparalleled corruption, state terrorism, foreign subservience and anti-people policies. There is no other recourse for the broad masses of the people but to wage militant resistance to defend their rights and advance their aspirations for genuine national freedom and democracy.

The broad sectors view Marcos

Jr's presidency as illegitimate because it was installed through brazen fraud through the automated 2022 elections. It is further discrediting itself with its penchant for foreign junkets, obsession with burnishing the image of his dictator father, and rush to get hold of hundreds of billions of pesos of public funds.

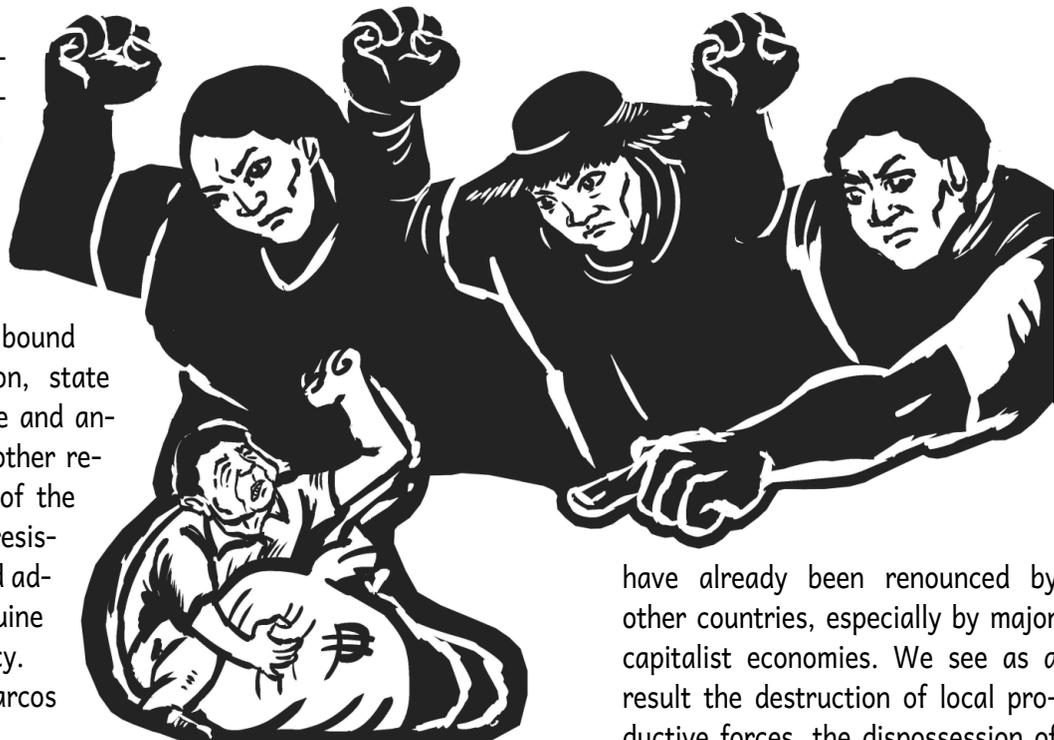
Corruption under Marcos remains acute and worsening. He is busy securing their family's hidden wealth accumulated during his father's 14-year dictatorship. He has rehabilitated former Marcos cronies and their heirs to power and privilege. Like his father, Marcos pampers and satiates military officers with large public funds on the pretext of "military modernization" and "counterinsurgency."

The ruling Marcos clique is in

collusion with the Duterte and Arroyo, both notorious for corruption and fascism. They both are given control of large public funds, as well as the privileges to expand their businesses and dynasty. Marcos is set to sign the Maharlika Investment Fund in the coming weeks. He will have ₱500-billion public funds in his hands to regale his cronies and secure further political support.

Since assuming power, Marcos has persistently bowed his head to foreign superpowers, especially to the military power and the economic interest of the US imperialism, and its financial agents such as the World Bank and other institutions. It also kowtows to China even in the face of outright intrusion into the country's maritime territory.

Marcos continues to carry out neoliberal policies, even if these



have already been renounced by other countries, especially by major capitalist economies. We see as a result the destruction of local productive forces, the dispossession of people of their means of production and sources of income, and the undermining of the local economy. Marcos has allowed all-out importation of agricultural products which kill local production, including the unprecedented increase in rice imports. Imported agricultural products are bound to flood the country as it joins the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which is set to lead to greater economic dislocation of millions of Filipinos.

