

EDITORIAL

# Resist the savage US imperialist monster

Only a month has passed since Donald Trump took office as president of the United States of America, yet he has gored and thrust at everything around him, like a monster obsessed with claiming everything for his kingdom. By his declarations and actions, Trump has torn away the "spreader of democracy" mask of the US, exposing its true face and nature as an insatiable imperialist power mired in crisis and desperately trying to salvage its declining empire.

Within the US, reflecting the deepening political crisis and the rise of fascist, racist, and ultra-conservative trends, the democratic

Trump government is trampling widely on the democratic rights of the American people. At Trump's command, tens of thousands of gov-

ernment employees have been abruptly laid off under the guise of "austerity." He has mobilized armed state agencies to violently detain or deport millions of "illegal" immigrants in the US.

In almost every corner of the world, people and nations are facing economic pressures and threats of aggression from US imperialism. Trump is using the imposition of trade tariffs, and the withdrawal or withholding of military and economic aid, against countries he wants to squeeze, subjugate, or bend to his dictates.

Trump has imposed additional tariffs on products from Canada, Mexico and China in an attempt to pressure them into giving him what he wants. At the same time, Trump declared his desire to bring Canada under the US as its 51st state. He also announced plans to take away control of the Panama Canal from Panama, claiming it favors China. Trump is also making noise about his intention to "buy" or occupy Greenland.

Trump has also declared his plan to "take control" and "own" the Gaza Strip, and to expel all Palestinians from their land and homes. This is a blatant violation of the freedom and rights of Palestinians to self-determination. Trump is urging the Zionist state of



Israel to resume the bombing of Gaza, in violation of the ceasefire agreement.

Recently, Trump ordered a 90-day suspension of \$64 billion worth of programs funded by USAID or the US Agency for International Development. Trump is using the suspension to further pressure underdeveloped countries that rely heavily on USAID programs. Among those being leveraged by Trump are South Africa's health programs, to push the country to retract condemnation of Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinians, and to prevent it from implementing land reforms that would dismantle the land order of the former apartheid regime.

On Trump's initiative, the US and Russia began negotiations supposedly to end the war in Ukraine. It has becoming increasingly clear that this war is a proxy war. Trump is now blaming Ukraine for "starting the war," when in reality, the US has long used Ukraine to engage with Russia. In Trump's rapprochement with Russia regarding Ukraine, he seeks to take control of the mineral resources in the region, while creating a rift between Russia and China, for the strategic goal of the US to

isolate China. Under Trump, US military forces continue to establish a significant presence in Asia, particularly around China, and to equip the armed forces of the Philippines and the puppet government of Marcos, to continuously escalate tensions with China.

Fearing that Trump might subject the Philippine government to similar pressures as other countries, the Marcos regime is now scrambling to impress its new master by proving its loyalty to US imperialism. Marcos is further binding the Philippines' foreign policy and welfare to the interests and geopolitical agenda of his US imperialist master




to surround and contain the growing power of imperialist China.

In recent weeks, the Marcos government has whipped up an anti-China hysteria by arresting alleged "spies" from China in the Philippines (even as CIA agents operate freely in the Philippines, like in its downed spy plane in Maguindanao). There have also been continuous shows of "driving away" the "monster" Chinese Coast Guard ship in the West Philippine Sea (while remaining silent when the massive USS Carl Vinson passed through the very territorial waters of the Philippines, entering between Leyte and Mindanao, before stationing in Palawan).

The actions of the Trump government demonstrate the desperation of US imperialism to assert itself as the primary power in the world, despite its strategic decline. It represents the interests of American monopoly capitalists who seek to expand the scope of US influence and control over natural resources, trade routes, and fields of investments in various parts of the world.

Trump's brutal, violent, and destructive actions are provoking widespread resistance to his rule. Even now, the outrage of American workers and citizens is quickly heightening. Even some courts and government agencies also oppose Trump's tyranny. The increasing number of rallies across the US is indicative of a brewing giant wave of protests that will surely engulf the Trump regime, sooner or later.

The Filipino people must also act forthwith to fight the subservient Marcos puppet regime, oppose US intervention, and oppose efforts to drag the country into conflicts initiated by the US for its own interests, especially against its rival China. Heighten the Filipino people's spirit of patriotism to advance the people's war for genuine national freedom, and to end US imperialist control and domination, which is the biggest root cause of the suffering and hardship of the Filipino people.




