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#PeacetalksItuloy*

HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS, church workers, academe, cultural workers and human rights advocates expressed their continuing support for the resumption of peace talks between the NDFP and GRP after GRP Pres. Rodrigo Duterte arbitrarily terminated the negotiations.

Last February 10, hundreds of students held a protest along Taft Avenue to Pedro Gil St., Manila. Students and progressive groups also gathered at the University of the Philippines-Diliman, in Freedom Park, Davao City and People's Park in Baguio City. The groups demanded the continuation of the scheduled meeting on February 22 and April 2 and the release of all political prisoners.

In Congress, the Makabayan bloc filed a resolution to push for the continuation of the talks. They were able to gather more than 103 signatures from the lawmakers. In the motion, they declared that compared to the previous administrations, peace negotiations under the Duterte regime were able to achieve substantive and positive progress that would be wasted if talks were terminated.

Last February 17, Kapayapaan, an organization promoting peace based on justice, headed the multi-sectoral protest action, Stand for Peace, in front of Bonifacio Shrine in Manila.

In a joint statement released by Kapayapaan, the termination of peace talks will only worsen the conflict as long the root causes of

...to be continued on 3



EDITORIAL

Defend the people against the AFP's all-out war

The Filipino people must firmly and vigorously fight back against the relentless all-out war being carried out by the fascist AFP under the Duterte regime.

After both the GRP and the CPP and NPA terminated their reciprocal ceasefire declarations in the first week of February, AFP attacks and abuses have considerably worsened.

There are outstanding cases of aerial bombings and artillery shelling. Entire communities are subjected to violence, are compelled or forced to evacuate and depicted as victims caught in the crossfire of the AFP and NPA when, in fact, they are the target of AFP suppression. The AFP targets barangays where the village people's resistance against plunder

and landgrabbing are strong.

The fascist soldiers hound and target mass leaders and activists in the countryside and cities. There are cases of mass arrests. A number of activists in the aboveground mass movement have been arrested and accused of being leaders or officials of the NPA. Expect that cases of military abuses will grow worse after the announcement that the AFP will be used in the "war against drugs."

When the all-out war was launched by the AFP, its officials declared that "we will hit them hard." Indeed, the AFP has dealt

strong blows; but mainly against unarmed people. Entire communities suffer. Civilians being killed are presented as NPA fighters to make it appear they are winning their declared war.

The tactics of the all-out war are comparable to the tactics implemented during the first and second Oplan Bantay Laya (2001-2009) campaign of the Arroyo regime. Key security officials then under Arroyo are now among the leading officials of Duterte. The former AFP chief-of-staff Gen. Hermonogenes Esperon is now National Security Adviser. The current AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Año is one of the officials behind the abduction of activist Jonas Burgos in 2006.

The AFP's all-out war is a dirty war against the people. This goes along the frame of the counter-insurgency doc-

trine of US imperialism. This is vigorously being pushed by Defense Sec. Delfin Lorenzana, former military attaché based in Washington D.C. and presently one of the most trusted agents of US imperialism in the Duterte government.

Pressed by Lorenzana and the AFP, and by the defenders of neoliberalism and other US agents, Duterte has taken back or toned down his past anti-US declarations and friendly overtures to the revolutionary movement. Under Duterte's authority as chief of the reactionary state, the AFP has now unleashed an

all-out war against the people. If the AFP's all-out war continues, he will ultimately be held responsible by the people for all the abuses, violations of human rights and crimes by the AFP.

The Filipino people must vigorously oppose the AFP's all-out war under the Duterte regime. This is a struggle to defend the rights under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). This is also in defense of the victories achieved by the masses in their struggle against foreign plunder, especially mining and plantation operations, in defense of their ancestral land, and in the struggle for genuine land reform.

The struggle against the AFP's all-out war seeks to defend the livelihood, schools, medical and other services which the masses have collectively built through their organizations. The AFP desperately seeks to destroy these in the zealous assertion of exclusive dominion.

The anti-fascist struggles in the cities and countryside must be intensified. In the countryside, Human Rights Committees must be set up closely linked with similar organizations and institutions in other barangays, in the town centers as well as in the province and region. People in neighboring barangays must closely work together to help defend each other against the marauding AFP in their area.

Promptly expose "peace and development", "delivery of service" and other disguises used by the AFP to conceal their fangs of repression. Quickly gather and mobilize support from church people and other organizations and personalities in the town centers. Mobilize the youth to take pictures and videos and quickly upload



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these to social media sites.

