

EDITORIAL

Strengthen and expand the NDF, fight against US imperialism

The Party and the New People's Army join the upcoming celebration of the 52nd anniversary of the National Democratic Front on April 24. Let us honor and celebrate the achievements and victories of the NDF in its more than five decades of uniting the Filipino people, in promoting and representing their national and democratic aspirations, and in advancing the people's democratic revolution through people's war.

The significance of commemorating the founding of the NDF cannot be overstated. As the most consolidated part of the national united front and the iron core of the Filipino people's patriotic front, it is crucial for the NDF to stand firm and strong today. This is in the face of the intensifying intervention and control of US imperialism in the country's military, politics, economy, and culture, as it escalates its conflict with its imperialist rival China. This is bound to bring unprecedented destruction, suffering, and threats to Filipino people's freedom, security and dignity.

The NDF must build a broad unity of the people against the false "deterrence policy" of the US, supposedly to deter China from attacking. Under this policy, the US military uses the Balikatan and other war games to deploy its weapons and personnel in various parts of the country. The goal is not to deter China from attacking, but to intimidate and provoke it.

The US is now focusing on the Batanes islands, where it is deploying more missiles aimed at China. Every day, large US warships enter and exit the Philippines, attracting more Chinese ships to the South China Sea and the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. The US is

dragging the Philippines into its conflict with China, using the country as a proxy in its campaign to contain China.

The puppet Marcos regime is shamelessly submitting to US dictates. It allows the use of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to assist US military operations. The US is using the Philippines as a proxy in its conflict with China, and the traitorous Marcos is allowing himself to be used by the US in its provocations and intimidation of China, instead

of representing the interests of the Filipino people in building friendly and peaceful relations with China.

The NDF must lead in strengthening the people's resistance against foreign plunder and domination of the economy. It must be a strong voice against the Trump government's threats of slapping tariffs against Philippine exports, which would further open up the country to US dumping of its surplus commodities.

The NDF must strongly criticize the Marcos regime for its neoliberal economic policies, which favor big foreign capitalists and their local partners, allowing them to grab



more land, exploit the country's natural resources, destroy the environment, and sink the country in debt. It must hold US imperialism and the neocolonial state accountable for keeping the economy and local production backward, and for the suffering of the Filipino masses.

The US is now waging relentless psychological warfare and cultural offensive to manipulate the minds and consciousness of the Filipino people. Using media and social media, it presents itself as a "friend, partner, and ally" of the Filipino people, while covering up its blatant disregard for the country's sovereignty. In collusion with the Marcos regime, the US is fueling Sinophobia or anti-China sentiments, and repeatedly portraying China as an "enemy" or "threat."

All this is part of the escalating global conflict resulting from US imperialism's attempt to reshape the world order and reestablish itself as the sole superpower. The conflict is heating up amidst the ongoing crisis of the global capitalist system. The US is using its military might to dominate

the global market and resources, and to contain the growing power of its rival China. In the US pursuit to establish dominance, the threat of war rises in various parts of the world.

It is imperative to strengthen the NDF and the patriotic front of the Filipino people to promote the stand for national freedom: freedom from foreign military intervention, economic freedom, political freedom, and cultural freedom. We must reject and fight the neocolonial state of the ruling classes, which is used to suppress the patriotic aspirations of the people.

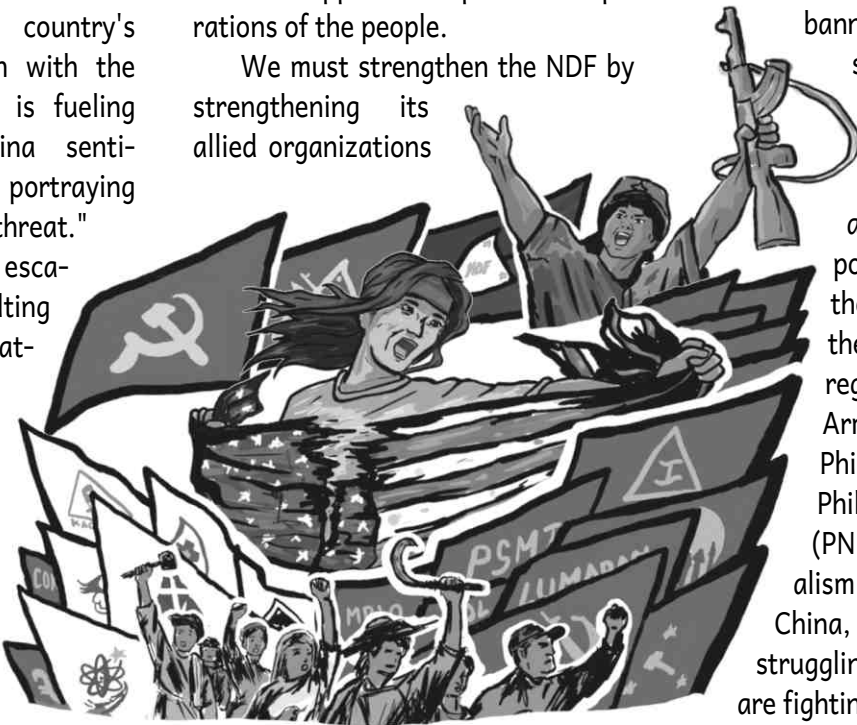
We must strengthen the NDF by strengthening its allied organizations


