



*Editorial*

## Unite to fight and defeat cha-cha!

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) strongly condemns Arroyo's stepped-up cha-cha (charter change) offensive and calls on the entire Filipino people to resist and defeat her attempts to perpetuate her rule.

Arroyo is now attempting all kinds of manipulations and schemes to be able to hold on to power. As the end of her term in 2010 nears, she has now become all the more desperate to extend her stay in Malacañang to avoid the people's verdict for the innumerable heinous crimes she has committed against the country and people.

The Arroyo family and its cohorts are now brazenly revving up their cha-cha offensive by distorting even their own laws and processes. They are present-

ly rushing Congress to pass various resolutions to effect cha-cha in whatever form and planning on using the Supreme Court in 2009 once it is dominated by Arroyo appointees to give their offensive a semblance of legality.

With the people's wrath against Arroyo and their refusal for her to rule much longer written all over, she is determined to employ her military, police and other security forces to crush the mass demonstrations and other protests expected to erupt against her cha-cha. Arroyo is deathly afraid that these protests will snowball into a mass uprising against her rule. Should this not be enough, she has in reserve another imposition of "emergency rule" or outright martial law. She had already attempted this with her declaration of a "state of emergency" in February 2006.

Should she pursue such a course, Arroyo will be making her biggest miscalculation. Cha-cha is now laying the ground for a decisive confrontation between the US-Arroyo regime and the Filipino people who see it as Arroyo's last straw in her desperation to prolong her rule. The mass of the Filipino people have declared again and again their loathing for Arroyo's cha-cha. They will never again allow her to extend her stay in power. Nothing can stifle their cries and no shackles can stop them from marching and fighting as one.

The broadest national united front against cha-cha is now rapidly forming, with the patriotic and democratic forces at its core. Numerous organizations, including various church groups with large mass followings have declared their vehement opposition to Arroyo's cha-cha. Millions are expected to join militant demonstrations and other forms of protest versus cha-cha and all efforts to prolong Arroyo's illegal rule.



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The more Arroyo and her ilk force through with cha-cha, the more intense will be the people's resistance. Her insistence to push through her cha-cha will only lead to her own undoing and eventual downfall. The Filipino people will make sure that cha-cha will be Arroyo's last dance.

The CPP and the revolutionary forces are all out in support of the people's fight against all attempts to prolong Arroyo's illegal, rotten and oppressive rule. The revolutionary forces stand ready to contribute their utmost to lead, unite and rally the people in their millions against Arroyo's cha-cha and spawn storms of protest against Arroyo's sinister attempts to perpetuate her hold on power.

As the anti-Arroyo and anti-cha-cha mass movement gains momentum, and as mass demonstrations and other forms of protest intensify, the Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) and other revolutionary forces will also be intensifying their tactical offensives nationwide to punish the US-Arroyo regime and put an end to its rule.

AB

# Cha-cha resolutions flood Congress

Gloria Arroyo's minions have been filing resolution after resolution to push charter change (cha-cha). They have frenziedly stepped up the pace of their cha-cha scheme especially after the fourth impeachment complaint against Arroyo was dismissed by a vote of 183-18. With the threat of impeachment out of the way again, her minions are moving heaven and earth to get cha-cha going. More than 20 new resolutions have been filed by KAMPI and Lakas-CMD (Arroyo's main political parties) with the Congressional Committee on Constitutional Amendments.

Arroyo so desperately wants to have cha-cha push through that no less than her own congressmen-sons Mikey and Dato have been at the forefront of filing resolutions and soliciting signatures in support of a constituent assembly ("con-ass"). Their version calls for Congress and the Senate to discuss proposed amendments and vote on them as a single body. Through this, the pro-Arroyo majority in the bigger lower chamber can easily swamp any opposition from the upper house on proposals being pushed by Malacañang.

Aside from Arroyo's sons, her

leading allies like Rep. Luis Villafuerte of Camarines Sur have come up with their own resolutions for cha-cha. Like the Arroyo brothers, Villafuerte is gunning for "con-ass". All in all, there are nine resolutions calling for "con-ass."

To disguise the real motive behind these resolutions—which is the prolongation of Arroyo's term—many of the "con-ass" proponents have also included in their resolutions calls for solitary amendments to the constitution that allegedly have nothing to do with running the government. In fact, such resolutions are meant to be the opening salvo for other resolutions once "con-ass" commences. The resolutions will mainly revolve around the various means of extending Arroyo's term.

House Speaker Prospero Nograles' House Resolution 737, for instance, purportedly proposes only to amend one economic provision of the constitution and claims to have no relation at all to politics or any bigger changes in the system of government. It nonetheless constitutes treason as it proposes the scrapping of one of the few remaining provisions that protect the national patrimony—the ban on foreign corporations' ownership of private and public lands.



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Six resolutions for "con-ass" call for a federal system of government. Two call for a unicameral legislature—thus doing away immediately with the Senate.

The most brazen of these resolutions were those filed by Rep. Hermilando Mandanas of Batangas, which both lead to the extension of Gloria Arroyo's term and the expansion of her powers. Mandanas' HR 548 calls for the merging of the executive and legislative branches allegedly to effect more efficient governance. It calls to mind the period of dictatorship when Ferdinand Marcos arrogated unto himself legislative powers by issuing decrees.