In the cities, a broad and strong anti-fascist movement that has widespread support in schools, churches and cultural circles must be generated. The urban mass movement must firmly support the anti-fascist struggles in the countryside. Cases of repression in the cities must be linked to cases of repression in the countryside. Expose fascist repression as aimed principally at suppressing the people's anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggles. Denounce the use of state violence both for political repression and for the war against drugs. Oppose the use of the war against drugs as pretext for political repression.

The clamor to continue GRP-NDFP peace negotiations must be strengthened in order to build on the achievements of the first three rounds. The Party is open to discuss a bilateral ceasefire agreement. The NDFP is expected to pursue the principled stand for the withdrawal of all AFP units occupying civilian communities, especially those within the guerrilla zones.

Amid the all-out offensive operations of the AFP, the NPA must carry forward the war to defend the people. They must strike the armed units of the AFP that have committed abuses against the people, especially in the barrios. Mobilize the people's militias in defending the welfare and rights of the people. Make use of all weapons to punish the occupying troops of the AFP.

The NPA must be continuously strengthened. Rapidly recruit, arm and train new Red fighters. The NPA must take hold of initiative in launching military campaigns and tactical offensives across the nation to derail the enemy's all-out war, attain victories and advance the people's war. AB

"Peacetalks..." from page 1

armed struggle remain unresolved.

Representatives of ACT Teachers Partylist, Antonio Tinio and France Castro joined the mobilization. In Davao City, a peace consultation was held by progressive organizations last February 18 in Ateneo de Davao.

School administrators and professors from University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila, De La Salle University, Siliman University, University of Makati and Philippine Normal University also expressed their support. Government officials like Sen. Loren Legarda, Sen. Chiz Escudero and National Youth Commissioner Aiza Seguerra also backed people's clamor for the resumption of talks. AB

**#Resumepeacetalks*

OBR for Peace

THOUSANDS OF WOMEN assembled at Liwasang Bonifacio last February 14 for the annual One Billion Rising (OBR) to demand the resumption of the NDFP-GRP peace negotiations.

OBR is a broad campaign to end systematic violence against women and children. Yearly, millions of women simultaneously dance in different parts of the world. Here in the Philippines, the theme for this year was "Women rising for livelihood, land, justice and peace".

Led by Gabriela and OBR Global Director Monique Wilson, the rallyists condemned the Armed Forces of the Philippines' "all-out-war" in the countryside.

According to Joms Salvador, Gabriela secretary general, the all-out war primarily victimizes people in the rural communities. While development workers and community leaders are assassinated and arrested one after the other, aerial bombardment and hamletting of thousands of rural residents are carried out in the countryside.

As part of the program, women from various sectors danced to the OBR theme song. Actress-beauty queen Maria Isabel Lopez, film director Bibeth Orteza, comedienne Mae Paner and Sr. Mary John Mananzan attended the event. Students from universities and colleges also expressed solidarity to the event. Department of Social Welfare secretary Judy Taguiwalo

and Usec. Marion Tan, undersecretary of National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) also participated.

Groups also held OBR events in Rizal Park, Davao City, where more than 1,000 people from institutions and communities in the province attended. Councilor Leah Librado-Yap was also present during the program.

"In the midst of a seemingly horrifying all-out war and heavy military operations, like what we hear in Compostela Valley and Davao Oriental provinces, women and their children are the most vulnerable victims," said Librado.

Luzviminda Ilagan, national chairperson of Gabriela, added that ending poverty, violence, land, job security, right to ancestral lands, are the compelling reasons to pursue peace negotiations.

Students from St. Scholastica's College, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, San Jose High School, Misamis Oriental Institute of Science and Technology, Holy Angel University, UP Visayas and UP Manila also took part in this year's event.

OBR dances were also held in Cebu, Aklan, Capiz, Pampanga, Hongkong and Macau. AB

The AFP's anti-peace all-out war

After GRP Pres. Rodrigo Duterte declared last February 8 his decision to terminate the NDFP-GRP peace talks, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana took the lead in announcing the all-out war against the New People's Army (NPA). He said that the NPA poses a big threat to the Philippines' national security, and proceeded to incite the people to assist the AFP in its all-out war.

The GRP likewise terminated the JASIG which grants security to NDFP consultants. Both the AFP and PNP supported this by declaring that they will hunt down and re-arrest the consultants.

With Lorenzana pushing the all-out war are National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon and AFP Chief General Eduardo Año, both notorious fascist zealots and key implementers of the past US-Arroyo regime's dirty war against those it labeled as enemies of the state.