Vol LVI No. 4 | February 21, 2025

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.

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

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## USAID, instrument of US imperialism

This February, US president Donald Trump suspended the operation of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and similar agencies. These agencies are directly under the US Department of State, the department that manages the imperialist state's foreign affairs. These are conduits of funds for pro-US corporations, institutions and groups inside and outside the country.

The suspension of funds coincides with the widespread layoffs and civil bureaucracy reorganization, reflecting the worsening crisis in US politics. The Trump regime has been pushing this suspension with the aim of giving his clique control over the entire bureaucracy and reorganizing the budget to serve its own oligarchic interests and ultra-conservative agenda.

The US government spent around \$30 billion for USAID in 2024, a puny amount (around 3%) compared to \$886 billion in overall US defense spending. This is a US instrument of the so-called "soft power", which is a strategy to influence the decisions of states and behavior of citizens, groups and organizations through deceptive projects. It is a form of indirect intervention, without using coercion or violence. It is used in tandem with "hard power" or direct and violent intervention, such as Central Intelligence Agency operations. The US uses both "soft" and "hard power" to strengthen its imperialist power and maintain its hegemony throughout the world.

In past decades, USAID has become an important instrument in promoting neoliberal economic policies, strengthening US cultural influence, exploiting natural resources of semi-colonies, pushing infrastructure projects that benefit US corporations and promoting US security and military interests. In countries that the US wants to control, especially in Latin America, its projects were also used for espionage and direct intervention in the internal affairs of these countries.

In the Philippines, USAID and its image-enhancing projects are used to obscure the more extensive US military aid to the country. According to reports, ₱4 billion worth of USAID projects in the country are affected this year. This fund is paired with \$500 million or ₱27.5 billion in military aid that the US is set to pour in during the same period.

As in other countries, its programs in the Philippines are disguised as promoting "freedom," "democracy," "human rights," "gender rights," and livelihood. Some of USAID's longest-running programs have been used to suppress resistance and capitulation of the Bangsamoro Mindanao struggle. Likewise, the primary beneficiaries of these projects are private American companies and institutions that serve as are "partners" of the agency in implementation.

In reality, the US primarily funds the terrorism of its puppet state in the Philippines through aid, training, and indoctrination of the reactionary army in counterinsurgency. What it funds is the suppression of progressive and patriotic groups and individuals fighting against US imperialist domination and its puppet state. AB

## NPA mounts guerrilla actions in Rizal, Mindoro and Negros

NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA) units launched tactical offensives in the past weeks against military forces and destructive operations in Rizal, Mindoro and Negros.

In Rizal, the NPA-Rizal (Narciso Antazo Aramil Command) attacked 80th IB troopers on February 17 in Sityo Tayabasan, Barangay San Jose, Antipolo City, around 3 p.m. One soldier was killed.

AFP troops have long been in the area serving as protectors of the destructive Wawa-Violago Dam and quarrying that have displaced farmers and caused severe damage to the environment of Rizal.

In Negros Oriental, Red fighters meted punishment against the plundering and destructive operations of a company owned by the big comprador Limkaichong family on February 8 in Barangay Aya, La Libertad. The unit paralyzed one dump truck, one road roller, and two backhoes used in building roads for mining and plantations. The total damage of the operation is estimated at ₱20 million.

Meanwhile, the attacking 4th IB unit failed to annihilate the NPA unit it attacked in Sityo Balugo, Brgy. Budburan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro on February 15. The Red fighters fought bravely and were able to inflict damage on the fascists. Two were killed, including the platoon commander, and nine were wounded in the ranks of the attacking enemy.

Prior to this, no less than four soldiers of the 203rd IBde were casualties in two active defense actions by units of the NPA-Mindoro (Lucio de Guzman Command) against military attacks carried out in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro and Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro on February 11.

# Orchids for Ka Maria Malaya, beloved hero and warrior of the oppressed masses

The leadership and entire membership of the Communist Party of the Philippines, all Red fighters and commanders of the New People's Army, and all revolutionary forces of the Filipino people, raise their clenched fists and pay tribute to Ka Maria Malaya (Myrna Sularte), one of the leading cadres of the Party and beloved warrior of the oppressed masses of workers, peasants and the Lumad people of Mindanao.

