

EDITORIAL

Indict, prosecute, and punish the Dutertes

After several months of hearings in Congress, the secret details of the operation led and managed by Rodrigo Duterte and his accomplices in Malacañang regarding the sham and bloody "war on drugs" and the criminal campaign of extrajudicial killings are slowly being revealed to the public. This further strengthens the resolve of the Filipino people to fight for justice for the thousands of victims. Their call to indict, prosecute, and punish Duterte for his crimes against humanity is growing stronger.

The hearings confirmed what the public has known all along, that Duterte and his top officials are directly responsible for the extrajudicial killings. A number of officials who were once Duterte's flunkies are now testifying about how he or his accomplices ordered their armed henchmen to carry out these bloody crimes. Hundreds of millions of pesos in public funds were used by Duterte to feed his minions.

Duterte targeted criminal rivals who refused to kneel to his power, as well as political opponents who refused to bow to his tyranny. They were killed in cold blood. Some chose to remain silent. Oth-

ers were thrown into prison, and there executed.

Fearing he would suffer the same fate as his father, who was ruthlessly butchered by Duterte's police while incarcerated, Kerwin Espinosa agreed to the orders of then-police chief Bato dela Rosa to admit he was a "drug lord" and testify against Leila de Lima, an imprisoned critic of Duterte. This was Espinosa's revelation made in Congress.

Among those who also appeared before Congress was Royina Garma, former police chief of Davao City, who is known to be close to Duterte. Along with Duterte, Garma was named as one of those who ordered the killings of imprisoned Chinese "drug lords" inside the Davao jail in 2016. She was appointed that year as the head of police in Cebu, where the "war on drugs" turned bloody. She was appointed in 2019 as head of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) and was implicated as the mastermind behind the killing of rival official Wesley Barayuga, who was murdered by police in 2020.

Despite attempts to wash her hands in Congress, Garma admitted having endorsed Col. Edilberto Leonardo to Duterte to serve as one of the key operators of the "war on drugs." Duterte appointed him to various positions in the gov-



ernment before assigning him to the National Police Commission in 2022. According to Garma, Leonardo was responsible for planning the killings and managing the funds to cover expenses and reward mercenary police killers of Duterte who sought to establish himself as the lord of all drug lords in the Philippines.

The information revealed in the congressional hearings and investigations further strengthens the case filed by thousands of victims at the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Duterte for crimes against humanity. It sufficiently proves how Duterte systematically used and abused his power as president to orchestrate a horrific campaign of killings that claimed the lives of thousands of victims. He branded anyone he implicated in drugs as animals and incited armed state forces to use their power against them without limit, without fear of the law or legal procedure. All killings were justified with the "nan-laban" (fought back) excuse to absolve Duterte's criminals in uniform from accountability.

Duterte used the "war on drugs" to establish his tyrannical reign. The same tactics of ruthless killings were directed against organizations of workers, farmers, indigenous peoples, urban poor, students, and other sectors, as well as against human rights defenders and peace advocates. On Duterte's orders, state forces carried out the Bloody Sunday in Southern Tagalog, Operation Sauron in Negros, the Tumandok Massacre in Panay, and other heinous crimes. Duterte also directly ordered bombings and shelling to

sow widespread military terrorism in the countryside. Duterte also masterminded the series of killings of captured revolutionary leaders, including those who served as consultants in peace talks.


The Filipino people must strengthen and tirelessly reiterate their call to indict, prosecute, and punish the fascist criminal Rodrigo Duterte, as well as his accomplices (including dela Rosa, Bong Go, and even his daughter Sara), and all officials and elements of the police and military involved in the criminal abuse of power. Bringing Duterte to the ICC will serve as one of the key measures to establish the legal foundation for holding accountable all those involved in his crimes.

Marcos must be held responsible for his collusion with and accommodation of the Dutertes in securing his own power, and for obstructing the people's efforts to bring Duterte and his accomplices to the ICC. Even if the "uni-team" of the Marcoses and Dutertes has collapsed, they remain allies in oppressing and exploiting the people and in defending each other's interests. Marcos fears that any punishment meted out to Duterte will also befall him in due time.

As long as none of these criminals are punished, abusive bureaucratic capitalists and fascists will continue to reign, relentlessly trampling on the rights and welfare of the people. The culture of impunity of the state armed forces promoted and fanned by Duterte is now being used by Marcos to establish his own tyranny based on sowing violence against the people.