Needless to say, the AFP's all-out war backfired as the NPA waged active defense and launched tactical offensives. On the other hand, the AFP and PNP's attacks against activists and civilians intensified. In a span of more or less two weeks, no less than 20 activists and civilians were arrested, 12 were shot dead while 12 more cases of frustrated killings were recorded, and up to 1,300 families of peasants and indigenous peoples were displaced from their communities.

Among the latest arrested by the reactionary state's forces was Ferdinand Castillo, Bayan-Metro Manila campaign officer. He was arrested last February 12 in Sta. Quiteria, Caloocan City and was slapped with trumped-up charges of double murder and multiple attempted murder. In the past few days, police and military operatives also arrested relief worker Rogina Quilop in Bacolod City (February 7); Sarah Abellon-Alikes together with Promencio Cortez and Marciano Sagun in Itogon, Benguet (February 9); Edison Villanueva of

Gabriela-Southern Tagalog in Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro (February 4); and Jacinto Faroden in La Trinidad, Benguet (February 8).

With regards to the NDFP consultants, the AFP and PNP openly announced their hunt for Pedro Codaste, Alfredo Mapano, and Concha Araneta-Bocala. The PNP-CIDG also disregarded the necessity for court orders, and stated that their agents anticipate that consultants targeted for re-arrest will "violently resist."

In Pantukan, Compostela Valley, activist farmer Edweno Catog was killed after being shot at close range near his home last February 16. Catog was an ardent supporter of the organization MARBAI's struggle against Lapanday Foods Corporation's landgrabbing of peasants' farmlands.

Also, the PNP-CIDG XI and SWAT last February 6 killed Glenn Ramos, Tokhang-style. Ramos was a former Bayan Muna coordinator and was working as a construction

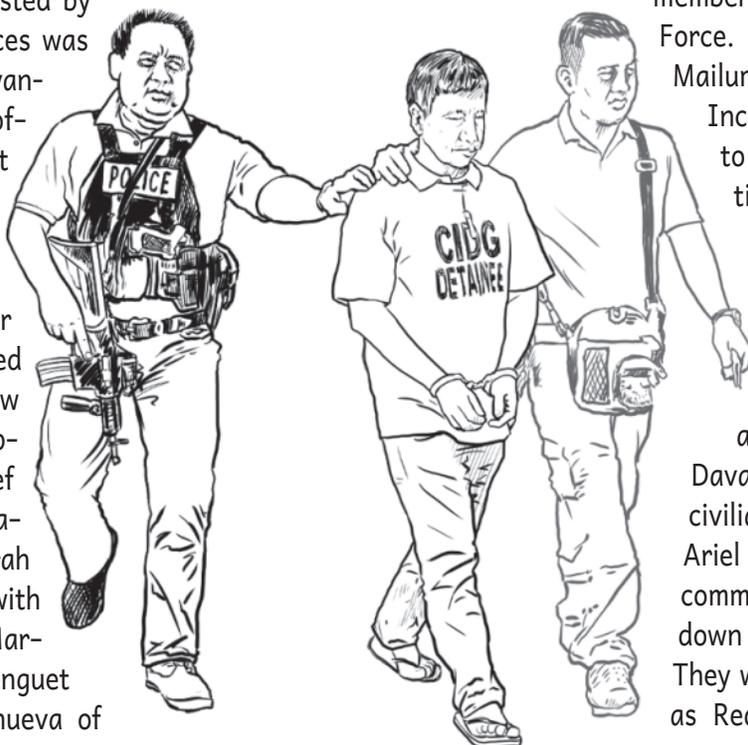
worker at the time of his murder. The PNP declared that Ramos violently resisted his arresters. According to his family, operatives entered their house in Brgy. Maa and planted a firearm for evidence before killing Ramos.

In Bobon, Northern Samar last February 14, soldiers belonging to the 43rd IB killed Bernadette Lutao, a mass leader in the said village. Afterwards, Lutao was reported to the media as a Red fighter who was supposedly killed in a firefight. According to residents, there was no encounter in the area and Lutao was in the community when she was shot.

Meanwhile, last February 4 in Brgy. Mangaod, Cabanglasan, Bukidnon, the Alamara killed Datu Lorendo Pocoan. The Alamara is an AFP-supported notorious paramilitary group. A day earlier, another indigenous leader in Bukidnon, Renato Anglao, was killed by state forces. Anglao is an active member of the Tribal Indigenous Oppressed Group Association (TINDOGA), an organization fighting against landgrabbing of their ancestral domain.