Ka Maria, 71, fell in her last battle on February 12 in Barangay Pining, Butuan City in a fierce encounter between the New People's Army and the ruthless fascist forces of the 901st Infantry Brigade.

She was a member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau. She was also a member of the Mindanao Commission and served as secretary of the Northeast Mindanao Regional Party Committee for more than two decades. She also served as the National Democratic Front spokesperson in Northeast Mindanao.

A native of Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur, Ka Maria came from a middle peasant class family. She graduated with a degree in agrotechnology from one of the universities in Butuan. She left her relatively comfortable life to selflessly serve the oppressed and exploited masses. She joined the Party in 1977, at the height of the darkness of fascist rule under the then Marcos dictatorship.

Over the past five decades, she performed various duties, including leading revolutionary work in cities and rural areas, both in western and northeastern Mindanao.

Her commitment to the revolutionary cause never wavered. She tirelessly fulfilled her duties as a Party cadre and leader of the New People's Army, even when she was diagnosed with cancer, which she faced for two decades through disciplined diet and treatment.

Ka Maria was an ardent student of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. She assiduously applied the Party's basic principles, policies and program to

the concrete conditions of the people in Northeast Mindanao. At the same time, she studied the revolutionary experiences of Vietnam, China and other countries, as well as that of other regions in the country.

For many years, she was a close partner of her husband, the former NPA spokesperson Ka Oris, in leading the Party and the NPA in achieving revolutionary victories in advancing the protracted people's war. She was one of the strongest pillars of the Second Great Rectification Movement in 1992, which she promoted and implemented without hesitation.

Ka Maria was a military cadre par excellence. She always ensured that the people's war in the northeast region of Mindanao developed comprehensively. Under Ka Maria's unwavering leadership, the NPA and the people waged an unyielding struggle against the destructive and exploitative mining companies, plantations and ecotourism projects which drove the toiling masses away from their communities and devastated the environment.

She instilled in the NPA an unwavering resolve to combat all forms of oppression and to exact justice for all the crimes perpetrated by the fascists against the people.

She inspired and helped organize



the resistance of the Manobo lumad masses in defending their ancestral lands, and preventing the further aggression of "development projects". For this, she earned the ire of the big bourgeois compradors and multinational corporations, who contributed funds to arm and train units of the enemy armed forces and paramilitary groups to fight the NPA, and "neutralize" Ka Maria.

In fleeting moments of respite, Ka Maria captured the elusive beauty of rare orchids and flowers, their vibrant colors bursting forth amid the green forest of guerrilla camps.

As the blood of revolutionary heroes once flowed through Ka Maria's veins, so does her blood now flow in the veins of a new generation of Party cadres and Red fighters. They are determined, as Ka Maria once was, to advance the people's war from one stage to the next, towards complete victory.

*Excerpts from the Central Committee of the Philippines' tribute to Ka Maria Malaya, February 14, 2025.*

AB

# The challenge of being a full-time revolutionary

**L**oren, a young woman, first became socially conscious during the pandemic. She was enraged at the Duterte regime's lockdown that ran over important events in her life, such as marching at her senior high school graduation and holding her 18th birthday. Her parents lost their jobs, and their family lost someone as they had nothing to pay the hospital bills.

"It was impossible for me to stay blind at that time," she recounts. She was immersed in social media and followed the posts of activist teacher Chad Booc. From online discussions, she realized the importance of joining mass organizations of young people like her who were roused by various issues in the country.

"I became a regular (participant) in Discord and other online meetings," Loren recounts. But despite her interest, there was a time when she stopped being concerned about societal issues. She was agitated again when she heard about the gruesome killing of Booc and others known as the New Bataan 5.

"I wept, got infuriated and endlessly condemned the fascist regime all day when I learned what happened to Teacher Chad," she recalls. "I couldn't keep the sorrow and anger to myself, I joined street marches, to demand justice for the person who helped me become aware and stirred me to act."

She never left the streets since. She returned as a student of the National Democratic School (PADEPA) and participated in lightning protests.