The people, however, will never be defeated. Every day, people are being stirred and are courageously rising up. They possess a firm resolve to advance their struggle for justice, freedom, and democracy, no matter how difficult or how long it takes. **AB**





Vol LV No. 20 | October 21, 2024

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.

Contents

Editorial: Indict, prosecute, and punish the Dutertes 1

A tribute to the Southern Tagalog peasant warriors 3

Peasant protests highlight land grabbing and hunger 4

Protests 4

Jeepney phaseout in Metro Baguio 5

NPA-Northern Negros harass 79th IB troopers 5

NDFP honors Dante Simbulan, 94 5

Attacks on farmers and indigenous peoples 6

Dismissal of case against Marcos ill-gotten wealth 6


Campaign against dynasties, violent elections 7

In short 8

Government housing is a business 9

Armed conflict in the Middle East 10

Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines

 ang.bayan@cpp.ph

A tribute to the Southern Tagalog peasant warriors

This Peasant Month, the revolutionary movement pays tribute to the peasant class, the giant of the countryside serving as main force upholding and advancing the people's war. In various parts of the country, the peasants and indigenous peoples make up the majority of the people's army. Generations have served as commanders, cadres, fighters, and soldiers of the people's militias.

One of them is Mike. At a young age, he already knew about the New People's Army (NPA) through his grandfather's stories. He was already a teenager when he personally met the Red fighters.

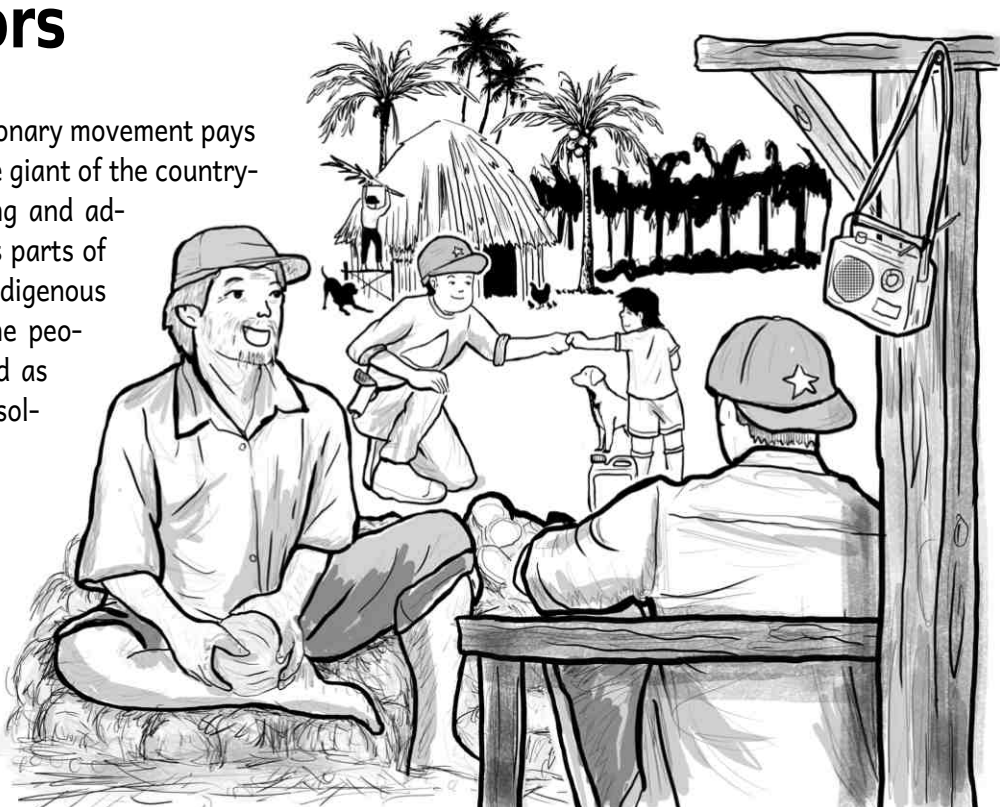
Not having gone through school, Mike was grateful for the NPA's literacy and numeracy lessons. After receiving political education, he invited his friends to discuss issues with comrades. He wanted to join, but was still below the minimum age.

The brutality of fascist soldiers was one experience he cannot forget. One afternoon, soldiers suddenly stopped him on his way home from the copra kiln. He was interrogated, threatened, and accused of carrying a gun.

He was let go only when a barangay official arrived and attested he was a civilian simply trying to earn a living. Mike never forgot the harassment he endured. He joined the NPA when he turned 18.