Marcos auctions off the Philippines to foreign big capitalists. He attracts them with promises of tax-free operations and with cheap labor. Marcos also uses his position in the Department of Agriculture to push the interests of agribusiness corporations together with the World Bank and other foreign banks

behind the veil of "raising productivity" like the failed Masagana 99 program that sank hundreds of thousands of thousands Farmers in debt.

Marcos' subservience is starkly demonstrated by his acquiescence to US plans to build additional four military bases under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), in addition to other facilities that the US is secretly building with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). It is part of the US strategy to establish military bases to surround its rival China. Marcos allows the country to be used and dragged into a possible armed conflict between the imperialist giants.

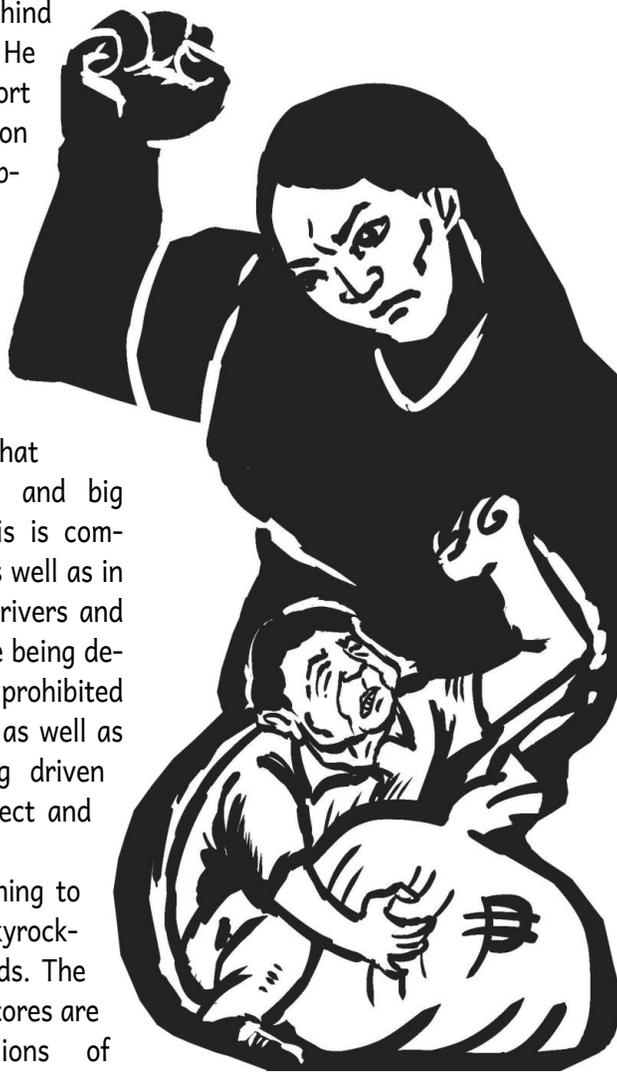
While Marcos moves heaven and earth to serve the interests of foreign capitalists and powers, he ignores the grievances of the Filipino masses. He plays deaf amid the cry of workers and employees for substantial wage and salary increases to help them keep up with rising prices and prevent the deterioration of their standards of living. He gives no heed to the demand for genuine land reform amid widespread agricultural crisis, and instead favors plantations, mining companies, construction of dams and other infrastructure, ecotourism and en-

ergy projects that are behind widespread land grabbing. He promotes the labor-export policy as band-aid solution to the acute problem of joblessness.

The toiling masses are being dispossessed of their means of production and sources of livelihood under the policies and programs that favor foreign companies and big business accomplices. This is common in the countryside, as well as in cities, as in the case of drivers and jeepney operators who are being denied their routes and prohibited from using their vehicles, as well as fishermen who are being driven away by reclamation project and various ordinances.

Marcos has done nothing to solve the problem of the skyrocketing prices of basic needs. The token number of Kadiwa stores are meaningless amid millions of poverty-stricken Filipino families. Marcos colludes with cartels and smugglers who rake in hoards of money by controlling supply to push up the prices of rice, sugar, onions and more.

Fascist terrorism is Marcos' response to the grievances and clamor



of the Filipino masses. Armed state agents are used in the campaign to suppress unions and organizations that serve as source of people's strength. Cases of murder and massacres, as well as abductions, illegal and prolonged imprisonment of political detainees. Countryside villages are under the martial law where fascist soldiers and paramilitary reign and people live under fear. Even in the cities, military and police agents enter factories, communities, schools, offices and others on the pretext of the "war against terrorism" to sow terror among the people.