Mandanas' HR 550 is even worse because it calls for the postponement of the 2010 elections and a term extension of up to four years for elective officials. Mandanas was forced to withdraw this barefacedly pro-Arroyo resolution after being pelted with criticisms.

Rep. Jose Solis of Sorsogon, on the other hand, has adopted Malacañang's proposed revisions wholesale in filing HR56 which pushes for congressional approval of all amendments recommended by the Constitutional Consultative Commission formed by Gloria Arroyo as far back as 2005.

All these resolutions being filed by Arroyo's allies in Congress covering every conceivable aspect of cha-cha betray Malacañang's mad scramble to have the constitution amended. Arroyo has placed all her bets on cha-cha, knowing it is the last "legal" card up her sleeve that would enable her to directly hold the reins of power beyond 2010. **AB**

## Militants advance national anti-cha-cha campaign anew

Progressive and democratic organizations and personalities have begun advancing a nationwide campaign against attempts to amend the constitution. Up to 50 organizations and personalities, including Manila archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales have assailed the "constituent assembly" scheme being pushed by Arroyo allies.

More than 2,000 people rallied on November 30 in various parts of Metro Manila to express their vehement opposition to "con-ass". The rally coincided with the commemoration of Andres Bonifacio's 145th birth anniversary.

Allied organizations under the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) such as the Kilusang Mayo Uno, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Anakpawis, Gabriela, Migrante and Anakbayan also conducted a giant "teach-in" at Plaza Miranda where they discussed the burning issues of the day, mainly the regime's "con-ass" scheme. They marched towards Mendiola Bridge afterwards. The protest action signalled the start of a nationwide campaign dubbed "Labanan ang cha-cha ni Gloria" (Resist Gloria's cha-cha).

Members and supporters of the Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya also launched a rally that day at the Andres Bonifacio monument in Balintawak, Quezon City. Bishops who joined the rally warned that it would not be farfetched for the massive protests currently being held in Thailand to be

replicated in the Philippines should Arroyo's minions insist on pushing cha-cha.

These protests were followed by the "Lakbayang mga Maralita" (Poor people's march) on December 1 joined by hun-

dreds of urban poor residents led by KADAMAY who converged at the Commonwealth Market and marched towards Elliptical Road in Quezon City.

The following organizations and personalities have likewise openly expressed their opposition to cha-cha: Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP), Rev. Eddie Villanueva of Jesus Is Lord Movement and Bangon Pilipinas, former President Joseph Estrada, United Opposition (UNO), Concerned Citizens Movement, Youth Act Now!, Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR), EDSA 3 Coalition, Sanlakas and Coalition for National Transformation. Also expressing their dissent are the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP), Makati Business Club and Management Association of the Philippines. Bro. Mike Velarde, leader of the El Shaddai Movement and known "spiritual adviser" of Gloria Arroyo has also added his name to the growing list of anti-cha-cha personalities. **AB**



# Revolutionary movement in Leyte advances

The Mt. Amandewin Command (New People's Army-Leyte) has vehemently belied claims by the reactionary Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) of having defeated the NPA and having crushed the revolutionary movement in Leyte. In an interview with *Ang Bayan*, various NPA units in Leyte described how armed struggle, agrarian revolution and other mass struggles have been advancing in the island despite the enemy's intense militarization.

Antifeudal struggles have, in particular, benefited residents of the third district of Leyte in a big way.

A striking example was the occupation by thousands of farm workers of vast tracts of abandoned sugarcane fields and ranches owned by big landlords. Up to 800 hectares of these lands are owned by the Larrazabal family, one of the biggest landlord clans in Leyte.

The farm workers successfully struggled for their right to plant rice and corn on these lands.

Other forms of antifeudal struggles have also been launched to reduce land rent, raise farm workers' wages and retrieve lands that have been seized from the peasants.

It is these victories that serve as the foundation for the NPA's continued ability to build its strength and maintain its close links to the people on the island despite the brutality of Oplan Bantay Laya 2 (OBL2).

With the big landlords shaken by the people's antifeudal struggles, the enemy attempted to use OBL2 to sow terror and destroy the revolutionary movement.

Human rights violations worsened and became more widespread.

The military vented its ire on farmers living in areas where antifeudal struggles were strong. In

some cases, feces and urine were forced into the victims' mouths. The victims were then punched to induce swallowing. Some peasants were forced to reveal the NPA's whereabouts.

According to partial reports, three heinous massacres were brazenly perpetrated by the military, claiming the lives of 20 farmers. For simply going to their farms, many of the peasants were accused of being NPA supporters, beaten up and ordered to leave the village. The military also killed the peasants' farm animals. One of the NPA commanders interviewed by *AB* said, "The enemy's military campaigns are really a bane to the farmers' livelihood."