that are united and working together to advance the people's war. We must intensify the propaganda movement to arouse and galvanize the patriotic spirit of the workers, peasants, youth, the impoverished masses, women, teachers, and government employees, and other democratic sectors.

The NDF and the national democratic movement should strengthen and expand their reach to academics, church people, lawyers and professionals, small businessmen, and all sectors that must be united under the freedom banner. They should also strengthen their ties with patriotic-minded officials and personnel of the reactionary military and police, and encourage them to stand against the traitorous Marcos regime that allow the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) to serve US imperialism in its rivalry with China, and to suppress the struggling Filipino people who are fighting for freedom.

The NDF should expand its ties with all movements and organizations around the world that oppose imperialist war. It should help build a strong backbone of a broad anti-imperialist movement and take advantage of all contradictions among the imperialists to benefit the broad masses of the people.

The most important task of the NDF now is to exert all efforts to advance the protracted people's war, especially strengthen the New People's Army (NPA) and reinvigorate the armed struggle and revolutionary mass movement in the countryside. The revolutionary armed struggle of the Filipino people is the primary and most effective form of resistance to stop the imperialist war being provoked by the US, and to achieve national freedom and democracy.






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Balikatan 2025: Further intensification of US military intervention

On the Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor) last April 9, national-democratic groups protested near the US embassy in Manila to mark the Filipino people's resistance against foreign military intervention and the defense of the Philippines' genuine freedom. They condemned the US for its provocative war games, the permanent basing of its troops in the Philippines, and its intensifying intervention and meddling in the country.

At present, American troops swarm various parts of the country for successive war games in connection with the annual Balikatan. These include the Combined Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (Aurora), Command-and-Control Exercise (Quezon City), Multilateral Maritime Exercise (South China Sea), Salaknib (Nueva Ecija), Cope Thunder (Pampanga), and Marex (Cotabato City). Alongside these are the publicity-aimed civil-military operations, such as the US Navy's dental services, in civilian communities in Palawan and Mindanao.

Prominent in this year's Balikatan is the use of NMESIS (Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System), which was brought into the country on April 17, along with unmanned surface vehicles. The first batch of NMESIS was flown to the Batanes islands where they will be prepositioned for the planned Fires Expeditionary Advanced Base or EAB. This will serve as US special forces' outpost to control the Bashi Channel, the narrow sea passage between the Philippines and Taiwan. The US had earlier deployed the Typhon Missile System here, which was brought into the country during Balikatan 2024.

American forces at the EAB are authorized to "fire" at "enemy ships" even those within Philippine territory. This transforms the islands of Batanes into the US Navy's firing line. This directly puts the people of Batanes, and the entire northeastern Luzon, along the first line of attack should an armed con-