In the face of worsening oppression, torture and repression, the Filipino people have no other recourse but to wage all forms of resistance—from the streets to the mountains—to defend their welfare, to advance their interests and to fight for justice. Further expand and strengthen mass organizations and build the broadest unity of the people to isolate and fight the anti-people, puppet and fascist US-Marcos regime.

AB

 <p>Vol LIV No. 13 July 7, 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: Resistance is the only recourse under the US-Marcos regime 1</p> <p>Failure and burden to the people 3</p> <p>Militarist in the education department 4</p> <p>NPA-Abra mounts 2 armed actions 5</p> <p>Workers denounce paltry minimum wage 5</p> <p>Groups denounce conviction of NDFP consultant 5</p> <p>Protests 5</p> <p>Mindanao workers suffer from measly wages 6</p> <p>94th IB in Negros, butcher battalion 7</p> <p>In short 8</p> <p>Free all political prisoners 9</p> <p>Pride: Wage increases, defense of rights 9</p> <p>Military siege in 5 provinces 10</p> <p>Cases of people accused of "terrorism", rising 10</p>
<p>Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>	
 ang.bayan@cpp.ph	 @ThePeople1969

Failure and burden to the people

Progressive groups protested in Manila to mark the first year of the illegitimate president Ferdinand Marcos Jr on June 30. Before this, they held the People's Summit where various sectors condemned the regime's incompetence, fascism and puppetry.

"Mahal sa Pilipinas" ("It's expensive in the Philippines," a sarcastic twist to the Marcos tourism slogan "Love the Philippines"), rallyists led by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan declared. The Marcos regime failed to curb spiraling inflation, which hit a 14-year high at the onset of 2023.

Instead of the promised ₱20 per kilo, the cheapest price of rice in Metro Manila is now at ₱40, according to farmers. Compared to last year, the prices of meat, fish and most vegetables, garlic, onions and sugar are higher. Water, electricity and transport charges are also higher. Despite these, farmgate prices of farmers' produce remain low.

Marcos remains silent about wage increase, even as national average minimum wages have fallen short of the so-called poverty threshold. His regime has no program to create decent jobs and continues to promote labor-export policy to squeeze remittances from millions of Filipino migrants. About 70% of the local labor force is informal and suffers from very low incomes, job insecurity and abuse by authorities.

Government employees are ap-

palled by Marcos' continued implementation of low wages within the bureaucracy and contractualization of 700,000 public workers.

Currently, the Philippines has the highest income inequality in East Asia. The richest 1% controls 17% of the national income, while that of the poorest 50% is equivalent to only 14%.

The regime has not provided any relief and instead reduced the already paltry government aid by 99.78%. From ₱233 billion in 2020, the regime only allocated ₱510 million in 2023.

Marcos continued the implementation of neoliberal and pro-foreign policies and programs which open the country's resources to plunder and aggression on the pretext of development. He declared as crucial the operations of destructive mining, the construction of large dams, the construction of energy plants behind the veil of renewable energy, as well as the expansion of commercial plantations, tourist spots and labor zones. He authorized the continuation of 187 reclamation projects that ravage coastlines and oceans.

The regime violently suppressed the resistance of farmers, fishermen,

and indigenous peoples against projects that endanger their livelihood and environment. Massacres, killings, illegal arrests and detentions, as well as bombings, hamletting and militarisation, are relentless.

Since assuming power, Marcos traveled abroad 13 times, accompanied by his family, friends and favored businessmen. Together they pimped the country's natural resources and cheap labor to foreign capitalists, hoping they will partner with local bureaucrats and bourgeoisie.

Apart from squandering public funds, Marcos spent his first year enriching himself and his group. Of the 31 priority bills he railroaded in Congress, 29 of these directly serve the interests of his cronies and the preservation of the status quo.

Foremost of these is the bill establishing the Maharlika Investment Fund which will concentrate billions of funds into his hands and those of his favored officials and businessmen. The Lower House also approved the 30-year National Infrastructure Program Bill (with the slogan "Building Better More") to serve as conduit for corruption. Almost at the same time, the National Land Use Act was passed which will allow the widespread seizure and land-use conversion of hectares of ancestral and agricultural land.

"There is no reason to celebrate Marcos' first year in power", according to Bayan. "It should continuously be denounced for its anti-poor and anti-Filipino policies, and we should assert the people's clamor for genuine freedom, democracy, and development." **AB**



Militarist in the education department

Since the outset, teachers opposed the appointment of Sara Duterte, the illegitimate vice president, as secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd). They said, there is no place in the department for a militarist, a historical illiterate and reality-detached like Duterte. She also does not have the background or skills to lead it.