Contrary to the enemy's expectations, however, the brutalities inflicted on the peasants have only strengthened their resolve to support the people's army and the revolutionary movement. They have remained steadfast and have even tightened their links

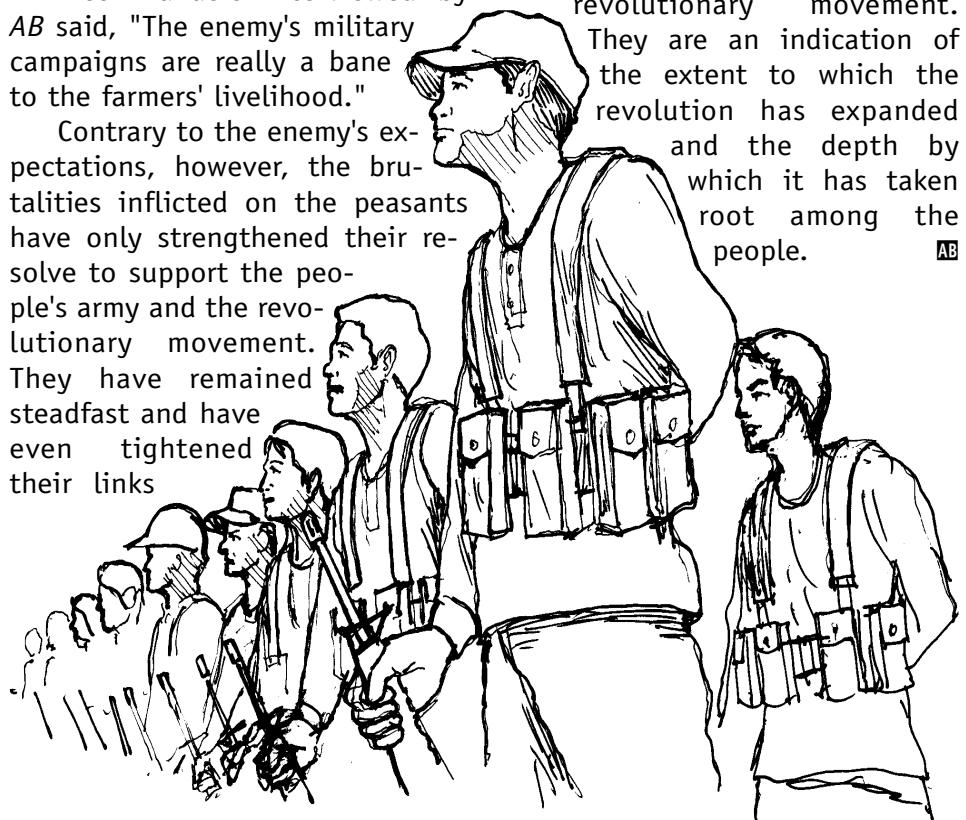
to the NPA. They have not wavered in giving what they can to support the people's army, including voluntarily providing rice and other foodstuff. They monitor the presence and movements of the enemy and report this to the NPA.

The masses gave invaluable help to the people's army in the 17 tactical offensives launched since the AFP began OBL2 in the area. The NPA was able to seize 49 firearms and kill 56 enemy forces. Twelve Red fighters, on the other hand, were martyred.

The NPA was also able to recruit more Red fighters and conduct other forms of military work, aside from cultural, educational and production activities. Party branches and mass organizations in the localities were able to fulfill their revolutionary tasks clandestinely. OBL2 has failed to put a stop to these activities.

These victories, which have all been achieved despite the enemy's atrocities in Leyte prove how the people ardently support the armed revolutionary movement.

They are an indication of the extent to which the revolution has expanded and the depth by which it has taken root among the people. **AB**



# Aerial spraying in a Lumad community

The indiscriminate use of toxic pesticides by large plantations is a tremendous burden on the people of Southern Mindanao and poses serious hazards to their health. It worsens the already grave exploitation and oppression suffered by workers and Lumad folk in these plantations.

Among the worst victims of the aerial spraying of toxic chemicals are some 150 Manobo families living in Barangay Kamukhaan, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur. Kamukhaan's more than 700 villagers are afflicted with various illnesses and are slowly dying from the effects of toxic pesticides used by the Lapanday Development Corporation (Ladeco) on its banana plantations adjacent to the barrio. The villagers began getting sick as far back as 1981.

Various ailments have descended on the people of Kamukhaan. Cancer, goiter, eye ailments, ana-

mia and other blood abnormalities, asthma, coughing, emphysema and other lung diseases are prevalent. Babies are often born with congenital defects.

Even their crops and farm animals have succumbed to disease. Their coconut trees and other crops have stopped bearing fruit. Some animals that happened to stray into or near the Ladeco plantation and eat grass or drink from its spring have died. Because the toxins have contaminated the rivers and seas as well, fish catch has plummeted from hundreds of kilos to only a few kilos per day.



Dwindling livelihoods from farming and fishing have forced many of the villagers to work at Ladeco, where they suffer direct exposure to pesticides without any protective gear whatsoever. This, in exchange for a measly wage of ₱45 a day. The company refuses to pay for the workers' medication whenever they fall ill from pesticide exposure. AB

## Punitive actions against plantations using toxic chemicals

Heeding the people's demands, the revolutionary authorities in Southern Mindanao have banned big plantations from using toxic chemicals that are hazardous to the people's health and the environment. The NPA has launched the following punitive actions to enforce the ban:

**November 25.** The NPA burned a 10-wheeler truck owned by Sumitomo Fruits Philippines (Sumifru) used by the company to apply toxic pesticides. Sumifru, a subsidiary of the Sumitomo Group of Companies in Japan plants and exports Cavendish bananas. The punitive action was meted out in Sitio Cogon, Barangay Tamayong, Calinan, Davao City.