After Mike left the village, soldiers targeted his family. They confronted his mother Gina at their home, badgered and threatened her. While stepping back, Gina fell off a cliff and broke her pelvis, rendering her bedridden for several months until her eventual death. The perpetrators did not indemnify nor apologize for the injustice.

Not satisfied, they illegally arrested Mike's father Billy. He was betrayed by an acquaintance who



said he would take him to the hospital when he got sick. Instead, he was driven straight to the military camp. He was illegally detained, interrogated, and released only when a throng of villagers and relatives stormed the camp to demand his release.

"All brutalities inflicted by soldiers on my family seek to force my surrender and suppress the struggle of people in our community. However, these only give me more reason to persevere. As long as innocents people suffer state violence, the struggle becomes even more justified," Mike said.

Mike, now 34, works full time in a guerrilla front as a skilled and fully dedicated officer in charge of ordinance and logistics.

Jojo, 38, was also a peasant prior to becoming a Red fighter. He recalls his family having a small palay farm when he was still a child. But like many peasants, prohibitive production costs eventually led them deep into debt, and losing their farmland. Being eldest, he was forced to help support the family.

Jojo started working in the sugarcane farm at the age of eight. He

went to Manila and took on various odd jobs. At 18, he worked as a driver for a small company. The pay was low, with no benefits or tenure. He got no help paying back for his license when it was confiscated. Having lost his job, he went to Palawan and became a charcoal maker.

Jojo and his companions witnessed how the Ipilan Nickel Corporation destroyed the mountains at Brooke's Point. The company deforested the area which provides the charcoal makers with livelihood. The state deployed soldiers to guard the mine and harass them.

In his search for a new job, Jojo met Mang Jose, a small businessman and member of a revolutionary mass organization. He introduced Jojo to the NPA.

With uncertainty, Jojo went with the comrades. He was urged to stay for the studies and discussions alongside military training. Jojo quickly grasped the goals of the people's war through his studies. Most importantly, he found fellow toilers in the NPA who seek to pull out the root causes of poverty through armed struggle.

AB

Peasant protests highlight land grabbing and hunger

FARMERS AND RURAL women's groups held consecutive protests on October 15 and 16 to mark the International Rural Women's Day and World Food(less) Day.

Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women led women from Bulacan, Laguna and Cavite in a picket before the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to protest the lack of genuine agrarian reform in the country.

They highlighted several cases of land grabbing and conversion of agricultural land including seizures in the Araneta Estates in San Jose Del Monte City; Lupang Ramos in Dasmariñas, Cavite; Hacienda Luisita under TADECO, Aboitiz, and Ayala Land Inc.; lands in Nueva Ecija where CLOAs and CLTs were cancelled; 6,000 hectares of land taken over by oil palm plantations in Negros; and lands covered by state projects such as reclamation and Laguna Lake Road Network that will result in massive displacement of farmers.

Peasant women demanded the need for genuine land reform, fair farmgate prices for their produce, and access to food and land.

On the following day, October 16, women joined peasants and fisherfolk in a protest action before the Department of Agriculture (DA) to condemn the neoliberal and inutile government policies and programs that worsen hunger in the country. Farmers denounced the DA-supported importation policy which has destroyed local production.

The protests were held to commemorate the Peasant Month. In addition, peasant groups also held assemblies, study meetings and other activities in different parts of the country. They have also mounted projects like the "bagsakan" (farmers' markets) in Metro Manila and Cebu, which various organization take part in.



Hold Duterte accountable for war on drugs. Bayan Muna members protested before the Lower House on October 11, coinciding with the hearing on extrajudicial killings under the regime of former President Rodrigo Duterte. Along with the families of the "war on drugs" victims, they called for justice and accountability from Duterte and others involved in the mass killings.

CBA negotiation at Technol Eight. Since the last week of September, seven protest actions have been staged by the Technol Eight Philippines Union-OLALIA-Kilusang Mayo Uno to push for the continuation of negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA). The latest of these protests were held on October 16 and 17 at the factory in Biñan, Laguna.

Picket at Paperland. The Paperland workers' union condemned the company for the illegal shutdown and harassment of its leader Renato "Rey" Ayroso. The workers staged a picket in front of the factory in Quezon City on October 17 to protest union busting attempts and maneuvers to oust Ayroso. Paperland is a paper manufacturing company.

