

EDITORIAL

Fight to free the Philippines from US military control

Global inter-imperialist conflicts are now being intensified by US imperialism. The US imperialist government recently declared its so-called "deterrence strategy" against "China's aggression" in the South China Sea, purportedly to "achieve peace through strength" and "avoid war."

The declaration was made by US Defense Sec. Pete Hegseth during his visit to the Philippines in late March. Philippine President Marcos and his officials, led by Defense Sec. Gilbert Teodoro, couldn't help but wag their tails, and offered the US to use the country for its strategy. This came after they were assured by the US that it would continue plans to provide \$500 million in military aid.

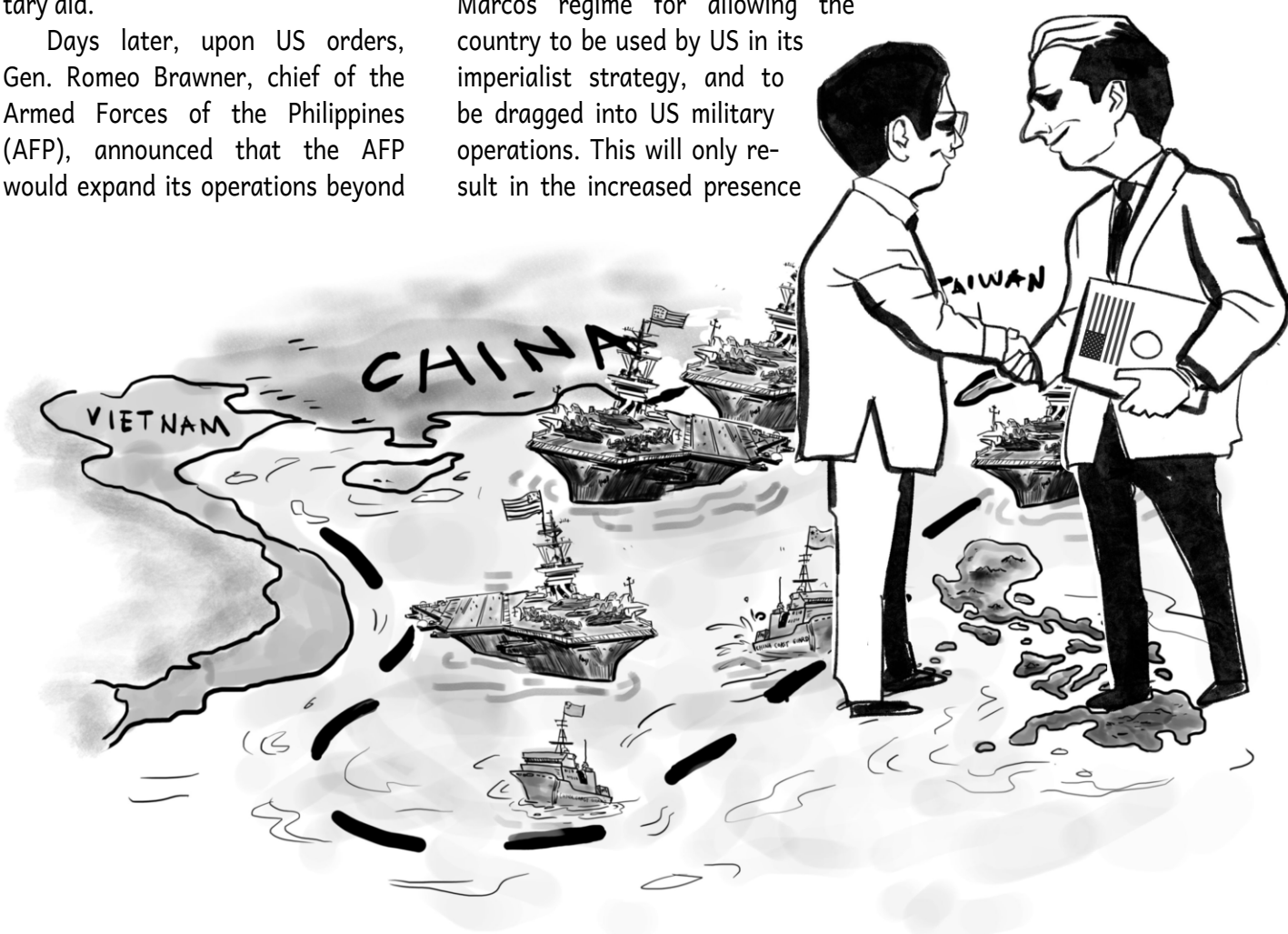
Days later, upon US orders, Gen. Romeo Brawner, chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), announced that the AFP would expand its operations beyond

the northernmost island of Mavulis in Batanes. He ordered the Northern Luzon Command to prepare for a possible "invasion of Taiwan." In truth, the US just wants more Filipino soldiers be deployed in the said area to serve as backup helpers to American troops that will be stationed near Taiwan.