When schools opened, she entered a university as a "scholar of a relative." Here she faced the issue of education's high cost and the state's neglect of her sector. Be-



cause of this, she persevered to organize among her fellow students.

"Those in power will not simply hand over what the youth deserves," she states. She proved this when her application for financial aid in her last year of college was not processed. "I had to grovel to persevere with my studies or else join thousands of other students in hoping to enter public universities."

Despite this, she still hoped to finish for she just had one more year to earn a diploma. But she also realized the frivolity of a diploma to change the oppressive feudal-patriarchal system and the society that doubly oppresses young women like her.

"I jokingly remarked to my comrades that I don't need a college diploma since I 'finished PADEPA' and persevere in studying theory and practice," she says.

In her experience, full-time activist life in the city means struggling daily and opting to overcome ingrained bourgeois culture.

"I no longer join my friends' gimmicks," says Loren who used to like vaping and smartphone dating apps. "I desire more to learn theo-

ries and study Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and teach PADEPA, participate in actions no matter how early in the day, immerse with farmers and workers and go to schools to raise awareness, organize and mobilize."

There are times when she feels like abandoning work. To overcome these moments, she draws lessons on how other comrades resolve such contradictions. She thinks about the revolution's long history and the many lives sacrificed. But many remain despite knowing they may not see victory. She greatly admires the comrades who are advancing the national democratic cause for their children, and the memory and legacy left by martyred comrades.

"I'm embarrassed before my organizer Teacher Chad who is among the fascist regime's thousands of victims," she says. "I am not a perfect activist and organizer, but I will not tire in learning, teaching, rectifying, overcoming, loving and struggling."

This year, Loren is facing another crossroads—whether to continue full-time in the city, or go to the countryside.



# Worsening violations of children's rights under the Marcos regime

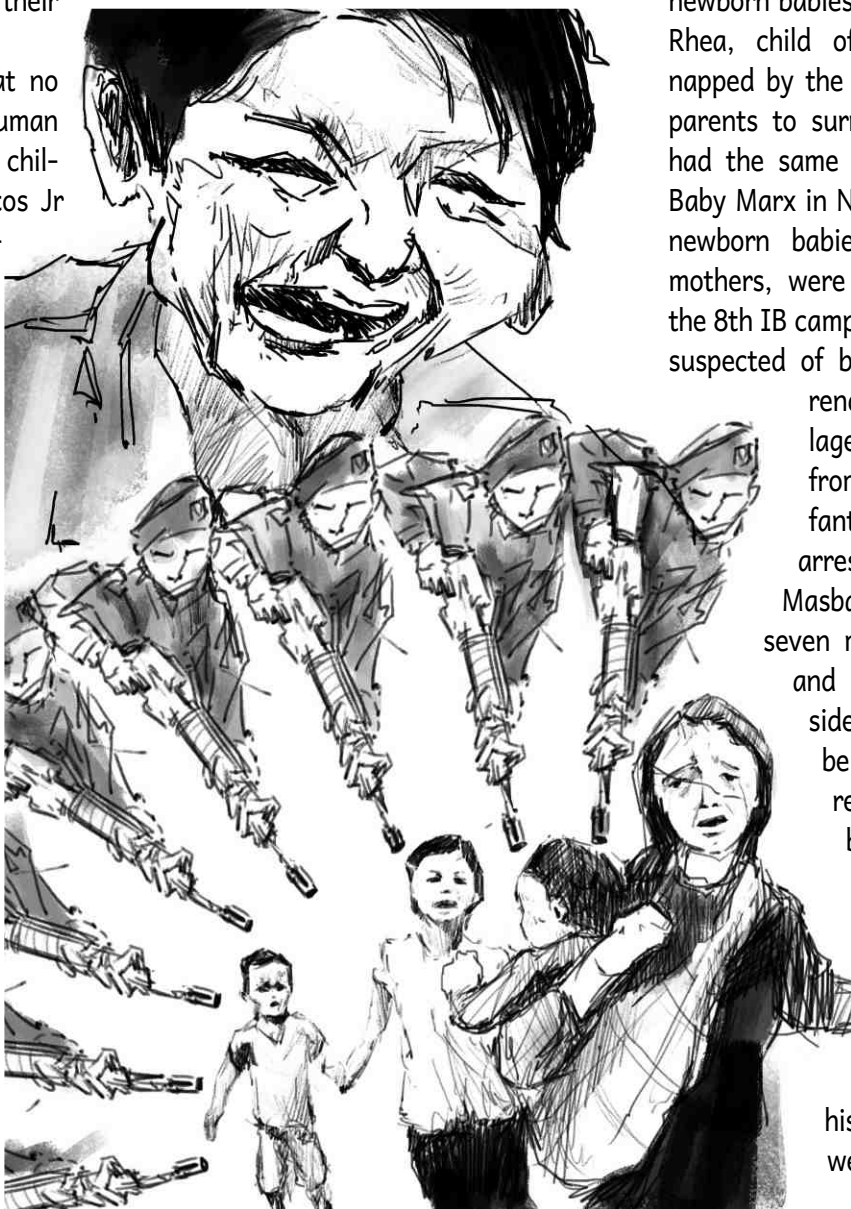
The Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (Patriotic Movement of New Women or Makibaka) refuted and denounced the Marcos regime's recent statement that the Philippines can now be removed from the watchlist of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on Children and Armed Conflict. Makibaka exposes the hollowness of Marcos' claim that his government has been successful in addressing children's issues such as child labor, violence against children, trafficking, stunting and even responding to poverty which is the root of war.