Residents barricade against demolition in Laguna. Residents of Barangay Nueva, San Pedro, Laguna, erected a barricade on the third week of October against threats of demolition of their homes by the Philippine National Railways (PNR) and the local government. The PNR failed to present documents for the demolition, and no plans for relocation of affected residents have been prepared by the San Pedro government.

Anti-mining protest held in Romblon. On September 22, over a thousand Sibuyanons united anew and gathered at an anti-mining protest in San Fernando, Sibuyan Island, Romblon. This is part of the ongoing opposition of the island's residents against the destructive mining of Altai Philippines Mining Corporation owned by the Gatchalian family.

Justice for Jennifer Laude! Youth groups held protests and activities on October 11 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the murder of Jennifer Laude by US Marine Lance Corporal Joseph Scott Pemberton. They held activities at the University of the Philippines (UP)-Diliman, in front of the Technological University of the Philippines, and at UP Mindanao. Various groups also marched to the Joint Base Lewis-McChord of the US military in Washington, US on October 12. They called for justice for Laude's death and demanded the US troops' expulsion from the Philippines.

Relatives of OFWs in Lebanon picket the DFA. Families of overseas Filipino workers in Lebanon, led by Migrante International, picketed before the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pasay City on October 10. They called on the agency to form a comprehensive plan addressing their appeal for the immediate rescue and assistance of Filipino migrants caught in the US-Israel aggression in Lebanon.

Metro Baguio pushes jeepney phaseout through route reduction

After forcing jeepney drivers and operators in Baguio City and nearby towns to consolidate their franchises, the local government is now taking away their routes to aggressively push the jeepney phaseout.

Piston local chapter reports that 96% of licensed jeepneys have already consolidated under threats of individual franchises cancellation from the LTRFB-Cordillera Autonomous Region.

"Many were pressured and forced to comply with the process," Piston Metro Baguio president Carlito Wayas said. City drivers have long questioned the so-called modernization's true intention.

The jeepney phaseout's goal became clear when the city released Ordinance No. 22 or the Route Rationalization Plan, which aims to reduce the number of routes for operating jeepneys, even for those who consolidated. From 46, only 31 routes remain. Of these, 29 are "rationalized" or merged routes, while

two are new routes that will pass through tourist areas.

As a result, the number of operating jeepneys will drop from 2,164 units to 1,544, depriving over 2,000 drivers and their families of livelihood. Commuters ask why jeepneys are reduced by as much as 620 units amid the increasing demand for public transportation.

There is currently only one jeepney for every 169 passengers per day. The ordinance will make it one jeepney for every 237 passengers. "This shortage will worsen with the growing Baguio population, both residents and visitors," they said.

This will also result in confusion for commuters and chaos for drivers with overlapping routes. In addition to drivers and operators, this will



also be detrimental to canteens, vulcanizing shops, and dispatchers relying on jeepney operations.

In September, drivers and operators under the Baguio-Benguet Movement Against Jeepney Phaseout (BBMAJPO) and Piston Metro Baguio submitted their opposition to the route changes. They denounced the ordinance's release without consultation. Drivers are disappointed how local government officials have ignored their grievance. Officials even rejected the documents containing their position against the route reduction. AB

NPA-Northern Negros harass 79th IB troopers

NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA)-Northern Negros (Roselyn Jean Pelle Command) assaulted troopers of the 79th Infantry Battalion operating in Sitio Agtatahor 1, Barangay Macasilao, Calatrava, Negros Occidental on October 6. The harassment operation was carried out at 9:00 a.m. while the soldiers were preparing breakfast.

The unit reported how they stealthily approached the 79th IB's camp using effective camouflaging. The 79th IB troopers are part of a large-scale focused military operation in the area. This is combined with a Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP), which is an element in the military's psywar operation.

The combat operation covered at least 10 barangays in Calatrava. These include Macasilao, Hilub-ang, Hinub-angan, Lagaan, Minautok, Cambayobo, Marcelo, Minapasok, Malatas, and Pantao.

NDFP honors Dante Simbulan, 94

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC Front of the Philippines (NDFP) recognized and honored Dante C. Simbulan as a true patriot and partisan of the Filipino people's revolution. Simbulan passed away on October 12 in Fairfax County, Virginia at the age of 94.

Simbulan was a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1952. He served as a captain in the Philippine Army and fought against the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB). His exposure to social injustices and military repression awakened his revolutionary spirit.