The Filipino people should strongly reject and fight against the Marcos regime for allowing the country to be used by US in its imperialist strategy, and to be dragged into US military operations. This will only result in the increased presence

of US troops, warships, and war matériel in the Philippines, just like what the US is doing in Japan, South Korea, and other countries. This is aimed at intensifying US preparations and provocations for war in the Asia-Pacific region, in line with its strategic goal of "containing" China's growing power.

The US imposition of its strategy tramples on Philippines sovereignty. It shackles the Philippines to US plans and deprives the country of its ability to make its own foreign policy decisions. By leaning towards US military plans, Marcos



is closing off other possible paths, particularly the peaceful and diplomatic approach, to address conflicts with China for mutual benefit. Despite putting at risk the lives of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos, Marcos and the AFP are now following US plans to heighten tensions in Taiwan in an attempt to provoke China into making an aggressive military move.

Marcos is allowing the US to tighten its control over the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) through joint trainings that make the AFP subordinate to American troops and dependent on US military supplies. They claim to be "partners" with the AFP, but in reality, the US is using the AFP as pawns in its strategy to impose its hegemonic power in Asia.

The US's "deterrence strategy" is just a pretext to justify the deployment of its military forces around the world. Instead of preventing war, it only increases the possibility of conflict. History shows that the US's aggressive deployment of military forces and weapons in eastern Ukraine, under the guise of deterring Russian expansionism, instead provoked war in 2022.

This is only driving an arms

race, where more and more public resources are being wasted on the development and production of weapons, instead of being allocated to essential social services.

The US's "deterrence" policy is part of its Indo-Pacific Strategy to encircle China with military force, particularly in the seas to its eastern coast. This strategy will only lead to increased military tension in the South China Sea and other parts of the region, as China tries to counter US actions by deploying its own naval and coastal forces. The possibility of miscalculation that could lead to armed conflict is growing.

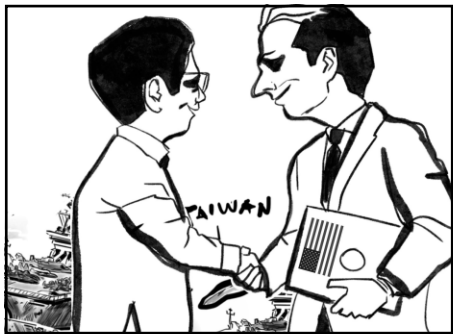
The US is using the Philippines as a major military base for the forward-deployment of offensive weapons. Last year, the US deployed the Typhon missile system in northern Luzon. The system was secretly transferred to another location, and is feared to be in one of the Batanes


islands. In the upcoming Balikatan war exercises, which will be participated in by up to 10,000 American troops, the US plans to deploy the NMESIS (Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System), an anti-ship missile system that can fire missiles up to 185 kilometers away. The US Navy also plans to bring and use "unmanned surface vehicles" in the Philippines.

According to Hegseth's statements, the US under the Trump government plans to shift its focus to Asia, including the Middle East, and transfer more forces from Europe. This is one of the reasons why Trump wants to end the war in Ukraine so that it can focus on other areas.

Facing this situation, the Filipino people should unite and strongly express their patriotic cry to break free from US military control. This control is in the form of the presence of thousands of American troops in US military bases in the Philippines, the use of the country for continuous and uninterrupted war exercises, the deployment of weapons in EDCA sites, the provision of military aid to the AFP's bombing and strafing campaign against the NPA and the peasant masses, and dictating the "AFP modernization" program, that obliges the AFP to buy equipment only from the US, making it more dependent on the US.

The Filipino people should strongly protest against the planned Balikatan war games, which will further drag the country into the imperialist conflict between the US and China. They should push for the demilitarization of the South China Sea and the resolution of maritime disputes through peaceful dialogue. The people should stand for the immediate dismantling of military bases, the withdrawal of all American troops, the scrapping of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) and all unequal military treaties, and the end of military aid to the fascist and puppet Marcos regime.






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NPA's 56th anniversary, celebrated in cities and town centers

Various activities were launched by organizations under the National Democratic Front (NDF) in cities and town centers to celebrate the 56th anniversary of the New People's Army (NPA) on March 29. They paid tribute to the NPA Red fighters and commanders for their unwavering revolutionary spirit in advancing armed struggle in the countryside.