**November 10.** The NPA raided two banana plantations in Compostela Valley—Compostela Plantation Inc., a subsidiary of Sumi-

fru, located in Barangay Mangayon, Compostela town; and Dizon Farms in Barangay Babag, Monkayo. Seized from Compostela Plantation Inc. were five shotguns, four .38s and six handheld radios. The raid on Dizon Farms yielded two baby Armalites, five carbines and a handheld radio.

**August 8.** The NPA meted punishment on

Rio Vista Agribusiness Ventures (owned by the imperialist Marsman Drysdale Corporation) by destroying a plant used in mixing toxic chemicals for use as pesticides and an airplane used for crop dusting. Rio Vista runs a huge banana plantation in Maco, Compostela Valley.

**April 14.** The NPA raided APO Land Fruits in Tungkalan, Toril, Davao City and burned two generator sets. APO Land Fruits serves as a packing house for Sumifru.

**April 9.** The NPA attacked the 11,000-hectare Dole Stanfilco (a subsidiary of the giant Dole Food Co. of the US) and burned its packing equipment. AB



# NPA seizes 26 firearms, enemy suffers 48 casualties

The enemy suffered 16 dead and 32 wounded in separate tactical offensives launched by Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) from November 18 to December 3. Twenty-six firearms were seized in these tactical offensives.

**December 3.** A policeman was killed and four were wounded in an ambush by NPA Red fighters on elements of the 6th PNP Regional Mobile Group (RMG) in Barangay Estado, Victorias City, Negros Occidental. The policemen were on their way to a detachment in Barangay Gawahon in the same city when the ambush took place. Another group of Red fighters also fired on an RMG troop from Barangay Gawahon that was sent to reinforce the ambushed policemen.

**December 2.** Five soldiers were killed, including four officers from the Philippine Army Personnel

Management Center and two other officers were wounded when NPA Red fighters detonated a land mine and opened fire on the soldiers. The AFP unit was aboard an Isuzu Elf truck and traveling along Sitio Bantolinao, Barangay Ganayon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur. The guerrillas seized an M14, four M16s, a laptop computer and rounds of ammunition from the soldiers.

**December 1.** Six troopers from the 67th IB "B" Coy were killed and 14 were wounded, including their commanding officer 1Lt. Francis John Gabawa when Red fighters from the Antonio Neario Antao Command-NPA Front 15 Operations Command detonated a land mine in Sitio Macopa, Barangay Mahan-ub, Baganga, Davao Oriental. The soldiers were ambushed while mounting a rescue operation for P03 Eduardo Tumol who is

currently a prisoner of war. Earlier, two soldiers of the 67th IB had already been killed and one wounded in a harassment operation by Red fighters from the same NPA unit in Sitio Kasunogan, Barangay

Mahan-ub. Gabawa and the 67th IB are notorious for killing seven-year old Grecil Buya in a firefight in New Bataan, Compostela Valley in March 2007 and later branding her a child soldier of the NPA.

**November 30.** A soldier was killed in an NPA ambush on elements of the 36th IB in Bingkugan, Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur.

**November 29.** A soldier was wounded in an encounter between the 47th IB and NPA Red fighters along the boundary of Buri, Tapaz, Capiz and Barangay Masaroy, Calinog, Iloilo.