After almost a year in office, Duterte's militaristic mindset is evident in her relentless anti-communist rhetoric and attacks against teachers. She used the DepEd as a platform to act as a military spokesperson, after not being appointed to her much coveted Department of National Defense.

She is desperately playacting as the chief of the reactionary army as part of her posturing for the next presidential election. She rejoiced over her appointment as co-vice chairperson in the National Task Force-Elcac last May which recognized her all-out support to the agency's cause.

Beyond being a red-tagger, Duterte brought to the department the fraudulent victory of Davao City's "local peace", achieved through a brutal suppression campaign characterized by massacres, killings, arrests, forced surrenders and subjugation of entire communities to military rule.

While preoccupied with her militaristic goals, Duterte failed to address the education crisis exacerbated by his father Rodrigo Duterte's misguided policies during the pandemic. She also failed to address the grievances of teachers for decent salaries, proper working conditions, job security and prompt benefits. She bring shame to a department incapable of providing reasonable allowances, like the foul-smelling and inedible rice that teachers received then returned in June.

Lack of personnel, classrooms, books and other long-standing issues in the sector remain as obstacles to quality

education. The holding of classes last summer was an utter incompetence due to overcrowded and humid classrooms.

Like her father, Duterte conceals her failures by repeatedly maligning progressive organizations, primarily the teachers' union.

In March, she resorted to red-tagging as a response to the clamor of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) for the government to employ an additional 30,000 teachers and allocate ₱100 billion annually over the next six years to attain the class-size ratio of 35 students per teacher. She said the

proposal was "unrealistic and impossible", and attacked teachers expressing legitimate grievances.

She used her position to silence the teachers union. In June, she issued a memorandum to collect and submit the names of ACT members to the agency's central leadership. This goes against teachers' guaranteed right to privacy, their right to unionize and express their opinion. This is similar to the previous profiling scheme conducted by the Philippine National Police in 2019. The said profiling resulted in police "visiting" the schools and homes of ACT members, and subjecting them to interrogations and surveillance.

Dangerous to children

In June, it was reported that Duterte gave DepEd key positions to retired generals loyal to her family dynasty. She appointed as undersecretary and assistant secretary Ret. Maj Gen. Nolasco Mempin and Ret. Brig. Gen. Noel Baluyan despite their lack of background or skills in the field of education.

Mempin served as the commander of Task Force Davao and 10th ID. He was responsible for the forced surrender of civilians in the Davao region in 2022. Baluyan, on the other hand, served as an officer in Task Force Cebu and as Assistant Division Commander of the 3rd ID. This is the AFP division responsible for many heinous crimes in the island of Negros, where children were among its victims.

Under Duterte, the forced participation of minors in Grades 11 and 12 in NTF-Elcac and AFP lectures and symposia continue. During these activities, soldiers suppress the students' right to express their opinions and join organizations of their choice. **AB**

DEPED
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



NPA-Abra mounts 2 armed actions

UNITS OF THE New People's Army (NPA) mounted two armed actions in Sallapadan, Abra during the last week of June. The attack was carried out against the 24th and 102nd IB troops operating in the said town.

Red fighters first attacked the 24th IB unit operating at Sitio Mangmangga, Barangay Naguilian on June 26. One soldier was killed in the offensive. This was followed by the NPA-Abra's harassment operation against 102nd IB troops in Barangay Bazar on June 28. Two soldiers were injured in the offensive.

In Negros Occidental, the NPA-South Central Negros on June 14 demobilized two backhoes at Sitio Bulod, Barangay Carabalan, Himamaylan City. The backhoes were being used in the construction of the Himamaylan-Tayasan Road that will pave the way for the entry of large mining companies into the mountains of Canseron, Tahod-Ilahas, Cambantog and nearby areas.

The two backhoes owned by the ESJ construction firm of the Javelosas and the Gensulins cost ₱7.5 million. No company workers were harmed in this operation.

Workers denounce paltry minimum wage

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION workers protested in front of the Nepa-Q Mart in Quezon City on July 3 to criticize the ₱40 wage increase mandated by the regional wage board. This increase, which will be received starting July 16, is equivalent to only a 7% of needed amount to reach the family living wage. Workers denounced what they called "paltry minimum" of the cheap Marcos regime.

In the order issued, wages of workers in agriculture, services and retail businesses will increase from ₱533 to ₱573. Non-agricultural workers will receive ₱610 from the previous ₱570. This is a far cry from the living wage for a five-person family of ₱1,160 per day in April. This is very low even compared to the ₱150 across-the-board proposal in the Senate.