In Manila, more than 60 Kabataang Makabayan (KM) members staged a lightning rally on Earnshaw Avenue, Sampaloc on March 31. The KM members carried pictures of Comrade Jose Maria Sison, Comrade Benito Tiamzon, and Comrade Wilma Austria-Tiamzon. They honored the three, along with many others, who sacrificed their lives and dedicated their lifetime to advancing the Philippine revolution.

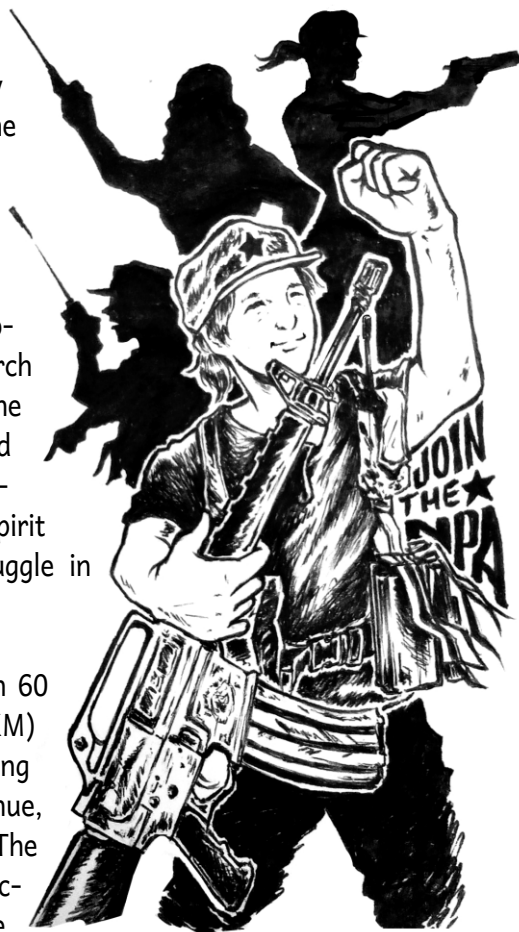
On March 30, a march in the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City, was launched by KM, Liga ng Agham para sa Bayan, Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan, Revolutionary Organization of Lumads, Cordillera People's Democratic Front, and Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa.

KM-Kira Mindoro also held a short program inside the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP)-Manila on March 29. They paraded a large banner and flags of the Party, NPA, and NDF, which they hung on the fourth and fifth floors of the building on campus after the program.

Revolutionary organizations also conducted numerous poster and graffiti operations for the anniversary. Graffiti, posters, stickers, and other artworks by KM were seen at PUP-Manila, De La Salle University-Manila, College of Saint Benilde, and Rizal Avenue in Manila.

Christians for National Liberation also painted graffiti and hung posters along Aurora Boulevard Extension in Quezon City. KM-SMR posted statements and stickers in universities in the Davao region, a stronghold of the Dutertes.

Various NDF regional chapters and member organizations also issued statements to greet the NPA's anniversary. Similarly, several international parties and organizations, including Friends of the Filipino People in Struggle, Cairde na Filipínigh Committee of Anti-Imperialist Action Ireland, and the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), expressed solidarity during the anniversary.



US deploys NMESIS and military equipment to the Philippines

PROTEST ACTIONS STAGED by progressive groups greeted the visit of new US Defense Sec. Peter Hegseth to the Philippines on March 28. Hegseth was in the country until March 29 to meet with Philippine defense and military officials to drive the US's war agenda in the Philippines and Asia.

Hegseth's agenda includes the deployment of US military equipment in the country, in line with its strategic goal of surrounding China using the first-island chain. After deploying the Typhon Missile System in northern Philippines, the US plans to deploy the NMESIS (Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System) in the country.

The NMESIS is an anti-ship missile system that can be loaded onto an unmanned ground vehicle called the ROGUE Fires Carrier, which carries the Naval Strike Missile (NSM). The NSMs are missiles that can fly up to 185 kilometers with stealth features to avoid detection. The US Marine Corps used this system for long-range attacks against ships from land.

Along with the NMESIS, the US will deploy unmanned surface vessels in the South China Sea. These drones are usually small and portable, designed for harsh sea conditions and narrow waterways. They are equipped with sensors, cameras, ISR systems, and sonar. They can be controlled directly or indirectly by humans and are used for surveillance, surveys, reconnaissance, and directing sea traffic.