Makibaka advised the UN-SRSG to examine more closely the submitted reports of the Marcos regime. It said these reports are deceptive and biased, aimed at covering up various acts of violence and violations of the rights of children, their families and communities, who fight and wage war due to worsening poverty. The Marcos regime is in reality not a "champion" of child protection, but the number one violator of their rights.

Ang Bayan reports that no less than 1,267 cases of human rights violations involved children since Ferdinand Marcos Jr took office in June 2022 until January 28 this year. These include cases of killings, attempted killings, abductions, torture, illegal arrests and detention of minors and infants. They were also victims of bombing, strafing, forced evacuation, food blockades, harassment and intimidation and military occupation. All of these violate international humanitarian law, and special protections for children, newborns and their nursing mothers.

Ten children were mercilessly killed by AFP soldiers then falsely claimed as casualties in their encounters with New People's Army

(NPA) units. These include 9-year-old Kylene Casao in Batangas, 17-year-old Argie Salvador in Camarines Norte and 16-year-old Eusibio Cranzo (Kuni Cuba) in Sultan Kudarat. In Negros, the 94th IB massacred the Fausto family, including 11-year-old Raben and 15-year-old Ben, and killed 16-year-old Everly Kee, along with her 5-month pregnant mother.



In Masbate, soldiers mercilessly killed 17-year-old Carling Belan and 14-year-old JP Osabel in separate incidents. They accused both of being Red fighters. In Samar, two children were shot without cause by the 73rd IB when they encountered them in the forest. Also in Samar, the 63rd IB butchers killed Ronie Obiado together with his 2-year-old grandson Intoy. In Oriental Mindoro, an infant of the Inyab family was killed while butcher soldiers were conducting combat operations. In all these cases, the families, friends and barriofolk repeatedly refuted the AFP's lies that the victims were involved with the NPA.

Thirty children were victims of abduction, attempted abduction and illegal detention. Five of them were newborn babies. One of them is Baby Rhea, child of Red fighters, kidnapped by the 47th IB to force her parents to surrender. The butchers had the same motive in kidnapping Baby Marx in Negros. In Samar, two newborn babies, along with their mothers, were secretly detained in the 8th IB camp to force their fathers suspected of being fighters to surrender. Meanwhile, villagers prevented soldiers from kidnapping an infant after they illegally arrested his mother in Masbate. Also in Samar, seven minors were arrested and made "hostages" inside the military camp to be used as bait for their relatives suspected of being fighters.

Children were not spared from torture at the hands of soldiers. In Samar, Tipano Rotamula, with his two minor children were made to stand un-

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# 87th IB, butcher of Samar

The 87th IB continues to sow terrorism in the towns of Samar. Its latest crime is the shooting and killing of a peasant father and son by its butcher soldiers in Santo Niño, Paranas, Samar on February 5. As in other cases, they falsely claimed that the two were Red fighters of the New People's Army to cover up their crime and liability under international humanitarian law.