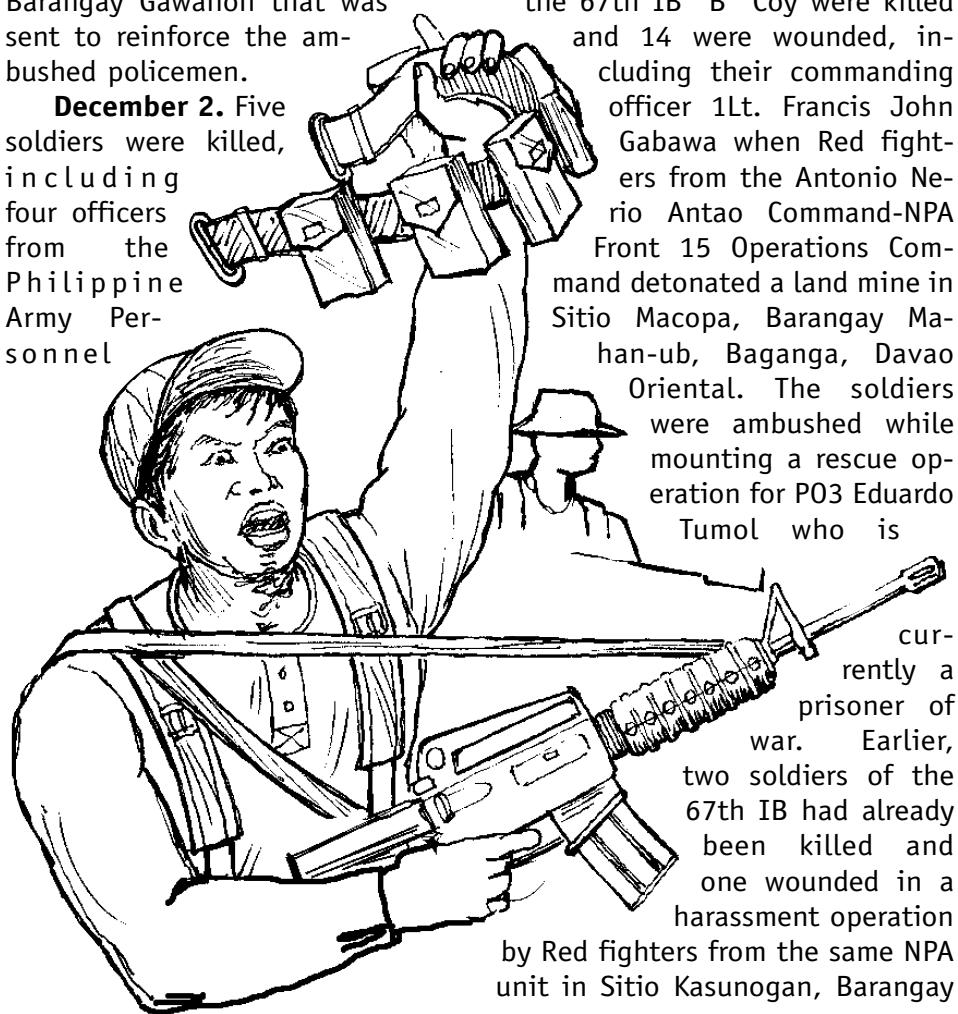
**November 28.** A soldier was wounded in an NPA sniping operation against a detachment of the 23rd IB-CAA in Sitio Maputi, Barangay Doña Carmen, Tagbina, Surigao del Sur.

**November 27.** Red fighters in Far South Mindanao Region seized ten firearms in a raid on the Civilian Volunteers Organization (CVO) detachment in Sitio Kiah, Barangay Kinam, Malapatan, Sarangani. The confiscated weapons consisted of eight shotguns, a carbine and a Garand.

That afternoon, a soldier was killed and six others were wounded when Red fighters of the Ruperto Tuyac Command-5th NPA Pulang Bagani Company ambushed elements of the 25th IB in Sitio Paraiso, Barangay Mt. Diwalwal, Monkayo, Compostela Valley.

**November 18.** The NPA in the Northeastern Mindanao Region (NEMR) seized 11 firearms in a raid on a copper mine in Barangay Bayabas, Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte. In a statement, National Democratic Front-NEMR spokesperson Ka Maria Malaya said the raid was a punitive measure on the abusive and exploitative mining company owned by the Amante family and its allies.

AB



## NPA returns personal items taken from La Libertad policemen

THE New People's Army (NPA) has returned on December 1 personal items confiscated by Red fighters from policemen of La Libertad, Negros Oriental. The items were inadvertently included in the items seized from elements of the La Libertad PNP.

Among the items that were returned were three backpacks, a raincoat, five cellphones and their chargers, among other personal belongings. The items were placed in a cardboard box and brought by unidentified comrades to the office of the Catholic church's Diocese of San Carlos. The parish priest Rev. Fr. Jose Advincula in turn gave the box to La Libertad Mayor Lawrence Limkaichong, who then turned over the box to the police station.

The Leonardo Panaligan Command of the NPA in Negros raided the La Libertad police station on November 3 and seized four M16s, five .45 cal. pistols and uniforms in a matter of five minutes. **AB**

## Stepped up AFP offensives will delay release of 2 POW—NDFP

**N**ational Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) Negotiating Panel spokesperson Ka Fidel Agcaoili assailed the Arroyo regime's obstinate refusal to submit a formal request to the NDFP to secure the release of two prisoners of war in Southern Mindanao. Agcaoili said that instead of commencing formal processes for the prisoners' release, the Arroyo government has even ordered the AFP to intensify military operations ostensibly to rescue the two captives.

Agcaoili explained that as long as the Merardo Arce Command (MAC) of the New People's Army (NPA) in Southern Mindanao does not receive a formal request, it will continue with its investigation of the prisoners' possible violations of human rights and the rules of war. Should there be probable cause, they will be put on trial before the revolutionary people's court and meted the appropriate punishment if found guilty.

Punishment may be meted swiftly under conditions of massive military operations, he said. But even if they are acquitted, said Agcaoili, they cannot be freed without a formal agreement for their safe and orderly release.

The prisoners are 1Lt. Vicente Cam Mayo Jr., commander of the Philippine Army 3rd Special Forces Battalion and PO3 Eduardo

C. Tumol of the Philippine National Police. Merarde Arce Command spokesperson Ka Rigoberto Tiglao said Cam Mayo was captured by the NPA in Monkayo, Compostela Valley on November 5 while Tumol was captured in Caraga, Davao Oriental on November 7. Seized from the captives were an M60 light machine gun, a KG9 submachine gun, three M16s, an M14 and a .45 cal pistol.