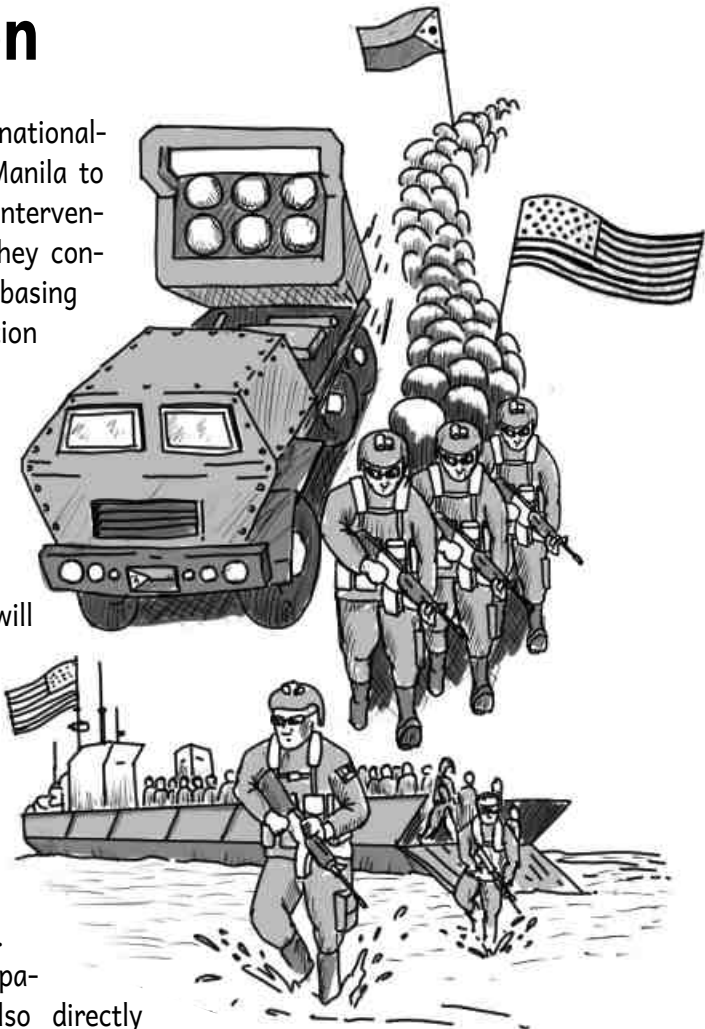
flict between the US and China break out, especially over Taiwan.

Balikatan 2025 will also formally launch the Littoral Rotational Force-Luzon, a US Marines unit that will be permanently stationed along Luzon coasts. For the first time, Japanese forces will also directly participate in the war games, after several years of serving as observers.

China considers these maneuvers as an intensification or "escalation" of tensions between itself and the US. It warned the Marcos regime not to allow itself to be used by the US as "proxy deterrence," especially in the Bashi Channel.

Based on public records, US aircraft carriers are frequently used in Philippine territorial waters. Aside from the Bashi Channel and Sulu Sea, US warships traverse the seas between the islands (in the San Bernadino Strait in Samar, Leyte Gulf, Balabac Strait in Palawan, and Surigao Strait). One of these is the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt. It sailed near disputed territories, such as the Paracel Islands and Scarborough Shoal, and drew more Chinese ships and aircraft.

At least four US Navy undersea terrain survey ships were almost continuously present in the South China Sea in 2024. Their survey cov-



erage includes the Bashi Channel, Balabac Strait, and Verde Island Passage between Mindoro and Batangas.

US Air Force bomber plains also traversed the Philippines from their military base in Guam to patrol the South China Sea. In 2024, China monitored the US sending bomber planes 32 times to conduct 56 sorties/missions, twice more frequent than in 2023. The common routes of these planes are the Bashi Channel in the north and the Sulu Sea in the south of the country.

The country is also a launchpad for unmanned aerial vehicles such as the MQ-9 Reaper UAV based at Clark Airbase and in Palawan under the US Task Force-Ayungin. In the past Balikatan, the US flew surveillance planes against China from its bases at Clark Airbase in Pampanga; Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, Lallo Airport and Camilo Osias Naval Base in Cagayan; Benito Ebuen Air Base in Cebu and even at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. AB

Endangerment and disruption

EVEN BEFORE THE start of Balikatan at the end of April, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) already conducted “clearing operations” in civilian communities to prepare for the arrival of American troops. In Central Luzon, this covered farming communities in Aurora, Bulacan, and Nueva Ecija to make way for the Combined Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (CJSLOTS) of the US held on April 9.

Residents in Aurora reported that two ships used for CJSLOTS were docked at Barangay Paltik, Dingalan since April 16. The AFP's clearing operations, together with American soldiers, also continued from Barangay Umiray, Dingalan up to General Tiño in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan. They said they have stopped working for a month since being prohibited from going to their swidden farms and food gathering areas. The sudden entry of American soldiers into Sitio Singawan in Barangay Umiray also brought fear. In Bulacan, residents noticed the presence of Americans at Camp Tecson in the town of San Miguel.