The father and son Renato and Reymark Gabac were bound for their farm at 8 a.m. to tend to their carabao when they encountered the soldiers. Residents said the soldiers mistook the two for Red fighters following a clash at 4:20 a.m. in a distant part of the boundary of Barangay Santo Niño and Barangay Maylobe.

Renato had just returned to Samar after staying for some time in Manila. He left the island because the 87th IB kept pressuring him to serve as an informant in their barangay against the people's army.

"They shamelessly brag about their victory despite the fact that the photo they themselves took clearly shows that the father and son were only carrying machetes," the NPA-Western Samar stated. The soldiers reportedly dressed up and changed the clothes of the two, which barangay residents said were not what they were wearing when they left their home.

The Gabacs' location was far

from the clash site, according to the NPA-Samar. The soldiers deliberately killed the two out of anger due to their successive failures from a series of attacks and encounters with NPA units in the first week of February.

According to the unit's report, the 82nd Division Reconnaissance Company (DRC) failed to annihilate an NPA team in Barangay Calapi, Motiong on February 1. The NPA-Western Samar said the Red fighters effectively defended themselves killing one DRC officer while the group safely withdrew without casualties.

The NPA-Western Samar unit also safely withdrew from the February 5 encounter site. Exasperated and angry, the military fired 17 mortar rounds in a desperate attempt to hit the NPA unit.

The 87th IB bombarded the towns of Samar several times before. In September 2023, it shelled villages in San Nicolas and Aguinayan in San Jose de Buan for a

week, terrorizing villagers. Along with these acts of terrorism, farmers were prohibited from visiting their farms. Schools were also forced to close. Villagers said they fared better when pests and rats attack because at least they are left with something to harvest. But they starve when the 87th IB attacks.

Residents reported another bombing in Sitio San Pedro, Barangay 3, San Jose de Buan, Samar in June 2024. This was the military's retaliatory attack after an NPA-Western Samar harassment operation killed a soldier. The military's shelling and prohibitions prevented most farmers from farm their swidden plots. Others were forced to evacuate for fear of being hit by bombs. Besides shelling, soldiers also stole animals and food from the farmers.

The 87th IB's severe disruption prompted sitio residents to unite to demand the expulsion of the soldiers camped in their area.

The NPA-Western Samar extended condolences to the relatives of the Gabac father and son and other victims of the 87th IB. It vowed that the time will come when the revolutionary movement will make the vicious 87th IB pay for their heinous crimes against the people. AB

From page 6

der the heat of the sun, after soldiers accused him of being involved in an NPA ambush. In Surigao, two underage children named Archie and Dennis were beaten, along with other members of the Montenegro family, on suspicion of supporting the revolutionary movement.

Thousands of children experienced trauma and fear caused by indiscriminate bombing, strafing and shelling in Samar, Negros, Ilocos, Agusan, Cagayan, Aurora, Kalinga, Bukidnon, Abra, Iloilo, Camarines Sur, Quezon, Surigao, Nueva Ecija and Mindoro. Using the latest and most high-tech warplanes, howitzers,

and drones, bombings devastate civilian communities of indigenous people and farmers. Children's education is also affected because local governments are forced to suspend classes in areas where bombing and militarization are intense.

Children are not safe in farming communities that are under constant threat of attacks by land grabbers' goons, along with police and military. These include children in Hacienda Yulo, Lupang Ramos, farms in Bulacan and many others.

Children in communities of workers and semi-workers in urban areas are also not spared from various

forms of oppression, threats, abductions and killings. According to AB's records, at least three communities experienced violent demolitions. One of these was the demolition in Quezon City to give way to the construction of a parking lot for a public children's hospital that resulted in having babies and infants sleep on the streets.

Widespread human rights violations against children, and the people in general, prove the persistence of the regime's campaign of suppression in the name of defeating the revolutionary movement especially in the countryside. AB

# The 62nd IB's relentless violence in Negros

Soldiers of the 62nd IB abducted and deliberately killed farmer Rolito Tanillo in Barangay Tala-on, La Libertad, Negros Oriental on February 10, at 7 p.m. Soldiers reportedly took him from his house and brought him to another location to be killed.