The newly formed Littoral Rotational Force-Luzon of the US 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment will handle these equipment. Like previous rotational forces, their presence will be permanent in Philippine seas and coastlines, violating the reactionary constitution prohibiting the presence of foreign troops. The upcoming Balikatan 2025 will introduce this permanent force leading a "full battle test" where the US will use the Philippines as a springboard for war against China.

AB

Being a doctor in the people's army

Within the New People's Army (NPA), Red fighters learn various professions. In advancing the struggle, they also act as teachers, lawyers, artists, singers, nurses, or doctors, and other occupations, all for the interest of the oppressed masses.

This is what Comrade Sey learned, a young fighter currently operating in the Bicol region. Since childhood, she had dreamed of becoming a doctor despite knowing her parents couldn't afford to send her to medical school.

"What value does two hectares of land hold for five siblings when life is hard and there's barely anything to survive on?" she said. Comrade Sey knew that studying and graduating from a bourgeois school required millions. She barely managed to take her first step into college because her meager earnings as a working student couldn't cover school expenses.

The revolutionary movement was not new to Comrade Sey. Her parents were active Party members in their locality. She grew up often interacting with comrades.

She was captivated by the NPA, which led her to join the people's army. "The NPA really had a strong impact on me. Every time I got back home after visiting them, I felt like something was missing," she said. "It was like love at first sight."

Being in the army gradually deepened her understanding of things. Along with her fellow fighters, she studied society and revolution, daring to practice what she learned.

"But most exciting is that I can continue my dream here—to become a doctor!" Comrade Sey said.

Recently, along with 11 others from various NPA-Bicol units, she graduated from a medical training program launched in a Norben Gruta Command guerrilla base. This was a major success in advancing revolutionary work. It prepared the Red fighters to provide free medical services to the peasant masses.

Upon her graduation, Comrade Sey became a full-fledged combat medic.

Revolutionary youth lambasts NTF-Elcac

THE REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH lambasted the fascist National Task Force-Elcac for recent statements against KM's series of activities in Metro Manila, particularly in universities, to celebrate the 56th anniversary of the New People's Army.

The agency is now targeting educational institutions at the pretext of defending academic freedom.

KM national spokesperson Ka Maria Laya Guerrero said academic freedom cannot exist where educations and discussions within the university are curtailed. She also said that the NTF-Elcac's plans to "investigate" universities are blatant repression of students, organizations, and administrators. As in the past, the agency will certainly target legal mass organizations and institutions.



NPA-Masbate launches 4 tactical offensives

THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA)-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) carried out combined harassment, demolition, and punitive operations over nine days to strike at the combined forces of the military, police, and CAFGU.

On March 24, Red fighters bombed a CAFGU detachment in Barangay Manlut-od, Placer. Two fascists died and two were injured.

On March 22, the Red army launched a harassment operation against a military headquarters in Barangay Estampar, Cataingan. Red fighters also fired at military troops stationed in Barangay San Vicente, Dimasalang on March 15.

On March 17, in Barangay Santa Cruz, Placer, NPA-Masbate paralyzed a construction company's mixer truck for violating the revolutionary movement's guidelines.

In Bukidnon, the NPA implemented sanctions on a land-grabbing businessman in Barangay Siloo, Malitbog on April 5. The Red army set ablaze a building and machinery used for cassava processing estimated at ₱3 million. The army also confiscated a gun and two radios.

Active defense. In Camarines Sur, the NPA-West Camarines Sur (Norben Gruta Command) twice repelled attacks from 81st IB and 16th IB soldiers on February 23 and 24 in the town of Ragay. At least 11 soldiers were killed and seven were injured. Red fighter Angelo "Ka Kim" San Diego was killed in action.

In Negros Occidental, a unit of the NPA-Northern Negros (Roselyn Jean Pelle Command) also repelled the 79th IB's attack on March 18 in Barangay General Luna, Toboso. The 79th IB reported three soldiers injured in the battle, although estimates of casualties are higher.

Central Luzon farmers oppose land grabbing and land-use conversion

Farmers from Central Luzon staged a protest camp from March 24 to 28 in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City to express vehement opposition to widespread land-use conversion, land grabbing, and state fascism in the region. Over five days, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) led programs and discussions with their supporters from various democratic sectors. The camp ended with their participation in a protest at Liwasang Bonifacio to hold Rodrigo Duterte accountable for his crimes against humanity. On the final night of the camp, participants lit candles for victims of at least 22 massacres targeting farmers under the Duterte regime, alongside victims of the regime's fake war on drugs.