The successive arrival of American vehicles and military equipment also brought disruption and anxiety to the residents of Casambalangan, Santa Ana in Cagayan. Their community was thrown in disarray, especially by the flights of attack helicopters. American troops used the town's Port Irene to unload vehicles to be used in their amphibious exercises in May.

Fisherfolk are at risk of losing their livelihoods due to the declaration of a “no sail zone” in coastal towns, as what happened during Balikatan 2024. Likewise, aerial exercises will disrupt the livelihoods of farmers in the mountains and forests. These add to the 5th ID forces' relentless clearing operations in the mountainous parts of the province. Aside from the disruption and destruction of livelihoods, the soldiers will bring intense fear and

trauma, especially among women, children, and the elderly. The delivery of equipment and forces by air alone already fills the people of Cagayan with fear and anxiety, especially with the planned live fire exercises in the region.



NPA-Quezon strikes at destructive project protector

NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA)-North Quezon struck 80th IB troopers operating in Barangay Tanauan, Real, Quezon in an encounter on April 16. The 80th IB unit that clashed with the people's army serve as protectors of the destructive giant Real Wind Energy Project (RWEPP) of Ayala Corporation's ACEN Corporation.

Meanwhile, AFP troopers suffered three casualties in an encounter between the NPA-Quezon (Apolonio Mendoza Command) and troops of the Philippine Army operating in Barangay Mabini, Lopez on April 6, at 10 a.m.

One AFP soldier was killed and four were wounded in an NPA-Batangas (Eduardo Dagli Command) unit's valiant defense against the 59th IB's ambush on April 2 in Barangay San Isidro, Rosario, Batangas.

Sine Proletaryo and Armas-ST release new video series and album

SINE PROLETARYO AND the Artista at Manunulat ng Sambayanan (Armas)-Southern Tagalog separately released a new series and album this April. These discussed the lives of revolutionaries and their determined efforts to uphold the rectification movement.

On April 8, Sine Proletaryo launched its latest video series, "Buhay Gerilya," which gives a glimpse into the lives and struggles of New People's Army (NPA) revolutionary fighters and commanders and revolutionary organizations members. The series aims to show adherence to revolutionary principles, the challenges in the revolution, and daily experiences in building a new society.

First interviewed by Sine Proletaryo, in cooperation with the Office of the Spokesperson of Melito Glor Command, was Comrade Kathryn, political officer of the NPA-Southern Tagalog. Sine Proletaryo encouraged other NPA units and mass organizations to send their videos and interviews to be featured in the series.

On April 11, Armas-ST released the album "Ampatin" (2025), which features eight songs, one instrumental, and a minus-one. The pieces reflect the inspiration brought by the ongoing rectification movement being launched by the Party.

Amid intense state attacks, the album was released through the cooperation of guerrilla productions in the guerrilla zone and cities. The group encouraged everyone to promote the songs in the album. "Study, perform, play them at gatherings and other similar activities. Also disseminate the digital copy through all possible channels," it said.

Download the video and album from the PRWC website (www.philippinerevolution.nu).



Stand against mining. In a forum in Tabuk City, Kalinga on April 12, more than 100 residents expressed opposition to the impending mining operations of Mak-ilala Mining Company Incorporated (MMCI) in their town. MMCI will cover three areas in Pasil, Kalinga—Maalinao, Caigutan, and Biyog—which are part of the ancestral land of the Balatoc Tribe and parts of Guinaang. Recently, the Marcos regime granted MMCI funding from the Maharlika Fund to resume its destructive projects.

The Marcos regime brings suffering to the people. Urban poor people led by Kadamay held an action near Mendiola called "Kalbaryo ng Mamamayan" (People's Calvary) on April 16. Participants included families of victims of extrajudicial killings under the previous Duterte administration and urban poor who experienced demolition of their homes, as well as youth and workers. Kadamay-Negros, urban poor groups, fisherfolk, and farmers in Bacolod City also held a similar action on the same day.

Run against abuse. Gabriela Women's Party held "Takbo Babae 2025", a running event against abuse inside the University of the Philippines-Diliman campus on April 13. According to GWP, their action was a demonstration of their stand "against gender-based violence." Hundreds participated, including well-known personalities such as actors Barbie Forteza and Ryza Cenon, and Miss Globe runner-up Rowee Lucero.

Black against tuition hike. Students and members of Anakbayan-Adamson University held a protest action on April 11. They wore black clothing to emphasize their opposition to the planned 5% tuition increase in the university for academic year 2025-2026. This is equivalent to an additional ₱2,500 in tuition. The university last imposed tuition increase in 2022, which reached 5.8%.