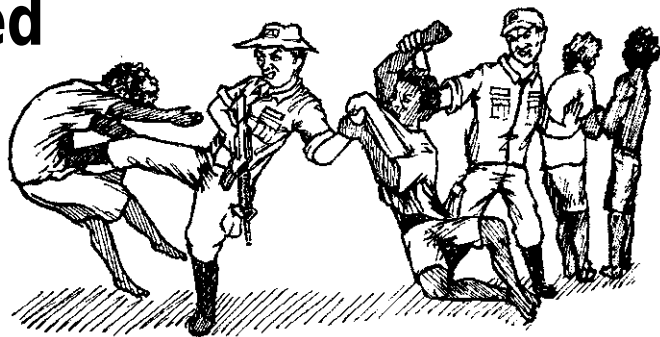
He became an instructor at the PMA and had the distinction of inviting Jose Maria Sison to give a lecture in 1966 on the mercenary tradition of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Some of his student soldiers later became revolutionaries, including Lt. Crispin Tagamolila and Lt. Victor Corpuz. Tagamolila was martyred as a Red warrior, while Corpuz defected and returned to the AFP in 1986.

For siding with the Filipino people, Simbulan was imprisoned from 1974 to 1977. He was exiled to the US in 1980 and continued his struggle there. He helped organize fellow Filipinos and was instrumental in establishing the Malaya Movement.

"He was a true patriot, a soldier of the people, and a revolutionary whose heart was dedicated to the pursuit of justice and freedom for the Philippines," the NDFP said.

Attacks on farmers and indigenous peoples continue unabated

Even amid observation of farmers and indigenous peoples' month, their rights continue to be violated by the military and police. In October, 32 individuals were illegally arrested, including at least 29 Mangyan, two NDFP peace consultants and a farmer from Negros. An organizer was also abducted and presented as a "surrenderee."



In Occidental Mindoro, police and military forces arrested 29 Mangyan Iraya residents of Hacienda Almeda in Abra de Ilog last October 18, including 17 elderly and 12 minors. Colluding with Pieceland Corporation, the Almeda family has been trying to seize the hacienda. This is not the first time that the indigenous people are violently being driven away from their land.

In Davao del Norte, joint police and AFP forces arrested Porferio Tuna, a National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) peace consultant, on October 2 in Barangay Mankilam, Tagum City. His arrest violates the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees between the Philippine government and the NDFP, which secures the safety of all parties involved in the peace talks.

In Ilocos Norte, state forces arrested Cordillera People's Democratic Front spokesperson and NDFP

peace consultant Simeon "Ka Filiw" Naogsan on October 21. Naogsan was brought to the Baccara Municipal Police Station and later transferred to an undisclosed location.

In Escalante City, Negros Occidental, the 79th IB arrested peasant leader Jose Puancing on October 7. The arrest was based on claims that arms and explosives were seized by the PNP and 79th IB during execution of a search warrant way back in 2019. The warrant was among the defective orders issued by Judge Cecilyn Burgos-Villavert.

In Laguna, the AFP's 203rd IBde abducted peasant organizer Fhobie Matias of the Katipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid sa Timog Katagalugan, on September 28 in Calamba City. Matias was meeting with Laguna farmers when abducted. After nearly two weeks, the 203rd IBde announced that they have taken custody of Matias, claiming that she had surrendered to

them.

"Terrorism" charges. Charges of "terrorism financing" have been filed against indigenous small business owner Marcylyn Pilala, a resident of Barangay Gueday, Besao, Mountain Province. Pilala, a store owner, is being charged for providing food, medicine, and other supplies to the New People's Army. A similar case was filed against Alaiza Lemita, sister of an activist killed by the military during the March 7, 2021 Bloody Sunday.

Lenville Salvador, former chairperson of the development organization Ilocos Center for Research, Empowerment and Development, was also charged with "terrorism financing."

Harassment. In Barangay Mapalacsiao, Tarlac City, four suspected military agents stormed the residence of Francisco Dizon, chairperson of the Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang Bukid sa Asyenda Luisita, on October 18.

Police and the 31st MIB also blocked one of the vehicles used by farmers from Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac City on October 18. The farmers were on their way to a gathering to commemorate the national peasant month.

Leaders of mass organization, Mimi Doringo, Manibela's Mar Valbuena and Regie Manlapig, Piston's Mody Floranda and Ruben Baylon, were charged with violating BP 880 or Public Assembly for organizing a strike and protest. They have been ordered to appear in court on November 14.