The soldiers then falsely claimed that Tanillo was killed in an encounter with the New People's Army (NPA). They fired indiscriminately to stage a fake battle. This extremely terrorized the villagers.

A few days before the killing, the 62nd IB illegally arrested civilians on January 29 and 31 in Central Negros.

In Barangay Linantuyan, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental, 70-year-old Naring Remasog was arrested without clear grounds. Until now, the family cannot ascertain where the soldiers took the victim and what his condition is.

In Barangay Santol, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental, Bobet Carillo was arrested on January 29. His wife and child were forced to dig the ground under their house to search for weapons Carillo allegedly hid there. Furthermore, Carillo was forcibly made to guide combat operations in adjacent towns near Binalbagan.

On February 18, residents of Hacienda Tres Hermanos in Barangay Luna, Cadiz City reported the influx of Scout Rangers from the 79th IB into their community. They raided the home of the association chairman and subjected him to interrogation.

**Harassment.** In Cordillera, Kilusang Mayo Uno-Cordillera spokesperson Mike Cabangon was charged with violating "terrorism financing." On February 15, Cabangon received a complaint filed by the police against him for two incidents of allegedly violating "terrorism financing."

Cabangon is the 12th progressive individual in Northern Luzon charged with fabricated complaints related to terrorism financing.

In Iloilo, Anakbayan-West Visayas State University (WVSU) reported its confrontation with a member of the Student Intelligence Network (SIN) under the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) who was posing as a university student and spying on their organization. The said individual admitted to his spying activities against members of Anakbayan-WVSU as ordered by ROTC.



## Incompetence, greed, worsen the effect of shear line

THE PEOPLE SURGE, an alliance of disaster survivors, strongly condemned the Marcos regime for its failure to protect vulnerable communities during storms and rains brought about by the shear line. It also denounced the regime for prioritizing destructive mining projects and operations, quarrying and land use conversion that aggravate damages caused by floods and rain. It demanded justice and compensation for disaster survivors and a stop to the said destructive operations.

Since January, prolonged and heavy rains brought by the shear line flooded and submerged entire barangays in Samar, Davao, Camarines, Cagayan and other provinces. The shear line is the collision of winds with different speeds, directions and temperatures that results in increased rainfall.

Recently, rains submerged barangays in the Calabarzon, Western Visayas and Central Visayas regions devastating 850,000 individuals. There were reports of severe flooding in Puerto Princesa City and other towns in Palawan, where five were killed.

The government's 65 million distributed aid has been woefully inadequate in comparison to the scale of devastation. This pittance cannot rebuild homes, restore lost crops, or heal the trauma inflicted on our communities.

The alliance calls for a comprehensive disaster preparedness plan to prioritize the most vulnerable areas and livelihood programs in affected communities. Local and national officials who failed to protect their constituents must be held accountable, as their negligence intensifies the severity of disasters.





4,000

tons of **onions** were allowed to be imported during harvest season. Farmers consider this Marcos order as sabotage of local onion production.



17%

drop in **palay farmgate price** in January after rice importation accelerated in 2024. Palay prices were lowest in Calabarzon, at an average of ₱17.41/kilo compared to the national average of ₱20.70/kilo.

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority



₱4B

**USAID** funds allocated for pro-US organizations and institutions in the Philippines suspended by US Pres. Donald Trump for 90 days.



1 Beechcraft King Air 300

US spy plane crashed on February 6 in Ampatuan, Maguindanao del Sur, far from the so-called "hotspot" of conflict between the Philippines and China, which the US uses as justification for its presence in the country.

7,210

deceased soldiers

continue to "receive" pensions amounting to ₱615 million in 2023.

Source: Commission on Audit

714% 

increase in diesel prices from March 1998 when the Oil Deregulation Law was implemented until January 2025, or 27 years, while gasoline prices increased by 563% in the same period.

Source: Piston's Paaralang Medardo Roda

62%

of staff from 126 humanitarian and civic organizations reported being red-tagged in the past year,

57% of them were subjected to physical surveillance and 17% charged with "terrorism financing" cases as a form of state harassment and intimidation, to force them to stop their humanitarian work.