Workers are aware that much more is needed to push their demand for higher wages. If it were up to the capitalists and the state, not a peso or even lesser increase would be granted on the grounds that it will "raise" inflation or would be "detrimental" to businesses. Workers promised to intensify their struggle for just wage increases throughout the country.

Groups denounce conviction of NDFP consultant and wife

HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS condemned the June 29 the court's conviction against elderly and sick National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) consultant Frank Fernandez, 75, and his wife, Cleofe Lagtapon, 69. The conviction is related to the fabricated case of illegal possession of firearms.

The couple, along with Ge-ann Perez, were arrested on March 24, 2019 in Barangay Calumpang, Liliw, Laguna. State forces claimed then that three .45 caliber pistols, three magazines and ammunition, and three grenades were seized from them.

Fernandez and Lagtapon were undergoing treatment in Laguna when arrested. Fernandez suffers from chronic artery disease, chronic stable angina, hypertension stage 2-uncontrolled, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and hyponatremia, in addition to other age-related diseases.

Meanwhile, Karapatan announced that the couple was acquitted from the cases of illegal possession of explosives and COMELEC gun ban. Perez, who was co-accused, was acquitted of all charges and released on June 30.



March against Ahunan dam.

Residents of Pakil, Laguna marched to the town center on July 1 to voice their opposition to the Ahunan and Belisama Hydropower projects. The Ahunan Dam will be built on Mount Ping-as, in the said town. The mass action was held after a forum and consultation on the same day led by Mamamayang Nagmamahal sa Pakil (People who love Pakil).

Oppose reclamation in Bacolod City.

Fishermen and urban poor residents opposed to the planned 1,018-hectare reclamation project in Bacolod City held a fluvial protest on June 25. Residents of barangays Banago and Punta Taytay, communities affected by the destructive reclamation, joined the mass action. Fishermen and residents voiced their demands aboard two pump boats and 13 motor boats.

Protest at hospitals.

Health workers unions under the Alliance of Health Workers (AHW) mounted a series of protests and noise barrage in five hospitals in Metro Manila on June 23 and June 27. The protests were held in connection with the Marcos regime's first year in power and its second state of the nation address. They raised their demands for wage increase, immediate benefits and greater budget for public health.

Mindanao workers suffer from measly wages

Outside the National Capital Region, the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards (RTWPB) have yet to act on the workers' petition for wage increase. Proposals are still pending in 10 RTWPBs.

The RTWPBs last ordered increases in daily wages way back in June 2022. Of these, ₱16 (BARMM) got the lowest increase while Region VI ordered the largest increase (₱110) to be implemented in the two tranches. Most regions implemented only a ₱30-₱60 increase. The NCR minimum wage is set higher at ₱533-₱570.

In Mindanao, the average minimum wage is at ₱357.83 to ₱376.33. Workers in the Davao region receive the highest amount at ₱443. This is a far cry from the island's average living wage set at ₱1,315/day in April. To reach the living wage, an increase of up to ₱938.67 is needed islandwide.

State statistics in January recorded that Mindanao hosts more than 23% of the labor force (population aged 15 and over) or 17.82 million out of a total of 77.12 million in the country. Of this number, the labor force participation rate was pegged at 68.2%. During the same period, the unemployment rate was pegged at a low average of 3.9% while underemployment in the island was at 17.5%.

A 2017 study found that one in five workers in Mindanao was looking for extra work, but most work is either temporary or part-time. About 90% of the workforce is in the informal sector, mostly in agriculture. The island's economy is starkly non-industrial, even in comparison with the backwardness of most parts of the country. In 2018, there were only 153,369 manufacturing workers, of which 50,522 were sub-contract workers. More



than 364,000 were employed in transportation and storage, wholesale and retail, and electricity and gas related businesses.

Meanwhile, the number of workers in the 72 mining and quarrying companies recorded then was at 24,025. Mine workers were most concentrated (19,482) in the Caraga region where 54% of workers are contractual. Currently, the daily wage of workers in the region is pegged at ₱350.

In June, the workers' union in Philsaga Mining Corp. (PMC), a gold mining company, succeeded in negotiating a ₱40 wage increase in their collective bargaining with the management. The company employs 2,050 regular workers and allocates a meager ₱82,000 per month in additional wages. According to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau Region 13 in 2022, the company had an estimated 5,040 employees and spent only ₱692 million for wages, a small amount compared to the amount of gold (\$137.51 million) and silver (\$779,123) which it exported in the same period.

