

EDITORIAL

Hold the Dutertes accountable and resist the anti-people Marcos regime

Against the Filipino people's demand for justice, Marcos is now dragging his feet in pushing for the impeachment of Vice President Sara Duterte, and in arresting former President Rodrigo Duterte to make him face the International Criminal Court. This is despite the overwhelming evidence of Sara's grave corruption and Rodrigo's crimes against humanity.

Marcos is acquiescing to the advice of his imperialist US masters to deescalate confrontation with the Dutertes to avoid alarming foreign monopoly capitalist investors in the country. Instead of heeding the people's cry for justice, Marcos is prioritizing the consolidation of his power to gradually strip the Dutertes of their power and influence. These moves include the "loyalty check" and reshuffling of AFP and PNP officers and the reorganization of the National Security Council.

Marcos' ultimate goal is to tighten his control over political power to protect his own bureaucrat-capitalist interests. One of Marcos' main concerns now is the upcoming May elections. He is using the state's full force and public funds to ensure that his stooges control the Senate, Congress, and local governments. Marcos' consolidation of power is being used against the people and against his political rivals.

In an attempt to drown out the people's cry for justice and intimidate the congressmen and groups pushing for impeachment, pro-Duterte leaders of the Iglesia ni Cristo spent hundreds of millions of pesos to its million members in rallies last week. They used the decep-

tive theme of "unity and peace" to drown the people's demand for justice and accountability for the hated Duterte father and daughter.

More than a month has passed since three impeachment cases were filed in Congress. However, on instructions of Marcos, who said that

impeachment is a "waste of time" and "untimely," not one of the three has been processed. Some say that Marcos is waiting to secure a Senate majority to ensure that Sara Duterte will be convicted. In truth, Marcos is turning a deaf ear to the people's cry and is dismissing and discrediting the initiatives of various democratic sectors to hold Sara Duterte and her father Rodrigo accountable.

Marcos' delay in the impeachment case against Sara Duterte is



further fueling the anger of the Filipino people. They can no longer bear to see how the vice president, who is behind the anomalous use of hundreds of millions of pesos in public funds, continue to flaunt herself. And they cannot bear to see the billions of pesos in the reactionary government's budget, which comes from the taxes paid by ordinary people, being pocketed by corrupt government officials, led by the bureaucrat-capitalist Marcos.

The Filipino people's anger is deepening in the face of the worsening economic crisis, particularly the successive price increases of food, oil, and other commodities in the first weeks of 2025. Marcos continues to turn a deaf ear to the cry of workers and ordinary employees to increase their wages and salaries, which are insufficient to cover costs for decent living.

The Marcos regime has no solution to the problem of widespread unemployment, and is leaving the people to fend for themselves. Worse, millions of farmers, fishermen, jeepney drivers, and other sectors are being denied their sources of income in the face of the attempts

of the bourgeois-comprador and their foreign company and bank allies to grab their land and livelihood.

In the face of the people's widespread suffering and economic hardships, the Marcos regime's response is to intensify repression in an attempt to silence their grievances. The number of cases of surveillance, harassment of organizations, filing of trumped-up charges, arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings against ordinary people organizing to fight for their interests and welfare is rising. Marcos is using the "anti-terrorism"

laws to suppress the people's rights. The situation is worse in the countryside, where martial law is being enforced in thousands of barangays controlled and dominated by fascist soldiers.

To advance the welfare and rights of the Filipino people, they must unite and give a powerful form to their anger against the crimes and transgressions of the Dutertes, and against the continuing bureaucrat-capitalist and fascist rule under Marcos. The broad united front must be strengthened to gather all sectors, organizations, and individuals in the call to hold the Dutertes

accountable. Various forms of alliances and organizations, formal or informal, must be formed to encourage the broadest masses to participate in various forms of action and expression of grievances.



The democratic mass movement must be advanced to hold the Dutertes accountable and strengthen the fight against the Marcoses and the entire bureaucrat-capitalist system. The situation is ever favorable for arousing the masses and rapidly expanding their organized ranks. The ground is fertile for multiply-

ing the number of unions and mass organizations in both urban and rural areas.

Seize the favorable situation to carry forward and achieve in the economic and political struggles of the masses. These must be linked to the fight against the US-Marcos regime and the advancement of the national-democratic movement.