A video sent by the MAC to the media on November 30 shows Lieutenant Cam Mayo sending a message to his fellow soldiers and family on his situation. Cam Mayo said he was being treated well as a prisoner of war. He denied reports that he was wounded when he surrendered to the NPA on November 5. He also told his family that his rights were not being violated and that his basic needs were being met. **AB**

## Monet, 16

**M**onet is a 16-year old farmer's daughter. In Sine Proletaryo's latest production, she explains her situation and that of other youth like her in the countryside. She spoke of the poverty they suffer and their dreams of leading a better life.

Monet's story of her lack of educational opportunities and being obliged to earn a living at a young

age is a typical experience among peasant youth. Their difficult life is made worse by rampant militarization in the countryside.

Youth like Monet realize early on that they stand a very slim chance of realizing their dreams under the present system. It is this hopelessness that has taught them to join the revolutionary war in the countryside.

Listen to the peasant youth's grievances and the hope they have discovered in the New People's Army in *Monet, 16*. The video is distributed in VCD and DVD and may also be downloaded from [www.philippinerevolution.net](http://www.philippinerevolution.net).

Also available from the website are other Sine Proletaryo productions like *Dagli* (short films), *Sigños* and *Ambahan*. **AB**



# Killing and harassment hound farmers

**T**here has been no letup in extrajudicial killings, despite claims by the Arroyo regime that cases have dwindled. Karapatan reports that up to 43 political killings were documented from January to September 2008. There were also seven cases of forcible disappearances in this period. Mindanao registered the most number of extrajudicial killings, with 19 reported from July to September alone.

The most striking cases culled by *Ang Bayan* these past two weeks involved acts of violence and harassment against struggling farmers:

**December 3.** Unidentified armed men killed Arnaldo Hoyohoy, 40, a farmer from Barangay Caranoche, Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental. A bullet entered through his right cheek and exited from the left side of his neck. Hoyohoy's father is one of 30 farmer-beneficiaries recently installed by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) on a 61-hectare piece of land owned by former Rep. Herminio Teves. The land was the subject of an 11-year court battle.

**December 2.** Policemen twice blocked a group of farmers from Sitio Banasi, Barangay Pawili, Bula, Camarines Sur. They were first prevented from marching to Malacañang. They were later stopped again from marching to the DAR office. The farmers are demanding a reversal of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita order issued in April 2008 revoking the Certificate of Land Ownership Award granted in 1997 to 57 farmers from Banasi for a 123-hectare landholding in the area. Malacañang restored the land to the landlord Fajardo-Imperial family, claiming that the disputed

property was pastureland and therefore exempt from CARP coverage and eligible for land-use conversion. The farmers say Malacañang decided without even bothering to inspect the land which has long been planted to sugar, rice and corn.

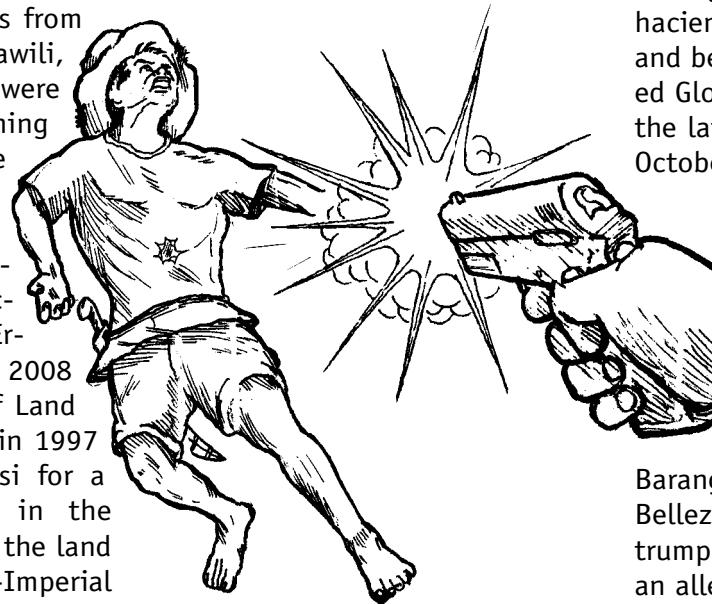
**November 30.** Suspected military elements killed Isabelino Celing, 47, Bayan Muna coordinator of Monkayo, Compostela Valley. He was ambushed in Sitio Samuag, Barangay Haguiman, Monkayo. Celing survived the ambush but died while undergoing treatment at a hospital after six days. He suffered five gunshot wounds. The assassins rode a red XRM mo-

torcycle without license plates.

**November 28.** Eight armed men abducted Mohammad Diya Hamja, a member of Hustisy! and the Moro Christian People's Alliance (MCPA). Hamja had just come from a mosque when his abductors forced him at gunpoint to board a white L-300 van with license plate XHC-238. Hamja, 50, was one of the Basilan residents arrested by the military in 2000 and accused of being members of the Abu Sayyaf. He was detained at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig but released due to lack of evidence. Human rights advocates strongly condemned Hamja's abduction.