Source: Council of People's Development and Governance/National Union of People's Lawyers

55%

or 86 out of 156 registered party-list groups belong to political dynasties, big businesses and military or police. These face corruption cases, have dubious advocacies or do not publish sufficient information.

Source: Kontra Daya



**Protest against tuition increase in Panay.** Students from various private universities protested on February 14 to oppose impending tuition and other fees increase. The Kabataan Partylist-Panay led the protest.

**Protests against Cebu layoffs.** Labor groups and members of the Makabayan Coalition launched a picket on February 13 to protest the intensifying layoffs and contractualization in the province. Earlier, Coca-Cola Cebu workers staged protests in front of its plant in Mandaue on February 10, the day the company laid off 200 workers.

**Dance against fascism.** Gabriela led the annual dance to commemorate One Billion Rising (OBR) in Mendiola, Manila on February 14. This year, the OBR campaign focused on fighting fascism in various parts of the world, including wars initiated and instigated by the US, and the fascism of US-funded states.

**Only rice is dear.** Farmers from Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna and Tarlac marched to the Department of Agriculture to reiterate their call for the scrapping of the Rice Liberalization Law, which was enacted on February 14, 2018.

**Antiqueño against mining.** Hundreds of Antiqueños launched the AMLIG Antique Alliance coalition on February 11 to oppose the reported state declaration of 3,715 hectares of land in more than 16 barangays in Patnongon, San Remigio, Valderrama and Sibalom in Antique as mining areas.

**Give us back the 5-year jeepney franchise!** Members of Piston gathered before the LTFRB on February 10 to demand the return of the 5-year individual franchise of drivers and operators. They also submitted a petition signed by more than 30 jeepney driver organizations for this purpose.

**Remove oil tax!** Piston and other democratic groups protested before the Petron station in Philcoa in Quezon City on February 10, the 27th anniversary of the Oil Deregulation Law. This law allowed the unrestrained increase in oil prices. They called for the removal of VAT and excise tax on petroleum products which burden both drivers and commuters.

## **DOLE "assumption of jurisdiction" against Nexperia strike, a capitalist tool**

THE DEPARTMENT OF Labor and Employment (DOLE) exposed its pro-capitalist bias when it issued an assumption of jurisdiction or AJ order on February 5 over the ongoing struggle of workers and union at Nexperia Philippines Inc. The DOLE's AJ effectively blocked the strike being prepared by workers led by the Nexperia Philippines Inc Workers' Union-National Federation of Labor Unions-Kilusang Mayo Uno (NPIWU-NAFLU-KMU).

The AJ is an order issued by the DOLE secretary in labor disputes in industries deemed "vital to national interest". It automatically prevents any strike or lockout, and obliges workers to immediately return to work and continue the company's operations. Using the AJ, DOLE can mobilize police and military to suppress workers who will defy this order.

NPIWU conducted successive pickets and rallies this February to denounce the AJ. They called for the immediate scrapping of the AJ and for Nexperia to address the long-standing grievances of workers there. It can be recalled that the majority of NPIWU-NAFLU-KMU members voted on December 20, 2024 to stage a strike after a year of delay by the company in negotiations and deadlock in talks for a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA). This is also their fight against the illegal termination and dismissal from work of four union officials including its president on December 17, 2024.

According to the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (Philippines), the AJ violates the right of workers to negotiate the CBA and the right to strike. The International Labour Organization Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions (ILO CEACR) already has a ruling that the AJ violates ILO Conventions 87 and 98 on the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike.

Nexperia is a subsidiary of a multinational company that produces semiconductor chips used in vehicles, cellphones, and others. Among its clients are Bosch, Continental, Denzo, Huawei, Neltz, Tesla, Xiaomi and Samsung.

Nexperia Philippines currently produces seven million chips daily. This is part of the more than 90 billion semiconductor chips produced by the entire company annually. This February, the company reported a total revenue of \$12.61 billion for 2024.

Nexperia was formerly Phillips Semiconductors, one of the largest semiconductor companies based in The Netherlands. Dutch owners sold it to American investors in 2016 and became NXP Semiconductors. In 2017, it was bought by WingTech, a Chinese company partly owned by the Chinese state. It has major offices in The Netherlands and China.