The cadres and members of the Party must act decisively and firmly serve as the backbone of the mass struggles. They serve to enlighten and guide the masses in forging ahead on the difficult path of struggle. Underground mass organizations that directly support advancing the armed struggle must be formed, and the masses must be encouraged to join the New People's Army.



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Revolutionary policy during reactionary elections

The reactionary election period in the country officially began on January 12. Candidates will compete and lock on each other's horns to vie for at least 18,000 government positions and exploit the bureaucrat-capitalist system. Big warlords and political dynasties will engage in confrontations and trample on the welfare of the people. They have their armed goons, police and military forces at their disposal.

Amid all this, the revolutionary movement will be strictly enforcing standing policies during the reactionary elections within their areas of operation. In line with the Party's orders, the New People's Army (NPA) will ensure the protection of the welfare, rights and interests of the people.

All candidates vying for seats in the reactionary government are reminded that these policies will be strictly enforced by the NPA within its revolutionary areas. Candidates and their supporters will be allowed to campaign in accordance with established guidelines.

Politicians are prohibited from bringing armed goons and police and military escorts that are used to terrorize the people. Other forms of coercion, use of armed violence will



not be tolerated, especially by bureaucrat capitalists who use public funds against the people. The NPA has standing orders to seize the weapons of candidates and their armed goons. If necessary, it will be implemented through checkpoints and other means.

The NPA must target AFP and PNP units, as well as reactionary politicians' armed goons, who will use the election campaign on guerrilla fronts as cover for surveillance operations against the Party, the NPA, the democratic people's government and the revolutionary masses.

Before campaigning in revolutionary areas, politicians are required to inform and communicate with local NPA units. This coordination is important to avoid any incident, including confrontations between armed escorts of opposing politicians.

It is certain that the AFP will take advantage of the reactionary election to intensify its combat operations, political repression and control of rural barangays within the framework of its counterinsurgency war. On the other hand, this will also

overstretch the AFP and PNP which will need to spread its units to different towns considered "red, orange and yellow-risk" based on the intensity of conflict between local politicians, as well as the "presence" of the NPA. AFP combat units are legitimate NPA targets.

The Party strongly urges candidates to refuse offers of armed security by the AFP, as these are only being used by the military to carry out political repression. Often, bureaucrats favored by the military are complicit in the fascist campaign of repression in the countryside. Their operations aim to suppress people's resistance and protect the interests of large landlords, large enterprises and foreign mining and plantation companies.

Despite repeatedly declaring that the NPA now has only a single "weak guerrilla front", the Philippine Army announced that they "remain alert and will still conduct operations for internal security" to ensure "peace and order" of the election. These operations institutionalize the "guns, goons and gold" tactics that characterize past reactionary elections.



Regional committees, determined to advance along the path of the rectification movement

Regional committees of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) from different parts of the country clearly responded to the Central Committee's call for a rectification movement. The leading committees have expressed their determined and continuous efforts to rectify the weaknesses and errors they made in recent years to decisively advance in various areas of work in their respective areas of operation.

Southern Tagalog victories

"The achievements of the current rectification movement in the region should be celebrated," the Southern Tagalog committee secretariat stated. The committee shared that the Party in the region affirmed, held and implemented its duties in the rectification movement. These include completing the party course campaign for nearly five thousand Party members, in both rural and urban areas.

It said most of the Party committees have successfully summed-up their respective practice over the past five years. "These summings up further deepened understanding of the previously identified issues from the authorized assessments at the regional committee level," the Secretariat said.

The summings up in subregions/provinces and fronts from 2019 to 2022 also helped to more sharply pinpoint specific forms of empiricism from the analyzed and identified errors and weaknesses. The

secretariat added, "We pinpointed the superficial, external and one-sided grasp of conditions and things; the erroneously static view applied to things and acquired data rendered it obsolete and inapplicable to the objective conditions affecting developing policy plans."

The Secretariat declared "it is determined to further deepen and expand and achieve the current rectification movement's success." However, it also declared that while it achieved important advances, it has yet to attain a decisive turning point in mitigating the damages and regressions in revolutionary work and forces in the region's rural and urban areas while some parts continue to regress.