Central Luzon is called the Rice Granary of the Philippines for its high rice production (20% of the national total). It has the largest area dedicated to rice production (705,078 hectares) and the highest yield at 5.13 metric tons per hectare.

Over the past decades, thousands of hectares of rice fields have been converted to residential, commercial, and industrial use. The region has also been swamped with infrastructure projects, mostly large roads, resulting in the displacement of farmers and destruction of farmlands. According to state data, farmland areas in the region decreased by up to 29% between 1991 and 2012, at a rate of nearly 9,000 hectares per year. Between 2012 and 2022, an additional 82,269 hectares of farmland were lost, equivalent to 18.44% of the region's total agricultural land.

According to KMP, the government treats Central Luzon like a blank slate for infrastructure and real estate projects. It denounced the damage to livelihoods and ecology caused by the Marcos regime's Build Better More program (2023-2028), a continuation of Duterte's Build, Build, Build program (2017-2022). Seventeen of the total 149

"flagship projects" are located in Central Luzon. Twelve of these are transportation infrastructure projects (airports and roads), eight of which are already in progress. The New Clark City project, a massive undertaking covering nearly 10,000 hectares, was not included in the list of "flagship projects" despite being in the implementation process.

According to 2022 government data, these projects account for 99% of the ₱1.54 trillion investments pouring into the region. Of this investment, 56% is foreign debt (under Japan's "official development assistance"), while 41% falls under public-private partnership schemes or joint ventures with major comprador bour-

geoisie.

Two of the regime's "flagship projects" are the Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX) and North Luzon East Expressway (NLEE). Like previous expressways, these projects have cut through rice fields. Foreign loans from the imperialist institution JICA fund both projects.

KMP's study found these projects will result in the loss of up to 704 hectares of farmland. This would mean a reduction in rice production by up to 4,641 metric tons or 3,017 metric tons of rice annually. Farmers said this reduction is enough to feed those the state considers "food poor" in Bataan, Pampanga, and Aurora provinces for an entire year.

These projects also make remaining farmlands prone to prolonged and frequent flooding caused by the reduced soil capacity to absorb rainwater.

In addition to these projects, the Marcos regime conspires with the biggest comprador bourgeoisie for a new wave of agricultural land-use conversions in the region. These include 290 hectares of farmland designated for Ayala Land Inc.'s Crescendo residential-industrial project; farmlands adjacent to expressways planned for commercial establishments by SM Prime; and 200 hectares in Tarlac City slated for conversion into an "economic zone" by Aboitiz Infracapital.

According to KMP, allowing corporations to destroy agricultural lands puts to risk national food security and endangers millions of Filipinos with disasters.



Accountability and justice for Duterte's victims

Members of progressive groups gathered at Liwasang Bonifacio on March 28 to light candles—not to mark Rodrigo Duterte's 80th birthday, but to demand accountability and justice for the victims of his gravest crimes against the Filipino people. They called for his conviction for crimes against humanity for murder, in the trial to be conducted by the International Criminal Court (ICC).



They seek the arrest of Duterte's co-perpetrators in these crimes, especially Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa and other brutal police chiefs. They also held the Marcos administration accountable for ongoing human rights violations and the poverty it continues to inflict on the people.

Foremost among the attendees to the protest were families of victims of extrajudicial killings, farmers from Central Luzon, students, teachers and others. Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) led the action. Groups in Tarlac, Quezon, and Iloilo City also staged protests that day.

Overseas, Bayan-Europe launched the Duterte Panagutin Campaign Network in The Hague, The Netherlands, also on March 28. Protests were held in Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Belgium, France, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States.

Meanwhile, migrant workers questioned the Duterte camp's "Zero Remittance Week" call for OFWs to withhold remittances to their families in the Philippines as a form of support for Duterte. Instead, they called for support for OFW rights and welfare—not for a murderer.

Progress at the ICC

The case against Duterte at the ICC continues to move forward ahead of his next appearance before Pre-Trial Chamber (PTC) 1 in September.

On March 21, the PTC 1 instructed the ICC's Victims Participation and Reparations Section (VPRS) to propose a process for victim application and registration. This is ICC's procedure to enable victims to participate throughout the process—from the start of investigations to reparations after conviction.

The VPRS is tasked with: 1) informing victims about their rights and assisting them in participating in ICC processes; 2) supporting and guiding victims in obtaining reparations or indemnification and ensuring access to reparation processes that may take the form of monetary compensation, restitution, property restoration, rehabilitation, or symbolic acts; and 3) coordinating with the Trust Fund for Victims to provide comprehensive support to victims throughout judicial proceedings.