Revolutionary martyrs, honored

HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS and relatives of revolutionary martyrs gathered on April 12 at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani in Quezon City to honor the heroism and sacrifice of revolutionaries for the national-democratic aspirations of the people. With the theme "Bravery and Resistance: Tribute to the Slain Hors de Combat and Revolutionary Martyrs," the activity was led by Hustisya! (Unity of Victims for Justice).

The gathering honored the fallen Communist Party of the Philippines leaders, New People's Army (NPA) Red commanders and fighters, National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) officials, and called for justice for the NPA hors de combat fighters murdered by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

According to Hustisya, the occasion also served to reaffirm the commitment to uphold the people's right to self-determination and to underscore the justness of a people rising up in arms.

Police and military arrest a family, farmers and youth

STATE FORCES ARRESTED a family in Sorsogon, two farmers in Quezon and Masbate, and youth in Isabela in the past weeks. They are being accused of various criminal offenses and links with the New People's Army (NPA).

On April 17, police and the 31st IB arrested Gilberto Tolentino, a 50-year-old farmer, his wife Amelia, 47, their daughter Regine, 21, and their 2-year-old grandchild. State forces took them from Barangay San Vicente, Donsol, Sorsogon, to a location unknown to their relatives.

State forces reportedly targeted only Gilberto but his wife and relatives refused to let him go alone, so they all went together. On April 18, the relatives of the Tolentino family and barangay officials immediately went to the police station in Donsol and the military camp in Barangay San Jose to locate the victims. The police and military denied having custody of the family.

In Masbate, the 2nd IB arrested Isabel delos Reyes, 56, a civilian farmer from Barangay Libertad, Cawayan on April 17. This was after an encounter between the 2nd IB and NPA-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) that day at the boundary of Barangay Miabas, Palanas and Barangay Libertad, Cawayan. She was made to pose for a photograph holding a gun and was forced to make a statement that the NPA unit was "extorting" from local candidates in the 2025 elections.

In Quezon, the military arrested Rico Endrinal, a farmer resident of Barangay Sugod, Lopez on April 6. He was transferred from one detention facility to another and his family had difficulty contacting him. After the incident, soldiers camped in their community and relentlessly harassed his family.

In Isabela province, the 5th ID nabbed Andy Magno of Kabataan Party-list and his Agta companion while campaigning in Barangay Dicamay Dos, Jones on April 20. Magno is a graduate of University of the Philippines-Manila.

The severity of assumption of jurisdiction against Filipino workers

The use of assumption of jurisdiction or AJ against workers' struggles was again put to the spotlight when it was used to suppress the impending strike at Nexperia Philippines last February. This was one of three AJs the DOLE secretary issued in the first quarter of 2025.

The AJ empowers DOLE to issue a "return to work order" (RTWO) to force workers to return to work, under threat of dismissal. In spite of this, the Nexperia union workers bravely defied the order and launched a strike that lasted for three days (March 5-8). The union achieved victories in the strike which cost the company an estimated ₱1.26 billion.

The AJ is an anti-worker policy crafted to take away the capacity workers of using strikes strike as weapon for defending their rights. The DOLE Secretary issues this order to prevent strikes, on the justification that the affected industry is "vital to national interest". Article 263 of the Herrera Law (Labor Code) stipulates that DOLE has the power to use police and soldiers to suppress workers who defy the order.

The AJ is among the various provisions of the Herrera Law that violates the right to strike. In the past 12 years (2013-2024), DOLE used it 38 times. The majority, or 36, were issued just after workers filed a notice of strike, while two were issued during an actual strike. In the same period, a total of 2,241 notices of strike were filed, but only 103 or 4.59% resulted in actual strikes by workers. This is the result of layers of bureaucracy, legality, and outright repression that unions and workers face before they can launch a strike and fight for their welfare.

Notable AJ cases

Under the Estrada regime, DOLE issued an AJ on December 23, 1997 against the striking pilots

of the Airline Pilots Association of the Philippines (ALPAP) of Philippine Airlines due to unfair labor practices. Despite this, ALPAP launched the strike on June 5, 1998 and DOLE issued a return to work order for the pilots two days later. Due to defiance and the "illegal strike," more than 600 pilots were dismissed. DOLE favored PAL, owned by Lucio Tan. This coincided with mass layoffs of other workers at PAL.