In the factories and plantations of the Dolefil company in South Cotabato, only about 7,000 of the 20,000 workers are regular and re-

ceive the Socksargen minimum wage of ₱341/day. Majority of workers, employed as contractuales, receive 8% less. Dolefil is one of the largest exporters of fruit products in the world and in 2021 earned up to \$6.5 billion.

Dolefil plantations are only a small part of the nearly 500,000 hectares of land or 12% of Mindanao's total agricultural land occupied by plantation companies.

In addition, there are at least 37 economic zones on the island. Of these, 17 are in Davao Region and 10 are in Northern Mindanao. There are 12 agro-industrial zones, 15 information technology parks, and eight manufacturing zones. Most of the workers here earn less than the minimum wage and face various attacks on their labor rights.

Recently, the regions in Mindanao recorded an average of 7.2% gross regional domestic product (GRDP). However, this is not felt by the people. In 2021, poverty incidence in Mindanao (21.93%) was twice worse compared to Luzon (10.52%).

AB

94th IB in Negros, butcher battalion

The National Solidarity Mission (NSM) composed of representatives from the church, farmers, farm-workers, women, indigenous people, and youth conducted an investigation on June 24 into the Fausto Family massacre in Himamaylan, Negros Occidental.

In the June 26 press conference, the NSM reported the results of their investigation not only on the case of the massacre but also on the brutal killing of Crispin Tingal Jr., and other extrajudicial killing cases in the island of Negros.

According to NSM, these incidents are linked as they found the the pattern of grave and repeated violations of human rights against civilians in the island. In both the cases, members of the Fausto family and Tingal suffered military harassment before being killed.

A day before the reporting, Susan Mendes was arrested. She chairs the Baclayan, Bito, Cabagal Farmers and Farmworkers Association (BABICAFA), the same organization to which the Faustos belonged. Mendes and 17 other individuals were falsely accused of murder and frustrated murder over an ambush in Kabankalan City on May 2018.

Who is the 94th IB?

The 94th IB is one of the battalions established under the Duterte regime. It consists of soldiers from 4th and 6th ID of Mindanao and 7th ID of Luzon. They were unleashed in Negros on 2018 with the declared

aim of crushing the revolutionary forces in the island. Duterte also imposed martial law on this same year in the island of Negros, Bicol Region, and Eastern Visayas through Memorandum 32.

It has since perpetrated more than 150 violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Central Negros. More than 18,000 residents of Moises Padilla, Isabela, Binalbagan, Himamaylan City and Kabankalan City in Negros Occidental, and Guihulngan City, Jimalalud, Ayungon and Manjuyod in Negros Oriental suffered from military abuses. This battalion has summarily killed 34 individuals, the latest of which is the massacre of the Faustos and their 2 children.

From 2022 to the present, Lt. Col. Van Donald Almonte headed the butcher battalion. Almonte came from 303rd IB based on Negros Occidental. He is notorious for deceitful schemes like sending letters to residents of Barangay Buenavista last month pretending to be pro-people and promoting peace.

The number of cases of threats and intimidation of 94th IB against civilians continues to rise. There is outright militarization, enforced

surrenders, illegal arrests, destruction of properties, abduction, and fabrication of lies to justify spending millions of pesos of people's money for the military.

Other important cases

The despicable crimes of the battalion include Oplan Sauron that began on March 2019 as the second in the series of Simultaneous Enhanced Managing of Police Operations (SEMPO) in Negros on 2019. Fourteen were killed while twelve were arrested under this "oplan".

It is also notorious for the abduction of a few months-old infant of an alleged "NPA child" on November 2020.

Victims of the battalion are primarily civilian farmers. In one incident on January, they murdered 49-year old farmer Jose Gonzalez in Himamaylan City on suspicion that he is a member of the New People's Army.

They are also notorious for destroying and burning houses and property of poor peasants suspected of being NPA members. On February 2019, they burned the house of Arlene Pausal, a month after a tactical offensive was mounted by the NPA in Barangay Banwage, Guihulngan City.

Left and right, infrastructure projects are being constructed purportedly for faster delivery of products directly to the markets. These include construction of the 222.8 kilometer by six meters wide road in the town of Candoni which will connect Kabankalan to hinterlands of Ilog and drill through Barangays Tapi and Magballo.

Meanwhile, a similar project worth ₱160 million will be constructed in eight "insurgency free" declared barangays in Isabela, Negros Occidental. These are part of preparations for the entry of mining, energy, and ecotourism companies in the interior part of the province.