Groups condemn dismissal of 7th case against Marcos ill-gotten wealth

SINCE FERDINAND MARCOS Jr took power, seven cases related to the recovery of the Marcos family's ill-gotten wealth have been dismissed. The Marcoses have reclaimed an estimated ₱2.3 billion worth of ill-gotten wealth linked to these cases. This has drawn condemnation by martial law victims and democratic organizations.

The latest case which the Marcoses won is related to ₱276 million worth of land and property in the Philippines and the US. The Sandiganbayan dismissed the case on October 4 due to its prolonged delay in court. The prosecution failed to pursue the case over the past 37 years.

A total of 28 criminal cases and 43 civil and forfeiture cases were filed against the Marcoses in the Sandiganbayan from 1986 to 1995.

Groups launch campaign against dynasties, corrupt and violent elections

In preparation for the 2025 elections, democratic organizations and parties have initiated separate campaigns against political dynasties, and against corrupt and violent elections. These aim to mobilize the broadest number of people to vigilantly protect their right to vote.

Pledge against dynasties

On October 14, senatorial candidates and party representatives under the Makabayan Coalition signed a pledge against Philippine political dynasties, which represent the worst bureaucrat capitalist, landlord, and warlord interests in the country. They staged a symbolic signing in Quezon City.

Makabayan expressed serious concern over the prevalence of political dynasties in the 2025 elections. "Families, siblings, parents, entire clans, are competing for elective positions and to concentrate power in the hands of a few families," it said. These dynasties are undermining the participation and election of ordinary citizens.

A study by professors from the Ateneo School of Government in 2019 found that the percentage of "fat" dynasties, or those with multiple family members in power, increased from 19% in 1977 to 29% in 2017. The study said that in 2001, there were 1,303 political families with two members in power, 257 with three members, and 157 with four or more. This further increased in 2019 to 1,548 with two members, 339 with three, and 217 with four or more.

Dynasties have also corrupted the party-list system, which was established by the reactionary constitution to give space to marginalized sectors. A study by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism in May 2022 found that at least 70 of

the 177 party-list groups that participated in the previous election had nominees linked to dynasties and political families.

Currently, at least 11 members of the Marcos-Romualdez family are in power. No fewer than four are from the Duterte dynasty. In the Senate, six of the 24 seats are held by politicians from three "fat" dynasties.

In the upcoming 2025 elections, if the political dynasties succeed, they will occupy nine of the 24 Senate seats (more than a third). Among those who may take office are three Tulfos, two Villars, two Cayetanos, and the two Estrada/

Ejercito.

Makabayan opposes this practice. The concentration of power in the hands of a few fosters corruption, it said. The musical chairs game among family members in power serves their narrow interests. "Public service is not a family business," it said.