On March 24, the Office of the Prosecution presented 181 items of evidence to Duterte's camp for their

review. Duterte's lead attorney is British-Israeli lawyer Nicholas Kaufman. This evidence sharing aligns with the "disclosure" process that ensures evidence is made known to the accused. Prosecutors said the submitted documents include materials and reports cited in the arrest warrant issued against him.

Meanwhile, two veteran human rights lawyers criticized Vice President Sara Duterte for her misleading claim that her father is not liable for charges with crimes against humanity since the arrest warrant cited only 43 cases. Atty. Kristina Conti said Duterte's statement was "simplistic"—it might convince some but not a court. Conti explained that the 43 cases presented by prosecutors when they requested an arrest warrant are only representative of the widespread attacks, just to issue an arrest warrant. In fact, additional cases may still be filed against Duterte when he faces court again in September.

In two hearings held on March 20 and April 3, Sen. Imee Marcos made repeated dramatic flairs regarding the ICC's arrest and detention of Duterte. The senator sought to portray Duterte's arrest as wrong, a violation of sovereignty, and unjust.

AB

₱40

wage increase in **Bicol** to be given in two tranches—₱20 in April and another ₱20 in December. This will bring the daily wage to ₱435, which is still less than half of the living daily wage of ₱1,226 in December 2024.

7 of 10

land parcels are not fully owned by farmer-tillers; only 2.4 million land parcels are fully owned by tillers in 2022, lower compared to 3.6 million parcels in 2012.

7.5 M

households or 27.2% of Filipino families experienced "involuntary hunger" between January and March, the highest since the 2020 pandemic lockdown.

Source: Social Weather Station

43%

only of jeepney franchises have been consolidated, contrary to the LTRFB's previous claim that "majority" or 86% have already consolidated.



\$17.2 B

recorded wealth of **Manny Villar** for this year, surpassing his \$6.2 billion wealth in 2024. The increase this is reportedly due to land speculation by his company Golden MV, which earned ₱1 trillion in revenue.

Source: Forbes' Billionaires 2025

\$87 MILLION

US aid granted in the form of funds, training, and weapons to the Philippine National Police from 2016 to 2018; considered as the US' "contribution" to Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs and crimes against humanity.

\$5.58 BILLION

value of **20 outdated F-16 fighter planes** that US is disposing of by selling these to the Philippines. The AFP utilizes similar planes for bombing missions in rural areas which damage forests and civilian communities.



400,000

or 1/5 of **Gaza's total population** (2.3 million) are estimated to have been directly or indirectly **killed in Israel's genocide** since October 7, 2023. In addition to the over 60,000 killed by bombings, others died **from hunger and lack of medical attention**.



Teachers advance struggle for rights and welfare in universities

TEACHERS AND EMPLOYEES of private and public universities stand united in fighting to uphold their rights and welfare. Through negotiations for their collective bargaining agreement (CBA), teachers' unions are advocating for fair wages, benefits, and other rights.

On March 25, the University of Santo Tomas Faculty Union (USTFU) trooped to the National Conciliation and Mediation Board (NCMB) office of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Intramuros, Manila, to file a notice of strike. Over a year of unresolved disagreements with the administration regarding the CBA for 2021-2026 prompted the union to file this.

The union declared a deadlock on March 14 due to the administration's unacceptable offers. The USTFU's demands include 100% health benefits for all union members, a higher budget for promotions, and other benefits.

USTFU held a night of prayer and solidarity on campus on March 26, a day after filing the notice of strike. Members of the Ugnayan ng mga Nagkakaisang Manggagawa ng UST Hospital and Tomasino youth joined their action.

At Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU), the Lyceum Faculty Association (LFA) decided to also file a notice of strike on March 26 due to deadlock in CBA negotiations. The LFA is demanding higher wages, allowances, and the removal of mandatory retirement for teachers after 20 years of service in their CBA.

Aside from UST and LPU, negotiations are also ongoing for faculty unions at Siliman University and Centro Escolar University.

Meanwhile, Benguet State University (BSU) employees under the Job Order (JO) and Contract of Service (COS) system succeeded in having the administration withdraw an unjust provision in the agreement. On March 24, BSU attempted to force JO/COS workers to sign an agreement stating that they would only receive wages when the university has sufficient funds.

Long before this controversial provision, wages of contractual employees were already being constantly delayed. Reports show they have yet to receive their February salaries, while some have yet to receive their January pay.

With their plight exposed to the public, BSU was compelled to issue a statement clarifying the matter. The university administration said it currently lacks funds, but assured JO/COS workers that they would be paid.