Achievements in Negros Island

The Negros Island Regional Committee continues to uphold the Central Committee's call for a rectification movement. In the past year, the Party and its members reportedly reviewed its assessment of

the revolutionary struggle on the island spanning 22 years from the middle part of the 1990s. They shared how the Committee used this as starting point for a 5-year summing up of the years 2017-2022.

"We have accumulated golden lessons as solid basis for formulating the overall plan and direction that will further strengthen the foundation of our Party," the committee stated regarding the summing up, referring to their positive experience of collectively assessing each committee's activities up to the level of the guerrilla front.

The committee directed the campaign of continuing study of the documents of the Central Committee. This includes the three-level Party course conducted in various organs and mass membership based on the region's education plan. New instructors and new Party members emerged among them.

They further share that while studying these theoretical works, the collective study of the Party's theoretical journal Revolution, and Central Committee memoranda helped the region overcome erroneous practices and ideas. They said that Hiligaynon translations of the documents, courses and reading materials greatly helped members, especially those from the basic class, to better understand.

Amid the US-Marcos regime's focused military operations, the Party and the people's army in the region prevailed with the help of the rectification movement. It was able to expand the five guerrilla fronts' area of operations on the island compared to last year. "Amid sacrifices and hardships in advancing the armed revolution, the 'trend' of regression was prevented. Instead, the

"Regional..." continue on page 5



Harassment against Makabayan Coalition candidates intensify

WITH THE APPROACHING mid-term elections, candidates and parties under the Makabayan Coalition face intensifying attacks and repression of the Marcos regime and its armed forces.

On January 15, Makabayan senatorial candidates appeared before the Office of the City Prosecutor of Manila to file a counter-affidavit against police charges of illegal assembly or violation of the Public Assembly Act or Batas Pambansa 880. This is related to the protest action on November 30, 2024, Bonifacio Day, in Mendiola in Manila.

Ten of the coalition's 11 candidates were implicated in the case, along with a Bayan Muna Party-list nominee, leaders of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers and the Alliance of Health Workers. Similar charges were filed earlier against KMU Chairperson Elmer "Ka Bong" Labog and Bayan Muna member Nilo Mortifero, who was illegally arrested by police on the day of the protest.

On January 10, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) issued a memorandum requiring "enhanced security measures" over prisoners being linked to the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) or its allies. It specifically ordered monitoring of senatorial candidate ACT Teacher's Rep. France Castro for supposed frequent jail visits. Castro is being accused of ordering political prisoners to collect funds from "drug traffickers" in jail. She has been receiving increasing threats to her life.

Meanwhile, the National Task Force-Elcac issued statements of Red-tagging and spreading falsehood against Makabayan, its parties and candidates nearly every day.

Armas publishes Ulos 2024

THE ARTISTA AT Manunulat ng Sambayanan (Armas) released the 2024 edition of the cultural journal Ulos on January 13, the day of the group's 38th anniversary. This Ulos issue revolved around the theme of the continuous advancement of the national-democratic revolution and the efforts of the Party, army and revolutionary masses in the framework of the rectification movement.



The issue contains essays, poems, stories, songs, drawings and other works of art that describe the sacrifices and sorrows of the life-and-death resistance of the revolutionaries. They illustrate the revolutionary forces' iron unity with the masses and resolute mass work to recover neglected areas and rise.

The issue of Ulos 2024 has 150 pages containing works written in Filipino, English, Iloko, Bisaya and Hiligaynon.

A copy of Ulos 2024 can be obtained at philippinerevolution.nu or requested via e-mail at ulos@ndfp.org. Watch out for the upcoming Armas and Ulos contribution guidelines for this year's next edition.

CPP 56th anniversary celebrated in South Quezon Bondoc Peninsula

THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA)-Quezon (Apolonio Mendoza Command) conducted a simple, but significant celebration of the 56th anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines. They launched a "kapehan" style (tete-a-tete over coffee) commemoration in a South Quezon-Bondoc Peninsula (SQBP) front.

They honored the past year's Quezon martyrs in the program. Visiting attendees from allied organizations of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) such as Kabataang Makabayan and Artista at Manunulat para sa Sambayanan expressed their solidarity.

Prior to the kapehan, the Red Army collectively read and studied the Central Committee's statement and the Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee Secretariat's message on the Party's anniversary. The statements and messages affirmed the call to Rectify and Advance! mirroring the theme of the kapehan.