Only recently, Willerme Agorde, 64 years old, was killed this February 19 by gunmen believed to be members of the paramilitary Bagani Force. Agorde was a leader of Mailuminado Farmers Association Incorporated which is fighting to claim the land they have tilled for decades.

After incurring heavy casualties from three coordinated tactical offensives by the NPA last February 16 in Paquibato and Calinan districts in Davao City, soldiers killed two civilians. Roel Satingasin and Ariel Gelbero were ordinary commuters who were flagged down by soldiers at a checkpoint. They were presented to the public as Red fighters killed in an en-





counter.

In Agusan del Norte last February 11, two small-scale miners were killed when armed men who were with the 29th IB and PNP-SAF joint operations opened fire at their group in Sitio Sarog, Brgy. San Isidro, Santiago. Seven other miners were injured in the shooting. According to the NPA-NEMR, the 29th IB and its paramilitary forces have for long been seizing the miners' tunnels in order to arrogate high-grade gold deposits.

Meanwhile, in Pres. Roxas City in Capiz, a farmer was killed while five others were wounded when their

campout was fired upon by personnel of Hacienda Montecarba last February 11. (Read related news in page 7.)

Also, up to 100 families of indigenous peoples were displaced by the 54th IB's intensified operations in Brgy. Namal, Asipulo, Ifugao and its neighboring areas. Village folk also reported that the soldiers forcibly entered the residence of Patrick Pugong and confiscated his generator set. The soldiers accused Pugong as caretaker of the NPA's generator set.

The evacuees are currently staying at the Namal Elementary School and at other facilities in the sitios (sub-villages). A quarter of them are children. They are in dire need of food, water and blankets because of the very cold weather. An elderly man has already died from the cold.

Similar incidents happened in the town of Maddela, Quirino province last February 13. Hundreds of villagers from the communities evacuated due to operations launched by the 86th IB in Brgy. San Martin. According to the group Danggayan-Cagayan Valley, the soldiers have been instigating fear and terror among residents of villages San Martin, Villa Gracia, and Villa Ylanan. Residents were threatened that their communities will be bombarded and were forced to evacuate. AB

AFP bombs communities

GRAVE CRIMES AGAINST whole civilian communities were successively committed after the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) declared its all-out war against the revolutionary forces.

In Far South Mindanao, more than 200 Lumad families, mostly B'laan and Kaolo, were driven from their communities following the AFP's aerial bombing of sitios Tangis and Kindag in Barangay Datal Anggas in Alabel, Sarangani. Since February 11, the AFP has already conducted six bombardments, strafing the areas afterwards. Residents were stopped by 73rd IB soldiers from leaving the place. A food blockade was imposed by the military and even relief workers from the government were prohibited to enter the area.

The soldiers arrested four civilians, tortured and coerced them into serving as guides in the military's operations. The group Kahug-pongan sa Lumad sa Halayong Habagatang Mindanao (Kaluhham-

in) identified the civilians as Rene Mancal, Meon Salda, Fausto Barro and Garson Barro.

The following day, the 73rd IB again arrested men whom the 10th ID presented to the public as NPA "new recruits." The six arrested were Simeon Salda, Jun Moda, Claude Palbe, Garzon Palbe, Rene Ompao and Sabelo Colano.

In Southern Mindanao, around 1,000 families (more than 5,000 individuals) have become victims of forced evacuation as a result of AFP shelling using 105mm Howitzers on February 11 in barangays Macopa, Kibagyo and Bullucan in Laak, Compostela Valley. In Davao Oriental, barangays in Manay were also shelled on February 1, and the



AFP conducted aerial bombing in Lupon, Davao Oriental on February 14.

These bombings, which are indiscriminate in their targets, have resulted in many reports of injuries among civilians and damages to the homes and livelihoods of peasant Lumad communities. These have aggravated the communities' constant struggle with poverty and the recent floods and heavy rains. AB

NPA launches widespread military actions

Units of the New People's Army (NPA) vigorously defended revolutionary bases and guerrilla zones from attacks by AFP, PNP and other military groups. This was in accordance to the NPA National Operations Command's directive to launch active defense while the unilateral ceasefire was in force, and tactical offensives after its termination takes effect.