The Alliance of Concerned Teachers and its chapters expressed full support in these struggles and battles of teachers.

Mindoreños fight environmental destruction, defend livelihood

PEOPLE OF MINDORO staged two separate protests to oppose environmental destruction and defend their livelihood.

On March 23, residents of Barangay Talabaan, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro gathered for a prayer rally against the PERRC Construction and Development Corporation's destructive and deceptive dredging operations.

According to the Mindoro Forum Network (MFN), the company began dredging using the pretext of Pagbahan River's "restoration." However, instead of digging at the designated estuary, it excavated out at sea several kilometers away from the barangay shore. As a result, fisherfolk could no longer fish out at sea. They catch no fish, which are driven away by noise generated by 18-hour dredging operations of the company's ships.

On February 25, the Municipal Government of Mamburao temporarily halted the company's dredging after receiving complaints from Barangay Talabaan residents. In their protest, they called for the permanent cessation of the company's operations and for preserving the ocean, especially its reefs. They also urged the government to defend fisherfolk and their livelihood.

Meanwhile, members of the Samahan ng mga Magsasaka sa Guinobatan (SMG) and MFN collectively lit candles in front of Calapan City Hall, Oriental Mindoro, on the evening of March 28 to call on the local government to stop a corporation's fencing activities in Barangay Guinobatan. A day earlier, MENAKOR Corporation personnel forcibly erected fences under a barangay-issued permit. MENAKOR, owned by Jolly Lim Ting, claims ownership of 158 hectares of land in the barangay.

Residents said the barangay did not conduct proper consultation with them. The fencing gravely affects the land, livelihood, and homes of residents who have lived and toiled there for generations.

According to SMG, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) began distributing Certificates of Land Ownership Award or CLOA to farmers in Guinobatan as early as 1998. However, farmers continue to face land grabbing up to this day. An estimated 600 families are at risk of being displaced due to land grabbing.

Military abducts Masbate farmer

Agents of the 9th ID's 96th Military Intelligence Company (MICO) abducted and forced a local peasant into a van in Barangay Cabangalan, Placer, Masbate on March 29 at 6 a.m. The victim was identified as Junior Tuling, 56 years old.

Tuling had previously been a victim of the military's forced surrender. In 2021, the soldiers forced Tuling's surrender at the height of their Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP). In Masbate, soldiers harass many "surrenderers" like Tuling who refuse to serve as military intelligence assets or join the CAFGU.

Tuling's family and relatives sought help to locate him. They held to account the military for its brutality and demanded justice for the victim. They urged local barangay officials to act and take steps to find the victim and ensure his safety.

In a separate incident on March 27, 96th MICO personnel mauled Totong Cuyos, a farmer and resident of Barangay Cabrera, Dimasalang. Additionally, reports from Masbate's second district indicate rampant cases of the military seizing civilian property and shifting the blame on the NPA.

Arrests. In Quezon, members of the 85th IB and police arrested civilians Darwin Palo and Jay-Ar Molantes at the Lucena Grand Terminal in Lucena City on March 27. The victims were on their way to Bulacan to work.

The police tagged Palo, a farmer from Lopez, Quezon, as one of the "most wanted" criminals in the Calabarzon region. They said Palo faces six cases including multiple attempted murder cases and violations of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020. They also accuse him of being a collector for the New People's Army for the alleged "permit-to-campaign" during the 2025 elections. Meanwhile, the police did not file a report about Molantes' arrest.

Fake surrender. Police in Cebu once again claimed that a 25-year-old male farmer from Barangay Bonbon, Aloguinsan, Cebu "surrendered" to them on March 28. Police claims the peasant is an NPA supporter. Residents of Barangay Bonbon, where the San Roque Farmers Association is engaged in a land dispute, said this farmer had previously been falsely presented as having "surrendered."

Meanwhile, soldiers under the 31st Civil Military Operations (CMO) visited the home of San Roque Farmers Association (SRFA) chairperson Pio Del Rosario in Barangay Bonbon on March 11. Seven soldiers harassed and intimidated Del Rosario to stop him from exposing and condemning the militarization and oppression in their community. AB

Marcos regime tramples on GRP and MILF agreement

THE LEADERSHIP OF the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) expressed displeasure with Ferdinand Marcos Jr for appointing Abdulraof Macacua as the new interim chief minister of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA). Its Central Committee said Marcos did not consult them and bypassed its recommendation to retain the current chief minister Ahod Ebrahim (Al Haj Murad). Macacua, who is also an MILF leader, is closer to the Marcos regime.