The celebration included simple food, sharing of past year's experiences, embroidery, drawing, singing, and readings from some Marxist-Leninist-Maoist books.

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NPA grew this year compared to last year," the committee said.

The Red fighters gained renewed strength with confidence due to the consolidation they reached and the politico-military exercises. The Red army launched at least 36 tactical offensives in the past year. It confiscated 17 weapons, ammunition and other military equipment to arm new NPA recruits. This was the NPA's response to the call for justice for so many victims of human rights violations perpetrated by the military and police.

AB

High prices of rice and other goods deliver blows to the Filipino people

Instead of ₱20 per kilo rice, Filipinos were greeted by ₱20 per piece of tomato at the start of 2025. Before the end of January, people will also bear 10% increases in the prices of 60 basic products, up to ₱2.70/liter in petroleum products, and ₱15 per trip in the LRT. These additional burdens come on top of previously announced electricity and water price increases and deductions from the salaries of SSS or Social Security System members. (See the related article *"The US-Marcos regime brings catastrophic damage to the people," Ang Bayan, January 7, 2025*).

Worse than being inutile, the Marcos regime itself is responsible for the continuous increase in utility charges and price of goods, especially rice, which aggravate the Filipinos' quality of life. Instead of boosting and supporting local rice production, it further allowed expensive imported rice to flood the local market. The policy of reducing tariffs on imported rice implemented in favor of large importers and rice smugglers is an utter failure.

Department of Agriculture officials themselves admitted in congressional hearings in December 2024 and this January how tariff reductions were ineffective in lowering rice prices. They said, the "landed cost" of imported rice decreased by up to ₱8 but the market price of imported rice remains over ₱50. Hoarding is widespread keeping prices high. As of December 2024, the average price per kilogram of well-milled rice is ₱54.97. This is 23.3% or ₱10 higher than ₱44.54 per kilogram in December 2023. Conversely, farmgate prices of local rice dropped by up to ₱10 per kilo during the same period.

The relentless increase in the price of food and other goods depressed the real value of the peso. As of 2024, the true value of one hundred pesos is only ₱79. Commodities worth ₱100 in 2018 now cost ₱121.

A third of the expenses of Fil-

ipino families go to food. Thus, the rate of inflation is actually higher among the poorest families. Any increase in prices, no matter how small, will steeply pull down their ability to buy and meet their basic needs.

Consecutive catastrophes

The impact of high commodity prices was further aggravated by the devastation caused by successive storms and the regime's failure to meet the needs of disaster victims. The burden of imports was further exacerbated with the start of the cycle of one of the most intense El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) since mid-2023. In the first half of 2024, the El Niño tail end hit resulting in a severe drought in 12 provinces, damaging the livelihoods of more than 300,000 farmers in 17 provinces and destroying crops worth ₱15.3 billion.

The drought was followed by heavy rains, typhoons and the shearline (collision of hot and cold winds) rains which brought floods, landslides and swept away substandard bridges, roads and buildings. Eighteen typhoons passed through the country in 2024. Six consecutive typhoons struck on October 27, 2024-November 18, 2024, damaging property and livelihoods of 15 million people in 17 regions, the highest and most severe in Bicol, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon and Ilocos. These six storms damaged up to ₱21 billion in agriculture and infrastructure. The height of the typhoons forced up to 2.9 million people to evacuate.

According to the Pagasa agency, the onset of the La Niña phenomenon, which is the flip-side of ENSO, will bring 6-8 typhoons in the first half of 2025. La Niña results from abnormally cold ocean temperatures in the Pacific, which generates majority of bad weather.

Just this January, continuous rain and strong winds flooded many towns and farms in Eastern Visayas, Bicol and Davao. Like the millions devastated, many of them receive no help from the reactionary government to recover from the disaster. **AB**



₱22.6 B

in disaster funds the NDRRMC spent in 2024 for relief and rehabilitation, most of which (₱12.09 billion or 53%) went to the DPWH.

The DSWD received only ₱8.135 billion, while the DA and housing agency received only ₱500 million and ₱374.970 million, respectively.

₱129.39 M

damages to farms caused by the eruption and continuous rumbling of the **Kanlaon Volcano** on Negros island. It affected 1,431 farmers.