During the Arroyo regime, the two AJs issued by the DOLE were brutally and bloodily enforced against the strike of United Luisita Workers' Union and Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union at Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac in 2004. State violence against the strike culminated at police and soldiers firing on farm workers and their supporters who were holding a program at Hacienda Luisita on November 16,

2004. Seven strikers and supporters were killed while many were injured.

The Benigno Aquino regime enforced AJ in August 2010 against the Filipinas Palm Oil Industries, Inc (FPII) workers who planned a strike due to delays in their collective bargaining agreement (CBA). The FPII, formerly NDC-Guthrie, is a joint venture of a Malaysian company and Filipino billionaire Dennis Villareal. At the time, the company had the largest plantation and capacity to produce palm oil. It covered an 8,000-hectare plantation in Agusan del Sur.

The Duterte regime used AJ to suppress the strike of Nagkahiusang Mamumuo sa Suyapa Farms in Davao de Oro in October 2018. Nine hundred workers of Sumifru declared a strike on the issues of regularization, low wages, contractualization, and refusal to negotiate for a CBA. DOLE issued an AJ when the company incurred an estimated ₱38 million losses a few days after the strike began.

Amid blatantly pro-capitalist laws, defending their right to strike, including the use of the AJ policy, is a major challenge for workers. Defeating this can strengthen the entire workers' movement.

With AJ attacks, the declining number of unionized workers nationwide also has had grave effects. According to the Integrated Survey on Labor and Employment 2021-2022 released by the Philippine Statistics Authority, only 4.5% or 1,626 out of a total of 36,342 enterprises with 20 or more workers in August 2022 had a union. Of these, only 6.5% or about 350,000 out of a total of 5.35 million workers were members of a union. Among enterprises with unions, only 1,444 or 4% had a CBA, covering only 8.4% of workers. AB



Nora Aunor, Superstar

veteran actress known for being an activist and portraying ordinary people in films with patriotic and socio-political themes such as *Andrea*, *Himala*, *Tatlong Taong Walang Diyos*, *Minsa'y Isang Gamu-gamu*, *The Flor Contemplacion Story*, *Thy Womb* and many others. **She passed away last April 16 at the age of 71.**



30%

of pro-Duterte accounts on X (formerly Twitter) discussing issues about the ICC and spreading misinformation are fake. Fake, as well, are 37% of profiles discussing and shaping opinions about the elections.

8,565 PAGES

of written evidence in Duterte's case the ICC prosecutor initially submitted this April. In addition, there are 9 photographs and nearly 16 hours of audio and video recordings.

Source: Social Weather Station

21 HECTARES OF MANGROVES

along the coastline from Palawig to Santa Cruz in Santa Ana, Cagayan will be destroyed by the **Alpha-Palawig Mixed-Use Development Project**, which is being opposed by local residents.

Source: Conference of Major Superiors of the Philippines



3 IN EVERY 5

youth activists reported experiencing online harassment due to their posts about human rights violations in 2024.

Source: Amnesty International

600-700/day

is the number of "illegal" migrants Trump deports daily from the US in the first three months of his term, including some pro-Palestine activists.

Memo Order 36

issued on April 11 by the Marcos regime to entice revolutionary forces into joining its amnesty program and accepting a "safe conduct pass." **This was rejected and denounced by NPA units.**



Women farmers buried in debt in Cagayan Valley

The Cagayan Valley region, particularly the province of Isabela, is dubbed the corn capital because of its large share in corn production nationwide. It also ranks second in rice production. Despite this abundance, the broad masses of farmers in the region are mired in poverty. Aside from the main problems of lack and insufficiency of land to till, very expensive farm inputs, lack of subsidy, and the underpricing of their products, they are deep in debt and cannot escape from its enormous weight.

One such farmer is Jinky, from Isabela, who has a debt of ₱55,000 from three microlending institutions. She pays ₱3,300 weekly.

“As long as our children are in school, we need to borrow. Our daily income is not enough to meet our family’s basic needs,” she says. Her family’s monthly expenses reach ₱25,000. This covers expenses for education, electricity, food, health, and hygiene. This stands in stark contrast to her family’s ₱8,000 monthly income. To cope, she first borrowed from a bank to use as capital for a small convenience store. But it went bankrupt due to the onslaught of El Niño, as the farmers in her area also had no capacity to buy and pay at her small store.