**November 27.** Nine farmers from Hacienda Bacan in Guintubhan, Isabela, Negros Occidental were arbitrarily arrested and detained by the police in a Quezon City jail. The farmers were rallying in front of the Land Registration Authority (LRA) to assert their rights to a 157-hectare landholding owned by the family of the president's husband Mike Arroyo. They were charged with illegal assembly. Six farmers from the same hacienda had earlier been arrested and beaten up when they confronted Gloria Arroyo with a rally during the latter's visit to Bacolod City in October.

**November 26.** Combined forces of the Zambales Criminal Investigation and Detection Team and the Military Intelligence Group of Eastern Visayas illegally arrested Oscar Belleza, 51, in Barangay Banican, Olongapo City. Belleza is one of the accused in a trumped-up murder case involving an alleged purge that took place in Inopacan, Southern Leyte in 1985.





The military claims that Belleza is an official of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

**November 23.** Policemen conducted an illegal search of the houses of Cecilia Cervantes and her sister Leoncia in Barangay Bi-gaa, Cabuyao, Laguna. Cecilia Cervantes is one of the officers of the Labor Education Advocacy Development Response Services (LEADER Inc.), a group that advocates union rights.

The Cervantes family recounted how the policemen barged into the houses without a search warrant. They trained guns at family members who were inside at the time, ordered them to lie face down on the floor and later forced them to come with them. When they refused, the policemen forcibly took Darwin Cervantes, 25, a nephew of Cecilia's and accused him of being a marijuana user. To make it appear that Darwin was the real target, the policemen also arrested his friend Jericho Librero from the next barrio.

The incident is but the latest in an ongoing suppression campaign against mass leaders and activists in Southern Tagalog.

**November 22.** Gunmen shot to death peasant leader Vicente Paglinawan. Witnesses said that Paglinawan was then speaking before members of a cooperative in Paquibato District, Davao City when he was shot. He suffered three gunshot wounds to the head.

**November 16.** Elements of the 39th IB and Scout Rangers summarily executed Red fighter Hajid Marampong (Ka Raffy). Ka Raffy and another Red fighter were ambushed in Sitio Catalan, Barangay Sibulan, Toril, Davao City. They were both unarmed. Ka Raffy's body was riddled with bullets and his

## Militarization victimizes more children under the Arroyo regime

**U**p to 948 children have become victims of various human rights violations since Gloria Arroyo took power in 2001, based on records of the Children's Rehabilitation Center (CRC), an institution monitoring the effects of militarization on children.

Up to two million children have also become victims of forced evacuations, especially in Mindanao. The CRC reported that at least 66 children have been killed, 50 tortured and 55 illegally arrested or detained. Forty-nine survived attempts on their lives in the same period.

Military abuses against children have also worsened under Oplan Bantay Laya 2 (OBL2) as there have been more cases where child victims were branded as child warriors and charged with rebellion. Children were also used as guides in military operations and women and children forced to man checkpoints. The CRC said these practices directly endangered children and were in violation of International Humanitarian Law.

Such violations by the Arroyo regime of the rights of children also arise despite efforts by organizations like the United Nations to strengthen mechanisms to protect children in the midst of armed conflicts.

The CRC plans to submit a report to Radhika Coomaraswamy, United Nations Special Representative to the Secretary General on the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, who is scheduled to visit the Philippines on December 8-12.

The CRC and Salinlahi, another advocate of children's rights, are likewise currently conducting a campaign entitled "Children Under Siege: Children-Victims of the US-Arroyo Regime's War of Terror." The campaign aims to expose violations of the human rights of children resulting from advancing OBL2.

face smashed with a big rock. The AFP falsely claimed that Ka Raffy was among ten Red fighters involved in an encounter with the 39th IB that day.

The 39th IB is also responsible for the killing in 2006 of couple George and Maricel Vigo, NGO workers based in Kidapawan City; farmer Salvador Dante Jr. in Kisante, Makilala, North Cotabato; and Anakpawis volunteer Jay Allunar in Makilala.

Also since 2006, the 39th IB

has been forcing civilians in Kisante, Makilala and Coronan and Astorga in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur to surrender for allegedly being NPA members or supporters. A number of civilians have also been included in a "hit list." In Kisante, 40 farmers were paraded and branded as NPA members or sympathizers. The civilian community is also in constant peril because of the presence of an AFP RSOT camp in the middle of a populated area in Kisante.

## Transport strike paralyzes Bicol

THE Concerned Drivers and Operators for Reforms (CONDOR) and Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (PISTON) launched a transport strike that paralyzed 95% of transportation in three provinces of Bicol. The strike paralyzed up to 99% of transportation in Sorsogon, 98% in Albay and 85% in Camarines Sur. A protest caravan was also launched in Masbate.

The massive transport strike called for a major rollback in oil prices and the scrapping of the 12% value-added tax on petroleum products.

## CPP condemns terrorist attacks in Mumbai

THE Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) condemned terrorist attacks by a group calling itself the "Deccan Majahideen" on the Taj Mahal Hotel and nine other places in Mumbai, India from November 27-30. The indiscriminate attacks and hostage-taking that targeted innocent civilians resulted in 172 killed, including 22 foreigners, and 239 wounded.