18,280

positions in the senate, congress and local governments are up for grabs in the May 2025 election.

₱1 billion

reportedly spent on advertisements separately by each of 2 senatorial candidates (**Marcos, Villar**) in January-September 2024 even before election campaigns began.

₱9.5 B

insertions by congressmen in the DSWD's AICS budget, an **AKAP**-like aid program, which increased its budget to ₱44.744 billion. Like AKAP, it can be distributed during elections.

25%

increase in the wealth of the three richest Filipinos (**Enrique Razon, Manuel Villar, Ramon Ang**), from ₱947.3 billion in 2023 to ₱1.5 trillion in 2024. These three own water, electricity and energy companies that raised charges in 2024.

6 MILLION

printed ballots, worth **₱150 million**

had to be destroyed and reprinted by the Comelec after the Supreme Court ordered it to restore the names of some candidates it dropped.



38,000

of 89,000 hectares of land in Mindanao for banana exports were rendered barren due to contamination with Banana Fusarium Wilt Tropical Race 4 or TR4. It is unhospitable as well to other food crops.

Deliberate killings, illegal arrests and beatings, recorded in Negros Island

Units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) continue to unleash military violence in Negros Island. In the first weeks of January alone, the butchers already committed extra-judicial killings, illegal arrests and other human rights violations.

Murder. Soldiers of the 15th IB deliberately killed Red fighter Rodney Lumanog (Ka Wanny) of the New People's Army (NPA)-Southwest Negros (Armando Sumayang Jr Command) on January 10 in Sitio Cambogui-ot, Barangay Camindangan, Sipalay City, Negros Occidental. According to the NPA unit, Ka Wanny was captured alive following an armed conflict in the area.

Reports indicate that he was tortured and killed by soldiers. Ka Wanny had an operation and stainless steel implants for his leg disability in the 1990s.

Arrests. In Sitio Palosais, Barangay Mahalang, the 94th IB arrested a person named Dado Sanchez on January 14. Residents said the victim went to his charcoal kiln and never returned. Sanchez was said have been forced by soldiers to guide them in their combat operation.

In Sitio Nahulop, Barangay San Antonio, soldiers arrested Aira Gonzales and Alfredo Hilado on January 15. Gonzales' husband, Joseph, and his accompanying neighbor were beaten. A .45-caliber pistol, command-detonated explosives, and documents were allegedly confiscated from them. On the same day, 94th IB soldiers illegally confiscated the cellphones of the residents of Sitio Nahulop.

Threats. On January 3, soldiers of the 94th IB threatened to shoot the Tasi couple and their neighbors in Sitio Kambudlis, Barangay Mahalang.

Repression. Two United Methodist Church (UMC) officials and a driver were charged with "terrorism financing". State forces accuse Rev. Julius Neri Camanong and Rev. Joel Ordaneza of UMC in Zamboanga Sibugay, and driver Romeo A. Russell of providing financial assistance to "terrorists."



The case is related to the pastors granting sanctuary to the oppressed human rights defenders in January 2024 in Zamboanga Sibugay. The police used the narrative of former activist now state agent Nelson Bautista Jr as basis to prosecute the victims. **AB**



Disbar Duterte! Victims of extrajudicial killings and repression campaign filed a disbarment complaint against former president Rodrigo Duterte on January 17 in the Supreme Court. Among the 17 who filed a complaint were Atty. VJ Topacio, son of murdered revolutionary couple Eugenia Magpantay and Agaton Topacio; Liezel Asuncion, wife of slain leader-activist Manny Asuncion; and Llore Pasco, mother of two murdered in the "war on drugs".

Students oppose tuition increase in UST and NTC. Students of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) protested at its campus in Manila on January 14 to denounce the university's tuition and other fees increase (TOFI). The mass action was led by UST-based national-democratic groups. Tuition rate increases in UST hit 6% during the previous academic year, and for the academic year 2023-2024, students face a 4%-10% increase depending on the college.

At the National Teachers College in Manila, more than 100 students signed a petition led by the Ayokong Magmahal NTC to oppose the impending TOFI. The activity was carried out in time with the "consultation" on January 16 regarding the proposed increase in NTC tuition.