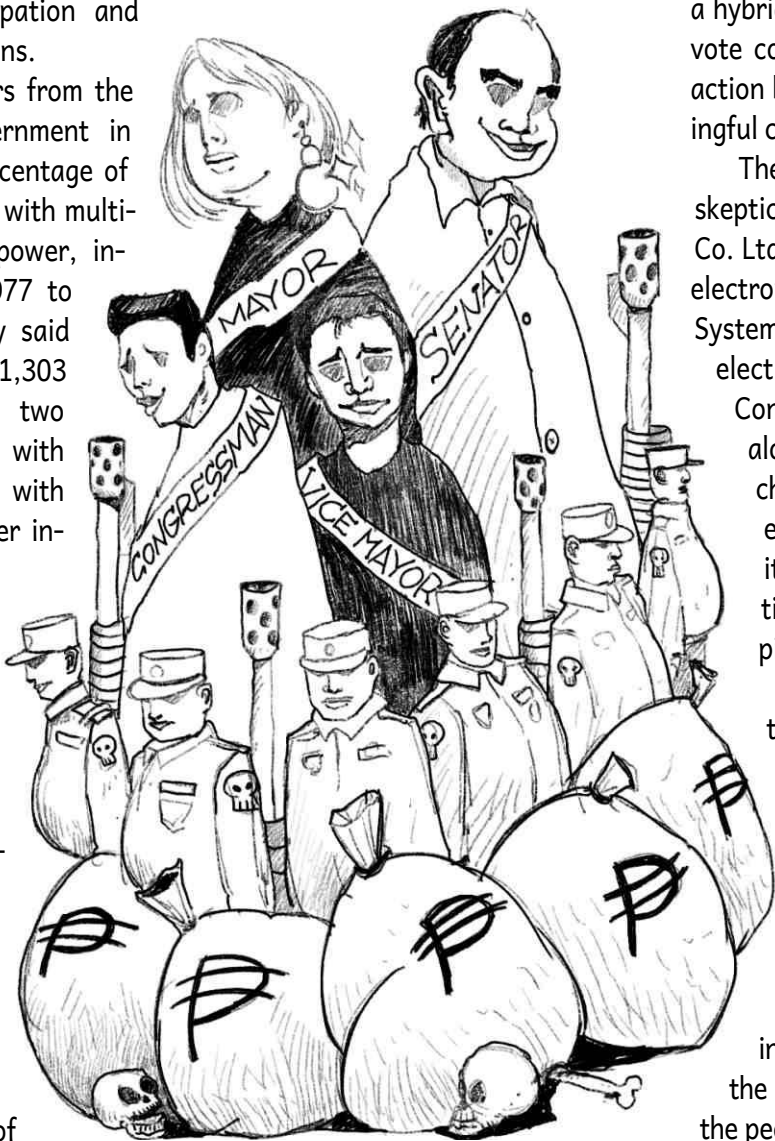
Corrupt and violent elections

Kontra Daya, on the other hand, is strengthening efforts for a clean, peaceful, and democratic election amid a corrupt, violent, and elite-controlled election system and fraud in machine-based voting. On September 30, its members marched in Intramuros, Manila after holding an assembly.

Kontra Daya is pushing for the abolition of the current automated election system and replacing it with a hybrid system to allow guarding of vote counting. It believes collective action by Filipinos can lead to meaningful change.

The group has long expressed skepticism about the Miru Systems Co. Ltd., which won the contract for electronic voting machines. Miru Systems is notorious for widespread election fraud and failures in Iraq, Congo, and Argentina. In Congo alone, up to 65% of its machines reportedly failed on election day. Kontra Daya said it is likely that a similar situation will happen in the Philippines.

The biggest problem is still the lack of transparency in vote counting, which will be conducted exclusively by machines rather than by people, according to the group. It vows to expose and challenge the current corrupt election system. Voting is a basic human right and the state should heed the voice of the people, the group said.



44.1%

of Filipinos are food insecure from 2021 to 2023. The Philippines ranks third in Southeast Asia after Timor Leste and Cambodia with the highest rates of food insecurity.

Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization



400,000

children have been driven away from their homes due to Zionist forces' bombing and attacks in Lebanon.

800

₱550.19
BILLION

spent by Filipinos from their own pockets for health services in 2023, for an average of ₱11,083 per person. This is way higher than the ₱151.51 billion budget of the Philhealth, which represents only 7.05% of the total health expenditure for the same period.

5.63
million

senior citizens (60 years and older) in the Philippines continue to toil due to inadequate pensions.

This figure is 50% higher compared to the 3.63 million seniors who were still working in 2019.



airport workers lost their jobs after San Miguel Corporation took over the operations of NAIA. The layoffs occurred alongside an increase in airport service fees.

4.6M
TONS

of rice are projected to be imported by the Philippines this year, representing an 84% increase from the 2.5MMT imported in 2020, underscoring the country's further dependence on rice imports.

Source: US Department of Agriculture

₱460
BILLION

has been stolen from Filipinos by scammers over the past 12 months (or an average of ₱16,000 per person). Almost 40% of Filipinos have been scammed, with only 3% managing to recover their losses.

Most scams or 85% were conducted via text messages, highlighting the utter failure of the SIM registration law.

Source: Global Anti-Scam Alliance

\$100 TRILLION

is the projected global debt by the end of 2024, equivalent to 93% of global GDP. The largest debtors are the US and China. The figure could rise to 115% of global GDP within the next three years.

Source: International Monetary Fund



Government housing is a business to make money out of the poor

The Pambansang Pabahay Para sa Pilipino Housing (4PH) project started in 2022 by the Marcos regime is bogus and anti-poor in essence. It insidiously aims to drive the poor from their communities through promises of relocation, and make profit from them through high amortization fees.

In partnership with private developers, the program aims to construct 1 million houses annually for six years to address the estimated 6.5 million housing shortage, with homeless families, mostly in Metro Manila, comprising over half or 3.7 million. (This target is ambitious, considering the state has built only around 300,000 houses annually in previous years.)

An estimated ₱1 trillion per year is needed to achieve the regime's annual target. The houses it plans to build will have a 25-square meter floor area and a pricetag of ₱1 million. However, rather than allocating public funds, the regime plans to shift the cost to private companies.