International Labour Organization

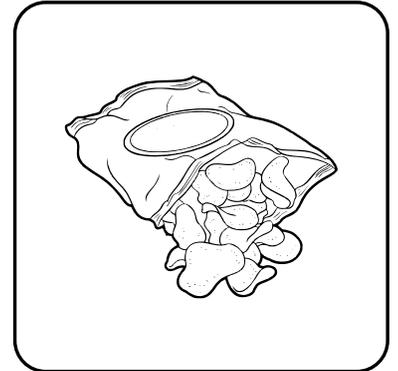
₱278,434

PER MONTH

minimum salary of Larry Gadon, disbarred lawyer by the Supreme Court because of misdemeanor and anti-women stance, as a newly-appointed presidential anti-poverty adviser.

107

representatives of the reactionary state, 38 from the AFP, PNP and NTF-Elcac, participated in a consultation in January with the International Labor Organization on the labor rights violations against Filipinos.

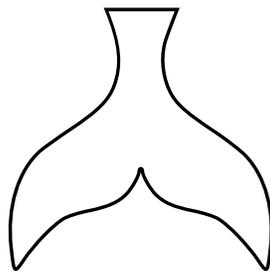


₱10

per 100 grams or milliliters planned tax to be imposed by the Marcos regime on **junk food** and other food items to collect ₱76 billion for debt payment.

80%

drop in the fisherfolks' catch in Cavite caused by dredging for the reclamation projects.



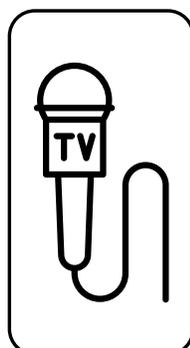
17 YEARS

since the time victims of enforced disappearances **Sherlyn Cadapan, Karen Empeño, Manuel Meriño, Prudencio Calubid, Celina Palma, Ariel Beloy** and **Gloria Soco** were last seen.

On July 1, Baby River would have turned

3 years old.

Baby River is the child of activist Reina Mae Nacino, who was imprisoned on trumped-up charges. The baby died after being separated from her mother.



1,600

Filipino journalists killed

since the office of the UN special rapporteur for freedom of expression was established in 1993.

Groups reinvigorate campaign to free political prisoners

"Breaking chains, Reclaiming freedom from Marcos Sr to Marcos Jr," an activity demanding the immediate release of all political prisoners, was held on June 27 at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City. It was led by the Samahan ng Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (SELDA) and joined by 13 organizations and some former political detainees under the Marcos Sr. dictatorship. During the dictatorship, the call "Free all political prisoners!" was a major campaign.

According to SELDA, there were 49 victims of arbitrary arrest and detention in the first year of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. They are now among the 778 political prisoners on human rights group Karapatan's list as of June 30.

Among the prisoners are more than 70 elderly, 150 women and 90 ailing.

Among the regions, Northern Mindanao has the highest number of arrested and detained (105), followed by the National Capital Region (104), Caraga (93), Western Visayas (90) then Central Visayas (85).

Most of the political prisoners are held on trumped-up charges. They were arrested without legal

grounds and most without an arrest warrant. They were detained because of their political convictions and activities.

Their cases move at snail-pace. There are detainees who have already completed their maximum sentence but continue to languish in jail because their cases are not properly monitored. This is common among detainees who are poor and whose families live remotely, and do not have regular lawyers.

There are detainees who have been acquitted in their original case, but are not released because of "multiple cases" filed by the military. Others simply die in prison without their cases being resolved.

The activity also commemorated



the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. In addition to torture and other inhumane treatment, political prisoners endure overcrowded cells, inadequate food and insufficient health services.

The campaign aims to gather support locally and internationally, build a network and coalition with different entities and conduct dialogues with relevant institutions such as the United Nations.

On July 1, human rights defenders again raised the issue of worsening human rights violations at the 53rd meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Switzerland. AB

LGBT+ community demands wage increases, defense of rights and sovereignty

Wage increase, defense of rights and protection of gender minorities, defense of national sovereignty and human rights are a few of the prominent calls during the Pride March last June 24. Bahaghari, the national-democratic organization that promotes LGBT+ rights in the country, led the campaign.

The group led the protest in the Southern Tagalog Pride, Metro Baguio Pride, and Central Luzon Pride. It also joined the march of tens of thousands of LGBT+ and their allies in Makati City and Quezon City.

More than 500 participated in the Metro-Baguio Pride march from Session Road to Igorot Park. The protest was filled with colorful and

rainbow flags, placards with various calls, and performances. They also held a Pride Fair at the Igorot Park from June 21 to June 23.