LRT fare hike plan denounced. Youth groups and students held a protest during the first trip of the LRT-1 on Doroteo Jose Station in Santa Cruz, Manila on the morning of January 15. They opposed the ₱15 maximum fare hike plan pushed by the Light Rail Manila Corporation, the company that operates the LRT service in Metro Manila. On January 9, representatives of progressive organizations attended a public hearing on fare hikes conducted by the Department of Transportation. They expressed strong opposition to it.

Handyman strike. Handyman-True Value-Pet Lovers Empowered Workers Union members went on strike on January 6 at Handyman's main depot at the Manila Bay Spinning Mills Compound in Marikina City. The illegal dismantling of their strike forced them to transfer and setup picket at the headquarters of Robinsons Retail Holdings Inc, (RRHI) owner of Handyman in Quezon City. The strike is the union's response to the illegal lay-off of at least 122 workers in November 2024. The RRHI fired them for promoting their union.

Trump's second reign, a threat to workers and people in the US and around the world

At noon on January 20 in Washington DC, Donald Trump was sworn in as the 47th US president and leader of the world's most bellicose imperialist. He will sit in power again after his first term in 2016-2020. He will stand as president with a senate and congress dominated by his party members. His billionaire supporters such as Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg, owners of the world's largest technology companies, attended his inauguration.

In his speech, Trump vowed his regime would implement the neofascist and imperialist policies which he had previously drummed up.

He declared "national emergency" to carry out the "largest deportation program in the history of America" continuing the anti-migrant and racist policy of his first term. Trump's target to deport includes an estimated 370,000 undocumented Filipinos to the US. He will also continue to build a border wall at the US-Mexico border and tighten migration policies.

On his first day, he announced some of the executive orders he intended to issue. These include at least 10 immigration policies, ending government recognition of genders other than male and female, US withdrawal from climate change agreement (Paris Climate Accords) and repealing oil and LNG production regulation.

Trump will also continue its crackdown against democratic and progressive groups and even institutions that promote civil rights and oppose US imperialist policy.

On the other hand, Trump will expand the privilege given to his favorite monopoly capitalists in the fields of technology, energy, finance, real estate and the arms industry. He promised to "shrink the government" to remove regulations on monopoly companies

at the expense of American employees and workers. At the same time, he will lower the tax on the largest American companies, from 21% to 18%. At least 13 billionaires are set to be part of his cabinet.

Trump has further strengthened his aggressive foreign relations policy. Before assuming power, he declared his plan to acquire (by force or purchase) Greenland, an autonomous region under Denmark, an island with its own government. Trump drools over the island for its value in US military strategy. In his speech, he repeated the threat of seizing the Panama Canal, through which 40% of goods imported and exported by the US pass.

To arrest the slump in US production, Trump during the campaign called for tariff increases (10%-20%) on all products entering the US from abroad, including from the Philippines. He intends to impose the highest tariff (up to 60%) on products from China, which the US considers a strategic rival.

At the same time, Trump is expected to continue to impose sanctions or

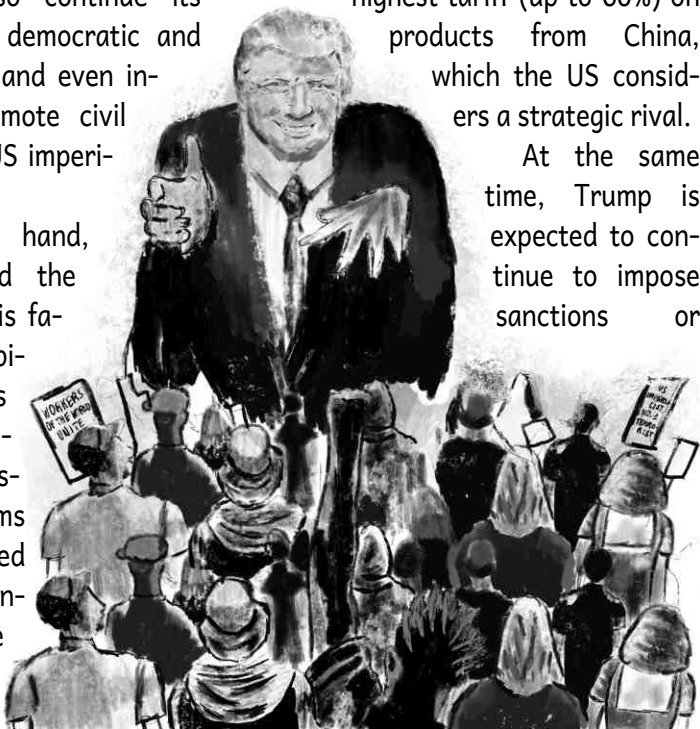
punitive pressures on the economy of Venezuela, Cuba, Iran and countries that promote their independence.