The state has only provided ₱36 billion "interest subsidy" to cover 5% to 6% of the annual interest on beneficiaries' amortization. Even with the state covering the interest, the poor will still have to pay ₱3,000 per month for 30 years. The developer will earn a total of ₱2.1 million, including a 6% annual interest, twice the original price of each unit.

This is way too prohibitive for families below the poverty line, which is set at ₱12,000 per month. They struggle to pay for housing costs even at the usual range of ₱900 to ₱2,000 monthly.

Another stupid plan of the 4PH schme is the plan to erect mid-rise building in urban poor communities

which the poor can ill-afford. They have little chance of making regular payments on amortizations which are intentionally set high beyond their reach. This will surely result in the their displacement and eventual eviction.

At its core, the 4PH is a profit-making scheme for private housing developers. Because this is funded by private developers and banks, they are set to manage and stand to benefit from it. State agencies, as well as local governments, will end up being agents of developers and banks.

Similar to previous anti-poor solutions, the 4PH includes relocating the poor to "mega-townships" in Nueva Ecija and Laguna. The regime touts this as "rural development" under its grand infrastructure project, Build Better More.

Urban poor groups said a real housing program should be funded and managed by the state, not by private real estate companies. They say subsidizing amortization interests is not enough.

The urban poor demand building public housing near workplaces and public services to ensure sustainability. Therefore, the poor should be granted priority access to land where their houses are currently standing through in-city and onsite relocation.

Most importantly, the root causes of poverty should be addressed not only in urban areas but also in rural areas. The rising number of homeless people in large cities is due to the overflow of unemployed people from rural areas who are forced to move to cities to seek work. They are forced to live in crowded communities near commercial centers and industrial enclaves because of their low wages and income, lack of jobs, unemployment, and high prices of commodities and services, including housing.



US-Israel escalates armed conflict in Middle East

On October 15, the US announced that it would send Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) systems and 100 American soldiers to Israel, supposedly to prepare for a potential attack from Iran. This comes as US President Joseph Biden hypocritically speaks about "de-escalation" or reducing tensions in the region, resulting from Israel's aggression in Lebanon and its ongoing genocide in Gaza.

The US supplied Israel with arms amid increasingly heinous war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, the West Bank, and Lebanon. Its most recent atrocities include the bombing of a refugee tent city in Deir al al Bahar in central Gaza Strip on October 14. At least four patients were burned alive after they were forced to transfer to the area from a nearby hospital which Israel had previously bombed. Hours earlier, Israel bombed a school sheltering refugees in northern Gaza, killing 22 people, 15 of whom were children. In Jaballah, Israel shelled Palestinians queuing for flour aid, killing 10 people.

Israel has already killed 42,603 people in Gaza, 700 in the West Bank, and 2,309 in Lebanon. In Lebanon, one of its most serious crimes was the bombing of 80 homes in Beirut on September 27, which killed Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah. Six buildings were destroyed, and 33 other people were killed. The wave of bombings displaced 1 million people, including 400,000 children. On October 1, Israeli troops invaded the southern part of Lebanon, where they met resistance from Hezbollah fighters. Israeli troops repeatedly and deliberately attacked the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

(UNIFIL) camp, among others. Israel uses banned cluster bombs and white phosphorus that results in extensive and brutal damage on civilians.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah forces are intensifying their defense of their sovereignty and people. Hundreds of its fighters are confronting 70,000 Israeli troops, tanks, and aerial bombers that Israel used in an attempt to invade southern Lebanon starting last September 30. Hezbollah has inflicted heavy casualties against the advancing troops, as well as on Israeli military camps and positions in various parts of Israel. Like the Palestinian fighters in Palestine, Hezbollah is prepared for a long and bloody war of attrition against the US-Israeli occupation forces.

A Lebanese military report said that since October 1, at least seven Israeli tanks that attempted to cross into the country were blown up. Fifty-five Israeli troops were killed, and more than 500 were injured. Two Hermes 450 drones were also struck while flying towards Lebanon.

Every day and almost hourly, the Hezbollah is launching waves of rockets targeting Israeli military camps and positions to disable the so-called Iron Dome, Israel's missile defense system that is fully funded by the US. Many of Hezbollah's rockets struck their targets. On October 13, a drone strike successfully hit a military camp in Haifa, killing four Israeli soldiers and injuring 67. These are similar to the Iraqi missile attacks on October 1 that hit the Mossad headquarters in the center of Tel Aviv. Unlike Israel, Lebanon and Iran focus their strikes only on legitimate military targets.