“Because of the short budget for our needs, not even including debt payments, I have to borrow again to pay for previous debts and for daily

expenses,” she adds.

This is also the experience of Alice, a corn farmer from Alcala in Cagayan. Her family tills less than one hectare, so their income is sorely lacking. She owes a total debt of ₱80,800 from a trader, educational assistance for her child who is studying, and two microlending institutions. Her family’s monthly expenses reach ₱23,000. Alice is deeply anxious about paying this with a meager ₱6,000 monthly income.

Niña, from Amulung, is also buried in debt even though she only owes one lender. Her debt is only ₱6,800, but she cannot stretch her ₱11,000 monthly income to pay it. This is far from enough for her family’s monthly expenses, which reach ₱25,000.

Hundreds of farmers borrow to meet their daily needs. They may borrow from up to four agencies at the same time just to pay off their previous debts.

Cagayan Valley has six large micro-finance and lending institutions: ASA Foundation, Center for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) Inc., KMBI-KASAPI Micro-finance, Kaagapay, Life Bank Micro-finance, and ASKI. In addition to these are many small lenders scattered throughout the provinces. For example, in Isabela, there are 32 microlending institutions. The usual interest charged by these is 15%-22%, payable within 20-23 weeks.

Microlending institutions are

part of the usury infrastructure in the countryside. These operate alongside traditional usury run by landlords and traders. They exploit farmers through high interest rates and deceptive loan conditions. This often leads to the foreclosure of their land or property when they miss payments.

According to state data in 2022, microlending institutions operated in 4,265 barangays nationwide. Although their coverage is relatively narrower, they still cause widespread losses and damage. Traditional usurers remain the main lenders in the countryside. They operate in 47.6% or 20,020 out of 42,020 barangays nationwide.

Microlending is part of the broader microfinance program declared as a “major program to fight poverty” in 2000. This was mainly pushed by imperialist institutions such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, which poured millions of dollars in loans through their “development partners.” CARD Inc., for example, received ₱4 billion in funds from the ADB in 2022 to further “expand” the loan program for poor farmers.

In 2018, more than \$3.5 billion was lent through microlending by banks, cooperatives, and institutions to 5.7 million borrowers. Ninety percent of the borrowers are women, two-thirds of whom are in rural areas. By 2022, this usury industry was already worth \$7.3 billion. Microlending is expected to further spread with the proliferation of digital (or internet-based) lending methods.

Microlending ultimately serves as an added burden that keeps the majority of farmers locked in a permanent cycle of loss and poverty. It spreads due to the fascist government’s lack of subsidy and services for agriculture and its deliberate feeding of farmers to greedy usurers and imperialist institutions.



Trump's tariffs, economic weapon paired with war for US domination

On April 2, US president Donald Trump announced a 10% tariff on all US imports, effective on April 5. This includes higher “retaliatory tariffs” ranging from 11% to 50% on imports from 57 countries. This includes a “discounted” 17% increase in tariffs on goods from the Philippines (almost half of which are assembled electronic equipment and semiconductors).

Trump’s additional tariffs caused intense worldwide turmoil. These are expected to disrupt global production and increase production costs. US stock market plummeted on the first day alone of their implementation. This was followed by a surge, after Trump suspended the additional tariff order, except for the more than 104% imposed on China.

Trump’s arm-twisting through imposing high tariffs is not a sign of strength but of desperation. This is the imperialist country’s latest attempt to revive the prolonged stagnation of the global capitalist system, reverse the strategic weakening of its own economy, and reclaim its former industrial domination. Its declared aim is to protect the US economy, eliminate the trade deficit, and strengthen local manufacturing. Such protectionism has long been a US policy, from

“inshoring,” “Made in America,” and the “CHIPS Act” of previous administrations under Obama and Biden.

Trump is using tariffs as a weapon in waging an economic war, forming part of US imperialism’s arsenal to restore its status as the sole global superpower. It uses the weight of the American economy to push China and other imperialist and capitalist countries to bow to its hegemony, and for the majority of weaker capitalist countries and semi-colonies to surrender their countries’ wealth to US imperialist control and exploitation.

Amid intense capitalist competition, the imperialist US is not only raising tariffs to restore the domination of its industries. It also represses the wages of American workers and suppresses their labor rights. They are troubled by the additional tariffs because these will mean a further surge in their cost of

living. Trump is blatantly undermining the multilateral system that imperialism has imposed for decades on semi-colonies in the name of neoliberal globalization. This exposes the neoliberal myth of “free trade” that was used to force open economies to the plunder of the US and its allied countries.