Under Trump, no change is expected in the US's belligerent dealings with its rival Chinese and Russian imperialists. Behind his "anti-war" statements the militarist stance "peace by strength." His push for a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine anchored Russia's acceptance of US conditions. While treating Russia and Ukraine, Trump is strengthening his ties with pro-Right and neo-fascist parties and regimes in the EU.

Trump is laying claim to the ceasefire agreement with the Gaza Strip, which began on January 19. There is no guarantee that this agreement will last, because Israel is notorious for disrespecting rules and agreements. In fact, every day, it violates the ceasefire it entered with Lebanon.

Trump will continue the pro-Zionist and belligerent policy in the Middle East. Since his first term, he has fully supported Benjamin Netanyahu's regime and the occupation of the Zionist state in the territories of Palestine and beyond. He praised the Abraham Accords which he forced on Arab countries to legitimize the Zionist state's relationship with them.

Trump is certain to intensify US war provocations with China. Trump's regime developed the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy in 2017, pushing for a wider US military presence in Asia, particularly in the South China Sea. His chosen secretary of state department has already declared that "Trump will confront China, mainly by arming and meddling in Taiwan. It can be remembered that Trump was the first to implement the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement in the Philippines and pushed for the first five US military bases in the country.



Ceasefire between Palestine and Zionist Israel begins

After 460 days of Zionist Israel's brutal bombing and invasion of Gaza, a ceasefire agreement was forged in the Gaza Strip. It was announced on January 16 by the Qatari government, serving as mediator in the talks, along with the US and Egypt. The agreement's first phase took effect on January 19.

In a statement, Hamas praised the resoluteness and integrity of the Palestinian people who pushed Israel to agree to a ceasefire. The agreement is a big pivot amid Israel's promise that it will not stop the invasion until it achieves "absolute victory." The Palestinians frustrated Israel's plan to expel them and defeat their desire to be free from its occupation and aggression.

"The agreement to end aggression in Gaza is a victory for our people, our resistance, and the free people of the world," according to Hamas. Hamas, along with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and other Palestinian groups, led the valiant defense of Gaza for

15 months. The groups thanked all those overseas for their support in their fight.

They honored the martyred Palestinian warriors in their "valiant and steadfast resistance" amid Israeli and US brutality. They mourned all the innocent children who were murdered and all those oppressed and tortured by the Zionist state.

The ceasefire will undergo three stages. The first provides for an immediate cessation of fighting and the release by Hamas of 33 Israelis (children, women and the elderly aged 50 and over) in its custody in exchange for Israel's release of up to 1,000 Palestinian prisoners. This phase requires Israel to withdraw from Gaza population centers and

allow the entry of much-needed aid to Palestinian families.

In the second phase, Israel will completely withdraw from Gaza and more prisoner exchanges will occur. In the third phase, the reconstruction of the territory pulverized by Israel airstrikes will begin. All details of the second and third phases will be subject to negotiation during the first phase, which is estimated to last six weeks.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), along with democratic organizations worldwide, congratulated the ceasefire. However, it is recognized that this will not end the Zionist occupation and genocide war. On the very day of the announcement on January 16, Israel carried out another series of bombings. In 24 hours, 101 Palestinians were killed and 264 injured in its airstrikes.

"Let us extol all their fighters whose bravery and brilliance in fighting secured victories for the Palestinian people on both the battlefield and negotiating table," according to the CPP. The Palestinian people and their freedom fighters showed that no amount of terrorism by the Zionist state of Israel can break their will to fight and their determination to attain their aspiration for freedom.

As of January 17, Israel has killed 46,788 Palestinians in its heightened genocide war in Gaza in the past 15 months. This includes 18,000 children. About 110,265 were injured, of which 25% were seriously injured. More than 90% of Gaza's population has been evicted from their homes.

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