The CPP said the attacks run counter to the interests of the Indian people. They do not in any way advance the aspirations of the Indian people to put an end to backward social conditions in their country. Like other third world countries, poverty, imperialist domination and the reactionary ruling class exploitation and oppression of the vast masses of the workers, peasants and other toiling people are widespread in India.

The CPP warned that the Mumbai attacks will be used as a pretext by the US and other imperialists to jus-

tify positioning troops in India and Pakistan. The US will also use them to escalate its interventionist war in Afghanistan and the South Asian region, in accordance with US president-elect Barack Obama's plans.

The CPP is nonetheless confident that these terrorist attacks will not draw the Indian people's attention and strength away from their revolutionary struggle that is advancing in great strides in the Indian countryside. Said the CPP, only with the advance of their people's war will the Indian people achieve complete national and social liberation.

## Witnesses implicate Bolante in "fertilizer scam"

REGIONAL directors of the Department of Agriculture (DA) have confirmed that former Undersecretary Jocelyn "Jocjoc" Bolante himself directed the distribution of funds and projects under the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani program. Despite such testimony, Bolante refused to acknowledge his involvement and continued his lies, prompting the Senate Sergeant at Arms to arrest him last December 4.

The regional directors said that the DA only began having such big funds when Bolante became undersecretary. They added that only Bolante had control over who the recipients of the ₱2.8 billion fund

would be.

A "runner" of the company that supplied the fertilizers said only 70% of the overall funds went to the purchase of fertilizer. Thirty percent (30%) was distributed as cash to those who received fertilizer. According to Jose Barredo, a "runner" of Feshan Philippines, the fertilizer was severely overpriced. The money that was supposed to have been used to buy the fertilizer went directly to Bolante's bank accounts and those of his staff Marites Aytona.

Before it was used as a conduit for watered-down fertilizer, Feshan Philippines' real business was sell-

ing electrical supplies.

Media reports revealed that Bolante had as many as 37 bankbooks but Bolante would admit to having only 23 during the investigation. The senators noted that it was unusual for a person to have so many bank accounts.

Meanwhile, several congressmen whose names were on a list of recipients submitted by Bolante to the Commission on Audit and the DA denied having received funds during the election.

Most congressmen and governors received ₱5 million each to ensure Arroyo's electoral victory in 2004.

## GRP rejects 12-day ceasefire proposal

THE Arroyo regime has rejected a proposal from the National Democratic Front of the Philippines for a 12-day ceasefire during the Christmas season. The NDFP made the offer during informal talks in Oslo, Norway from November 27 to 30. The ceasefire was meant to facilitate to the country's observance of the Christmas season and pave the way for negotiations for the release of two prisoners of war being held by the NPA. GRP chief negotiator Nieves Confesor instead pushed for a much longer ceasefire as a precondition for the resumption of the suspended peace talks. The informal talks thus ended at an impasse.

The proposal for a protracted ceasefire, said NDFP Human Rights Committee chair Ka Fidel Agcaoili, will most likely be used by the regime to buttress brutal military campaigns under Oplan Bantay Laya 2 against the revolutionary forces and the people.

He said that the Arroyo government was not serious in conducting substantive peace talks and wants only to quell and suppress the revolutionary movement.

The NDFP also assailed the Arroyo government's continued stonewalling on the conduct of serious and sustained peace negotiations for social, economic, political and constitutional reforms as the basis for a just and lasting peace.

## Thai prime minister steps down

THAI Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat has declared that he would step down after six months of protest actions by the Thai people led by the People's Alliance for Democracy. The massive protest actions have also led the Constitutional Court in Thailand to dissolve Somchai's party and two other parties in the ruling coalition and ban them from politics for the next five years.

The protests were launched to oust Somchai, brother-in-law of former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra who was overthrown in a military coup in 2006 due to corruption. Last December, Somchai won in elections held after more than a year of military rule. Somchai's party and two other allied parties were accused of massive electoral fraud, and his regime was widely regarded as a mere extension of Thaksin's regime.

The protests culminated in the eight-day occupation of Thailand's main airport. More than 100,000 passengers were affected after the airport ceased operating and suspended its flights.

The demonstrators warned that they would take to the streets once more if the next prime minister will again be involved in corruption.

## Chinese workers strike

MORE than 2,000 workers laid off from a toy factory in Guangdong province in China stormed the factory's office on November 25 to demand their reinstatement. The uprising at the Kaida Toy Factory which is owned by a Hong Kong capitalist is but the latest workers' uprising in the face of worsening unemployment precipitated by the worldwide capitalist crisis.

The workers fought it out with security guards and forced their way into the factory office. Police arrested 19 and six were injured in the protest.

The factory in question has 6,500 workers. It is but one of thousands of factories in Guangdong making products for export. Most of these factories are owned by foreign capitalists and manufacture cheap products like toys and garments.

More than 7,000 laid off workers also rose up in October in Guangdong when one of the biggest foreign-owned toy factories here closed down. The government fears that the critical employment situation in the whole country will lead to widespread uprisings.