Marcos ordered Murad's appointment as merely one of 80 regional representatives, which Murad turned down. Murad was appointed to the BTA in 2019 by then president Rodrigo Duterte. He is the current leader of the MILF and commander-in-chief of the Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces, the armed wing of the MILF.

The Marcos regime's blatant interference in MILF's internal processes violates the final peace agreement enacted as the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL). This tramples on provisions stipulating the group's "principle of autonomy." This law was passed during the Aquino regime but remains incompletely implemented as the first elections for forming an autonomous Bangsamoro government have yet to be held.

Marcos' appointment of only 34 out of 41 MILF members to the BTA also violates the BOL. The BOL states that the BTA should primarily be led by the MILF, secondarily by forces from the Moro National Liberation Front, and third by non-Moro indigenous peoples. The MILF lost its majority position when Marcos replaced 70 of its members on March 3.

Marcos' interference in the BTA is undermining the credibility of MILF leadership. By disregarding and rejecting MILF's recommendations, Marcos has effectively stripped the MILF of its right to lead the BTA, which now governs BARMM. This also erodes the Moro people's trust in the peace process.

Disregarding the provisions in the BOL demonstrates the duplicity of the Government of the Philippines, particularly that of the Marcos regime, in the agreements it entered during peace negotiations.



Marawi unites for Palestinian people. Approximately 800 residents of Marawi City launched a "solidarity run" at the city's "Ground Zero" on March 27 to support the Palestinian people, after Israel ended the ceasefire and bombed Gaza anew. The bare-foot participants chanted "Free Palestine" and "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," resounding in the once vibrant community. To this day, residents have not been able to return to Ground Zero, which was relentlessly bombed by the Duterte regime in 2017.

LRT fare hike. Workers, students, and the urban poor gathered at Monumento LRT-1 Station a day before fare increases took effect on April 2. They condemned the Marcos regime for refusing to stop the fare hike and nullify the state's contract with the private company operating the service. Oppositors include commuters from Camanava, populated largely by residents and workers relying on LRT services.

Water rate hike. Bayan Muna members gathered on April 1 before the MWSS Regulatory Office in Quezon City to condemn this month's water rate hike and amplify their call for #NoToWaterRateHike. Water rates are set to increase by ₱4-₱5 per cubic meter following MWSS approval.

Price hike of petroleum products. Bayan Muna members protested in front of a Petron gas station on March 30 against the ₱1.40/liter price increase on oil implemented on March 31. That day, Bayan Muna delivered a letter to the Department of Energy demanding it to take action after failing to enforce the Supreme Court's 2024 order for price "unbundling," requiring oil companies to itemize petroleum product prices and provide details on price increases.

American people tells Trump to “Hands off!”

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of Americans, mostly workers, poured into streets and parks on April 5 across all 50 states in the US to condemn the various anti-people policies of Donald Trump and his billionaire adviser Elon Musk. An estimated 250,000 participated in 1,200 protests and gatherings nationwide.

The actions were dubbed as the "Hands Off!" protest. Their demand Trump and Musk to stop their attacks on their jobs, rights, and welfare. One of the largest gatherings took place at the National Mall in Washington DC, near the White House, the president's official residence and office.

The protests were organized by more than 150 groups, including civil rights organizations, labor unions, LGBTQ+ advocates, veterans, and election activists. Participants expressed dismay over Trump's attempts to deflate the federal government, lay off more than 200,000 government jobs, and impose significant cuts on social benefits.

Protesters also expressed outrage at Trump's policies such as widespread immigrant deportation, cuts to funding for education and health care, and the removal of protections for LGBTQ+ individuals. They strongly condemned the role of Musk, the world's richest oligarch, in the Department of Government Efficiency, which laid off at least 30,000 government employees.

The "Hands Off" protests reflect the intense and widespread anger of rising numbers of Americans toward Trump, just three months into his second term in the White House. Americans outside the US also launched protests, such as in France, Germany, United Kingdom, and Portugal.

South Korea ousts president

SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT Yoon Suk Yeol was ousted from power on April 4 after the Constitutional Court upheld his impeachment by parliament on December 14, 2024. The impeachment stemmed from Yoon's martial law declaration on December 3, 2024, which was deemed as an attempted coup.

Having been removed from the presidency, Yoon may now face additional criminal charges. Meanwhile, South Korea must hold a special election within 60 days.

Millions participated in street protests to celebrate the court's decision. However, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and Nodutdol, a group of Koreans based in the US, urged the Korean people to continue their actions to attain full democracy in the country, a stop to US occupation, and an end to capitalist exploitation in their homeland.