In Laguna, hundreds of delegates from various sectors in Southern Tagalog gathered at the University of the Philippines-Los Baños campus in celebration of Pride Month. There was also a large gathering in Angeles City, Pam-

panga. Similar actions were mounted by different groups in Biñan in Laguna, and Cebu City. There were also activities in Dumaguete City and Mandaue City on June 25.

Bahaghari recalled on that day the first Pride March in the Philippines launched by Pro-gay, a national democratic organization of gays, in 1994. The march was also the first in entire Asia.

Bahaghari also supported the SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression) bill in congress that stipulates the recognition of the rights of LGBT+ people. AB

Military siege in 5 provinces

Grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law were recorded over the past two weeks.

In Masbate, soldiers shot and killed Randy Dionan Mahinay at Sitio Abanggan, Barangay San Carlos, Milagros on June 21 while working on a road construction in the area. The military implicated him in the ambush launched by the New People's Army (NPA) against intelligence assets and CAFGU, where one was killed, on April 14 in the same barangay. He was accused of aiding the Red fighters based merely on the fact that he was working in the area when the ambush took place. He was an active member of the association of poor farmers which oppose the expansion plan of the foreign company Filminera-Masbate Gold Project in the towns of Mobo, Uson and Milagros.

Attempted murder. Soldiers attempted to kill Rudolfo Ygot in his house in Barangay Barag, Mobo, Masbate on June 18. The 41-year-old Ygot is the village chief and is among those opposing the expansion of the Filminera-Masbate Gold

Project.

Arrest. The police arrested four sugarcane farmworkers belonging to the Pagkakaisa ng Manggagawang Bukid sa Tubuhan (PAMATU) chapter in Barangay Tumalim, Nasugbu in Batangas on July 3. The four victims are Felix Cailing Diraya (53), Francis Joshua Diraya (20), Efren Panganiban (51), and Lanie Villa Diraya (48). They were arrested for defending their labor rights and settlement on land.

In Negros Occidental, peasant-leader Susan Medes was arrested. (See related article on page 7.)

Intimidation. In Negros Occidental, soldiers subjected farmer Benjie Teruel to interrogation at the CAFGU detachment in Barangay Hilamonan, Kabankalan City on June 19. Teruel, who has a disability, was forced to confess his involvement in the attack by the people's army on said detachment on June 13. Soldiers threatened his life and the safety of his family.



Indiscriminate firing. Residents of Sitio Cansampo, Barangay Bagtik, La Libertad, Negros Oriental were terrorized after the 62nd IB indiscriminately fired bullets in the area on June 23 in the afternoon. Soldiers also forcibly entered and ransacked the residents' houses.

Between June 23 and June 30, soldiers chased and shot the mentally disabled Junior de los Trico in the same area.

Bombing. Soldiers dropped 14 bombs and repeatedly strafed farms in the barangays of Bazar, Naguilian, Sacaang and Bilabila in Sallapadan, Abra between June 26 and June 28. This was a retaliation of the soldiers after two consecutive armed actions of the NPA against their troops. AB

Cases of people accused of "terrorism", rising

To mark the third year of the Anti-Terrorism Law (ATL), various progressive groups protested in front of the National Security Council office in Quezon City on July 3. They lambasted the state's continued use of the law to openly suppress and silence critics of the regime and progressive organizations.

In Southern Tagalog alone, 15 individuals were charged with violating the ATL. The latest involves two human rights defenders who were charged on June 26 by the 59th IB with "providing material support" to "terrorist organizations." Ken Rementilla and Jasmin Rubia were accused of violating the law's Section 12. They were accused of "aiding terrorism" for having conducted a fact-finding

mission (FFM) in July 2022 to investigate the killing of Kyllene Casao by the AFP in Taysan, Batangas.

Tanggol Batangan spokesperson Hailey Pecayo was also implicated in the case, accusing her as one of the Red fighters the military encountered on July 18, 2022.

Meanwhile on June 29, Rev. Edwin Egar, Interim Officer of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog, re-

ceived a subpoena implicating him in a case involving violation of the said law.

Cases of the ATL being used to suppress and detain activists and progressive individuals were also recorded in Central Luzon, Bicol and Mindanao regions. The law is also the main justification for the continuing censorship of 27 websites of progressive organizations on the internet. The Anti-Terrorism Council, created by the ATL, also arbitrarily designated consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and other personalities such as Dr. Natividad Castro as "terrorists." AB