Amid Trump’s clear objective, the puppet Marcos regime responded with total subservience to the additional tariffs the US imposed. It even thanked the US for imposing a relatively “lower tariff” compared to Vietnam and other countries, claiming it to be an “opportunity to attract foreign investment.”

Despite the US’s demonstrated hostility to the Philippine economy, Marcos and his officials are now scrambling to strike a deal to remove all tariffs on American products entering the country in exchange for the US withdrawing its tariffs under so-called zero-to-zero tariffs. Such a “free trade agreement” will further bind the Philippines to the US economy, and result in a further influx and flooding of US products. This will worsen the country’s dependence on imported materials, of an economy tied to imports and focused on exports.

In asserting US hegemony, Trump is further intensifying inter-imperialist contradictions and provoking conflicts in different parts of the world. Trump is no different from the demagogues in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s who stoked ultranationalism as preparation for war.

Particularly in Asia, the US continues to use its military power, directly and through proxies, to heat up what it calls the theater of war in the Indo-Pacific against China.



15 months of Operation Kagaar

India's Narendra Modi regime is relentless in its fascist attacks against the Adivasi people, democratic forces, and revolutionary groups in the name of Operation Kagaar. The brutal counterinsurgency operation is now on its 15th month and has claimed the lives of at least 400 civilians, most of whom are Adivasi or indigenous people and revolutionaries.

According to reports, 287 were killed in 2024 and 113 so far in 2025. One third (1/3) of the victims are indigenous Adivasi while 40% are women. Many of the killings are made to appear as “encounters” between the reactionary Indian state armed forces and the People's Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA) of the Communist Party of India (Maoist).

Infants and children were not spared from the Modi regime's dirty war. In 2024, 14 children aged 14 years and below were killed, including a 6-month-old infant.

Operation Kagaar began in January 2024 in Abujhmaad, a mountainous and forested region in the south of the state of Chhattisgarh in central India. The operation is most intense in seven districts of Bastar. It targets Adivasis who resist the intrusion of multinational corporations into their ancestral land.

In 15 months, at least 13 major military operations have been conducted in Bastar, each using at least 1,000 forces. Hundreds of cases of human rights violations were recorded during that period. Because of this, the area has been dubbed the “Bastar Killing Fields.”

Bastar has 300 military camps, an estimated 50 of which were built during Operation Kagaar. Nine military camps are in Abujhmaad area. With so many, there is a camp every 2-3 kilometers. These serve as centers of counterinsurgency operations in remote areas. There is one state force for every nine civilians in Bastar.

To denounce state terrorism, groups led by the Forum Against Corporatization and Militarization (FACAM) gathered in Delhi on March 26. According to Prof. Saroj Giri of FACAM, the fascist attacks of the Brahmanical Hindutva fascist Modi regime in Bastar are intensifying because of the organized resistance of the Adivasi and peasants. Their struggle hinders the plunder of large corporations in the region.

The war on the Adivasi and Operation Kagaar are part of the overall Indian state's intensification of fascism under the Surajkund Scheme (2022). It fuels religious fanaticism

for fascist repression. It uses the veil of “Vision 2047 for Viksit Bharat” to build a “Hindu Rashtra” or Hindu nation.

Call for peace

Amid the attacks, democratic sectors gathered in Hyderabad, Telangana in the last week of March to call on the Modi state to engage in peace talks with the CPI (Maoist). A few days later, the CPI (Maoist) responded and expressed readiness to enter into talks.

Through party spokesperson Comrade Abhay, the CPI (Maoist) laid out four conditions for negotiations. The party also offered a ceasefire if the Modi regime responds positively to the call for peace talks.

First, it demands stopping Operation Kagaar, which is killing civilians. Second, it demands a halt to the construction of new military camps and for soldiers to remain in existing camps. Third, the state must stop issuing new Memoranda of Understanding or permits to corporations to plunder the environment. And fourth, release all political prisoners arrested for resisting corporatization and militarization.

Various democratic organizations supported the CPI (Maoist)'s readiness to enter into peace talks for the welfare of the Indian people. But as

expected, the reactionary state openly opposed this. It said it will only talk to the party if it declares surrender.

In this context, the CPI (Maoist) and PLGA are determined to continue their armed struggle until the basic problems of the Indian people are addressed. **AB**