From February 1 to 10, at least 15 active defense actions were launched by NPA units across the country. (See *Ang Bayan*, February 7). After the ceasefire termination, at least eight tactical offensives were reported in different parts of the country, garnering twenty firearms. Among these military actions were:

Southern Mindanao Region. A company of Red fighters attacked a 72nd IB detachment in Sitio Binaton, Barangay Malabog in Paquibato District, Davao City, around 5:30 a.m. on February 16. This offensive was in response to the residents' demands to punish the mercenary troops who serve as facilitators and protectors of the illegal drug trade in the district and environs. They gave security to the late Neptali Alfredo Pondoc, a notorious drug trade operator whom the NPA punished on January 23. One 72nd IB soldier was killed in the firefight and several were wounded. One Red fighter was martyred.

Around 4 p.m., the NPA used command-detonated explosives in Brgy. Lamanan in Calinan District to ambush a five-truck convoy of the 3rd IB. Three KM450 trucks were demolished. At least seven soldiers were killed and more than ten were wounded.

Half an hour later, two trucks of 3rd IB reinforcing troops were again exploded in Brgy. Lacson, Calinan District, wherein two AFP troops were killed and 17 wounded.

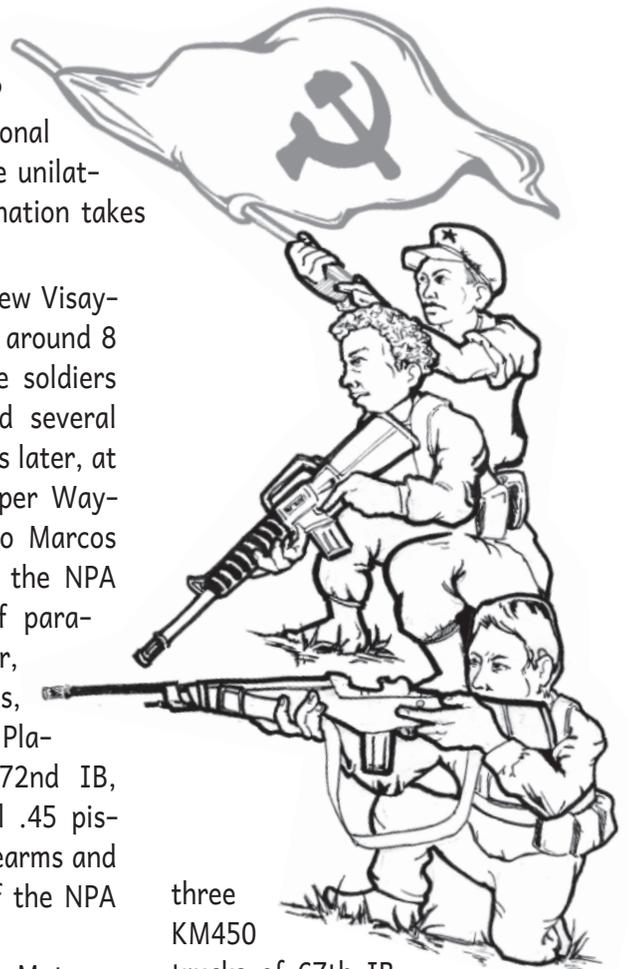
A platoon of operating troops of the 28th IB were surprised by an ambush by Red fighters of the Com-Val-Davao Gulf Subregional Opera-

tions Command in Brgy. New Visayas, Lupon, Davao Oriental around 8 a.m. on February 14. Five soldiers were confirmed killed and several were wounded. A few hours later, at a checkpoint in Purok Upper Waywayan, Brgy. Don Mariano Marcos in the same municipality, the NPA arrested two members of paramilitary forces. Rene Doller, 34, and Carl Mark Nucos, 24, both members of 1st Platoon, 4th CAAC under 72nd IB, were both divested of cal .45 pistols, their official issue firearms and are now in the custody of the NPA as prisoners of war.

Around 9 a.m., in Matupe, Kitaotao, Bukidnon, shots by Red fighters surprised the joint operating troops of the 72nd CAFGU and Alamara. Earlier, as part of defense against the enemy during the ceasefire period, NPA units conducted active defense operations. On February 9, four operating troopers of the 60th IB were seriously wounded when fired upon by a Pulang Bagani Company (PBC) team in the hinterlands of Sitio Patong, Brgy. Langtud, Laak, Compostela Valley.

On February 6, Edwin Hijara, member of the 39th IB's CAFGU was ambushed while conducting intelligence operations in Brgy. Balite, Magpet, North Cotabato. This was part of the 39th IB's combat operations. A team of NPA front guerrilla units fired at 71st IB operating troops in Sitio San Roque, Brgy. New Cortez, New Corella, Davao del Norte, wherein one AFP trooper was killed and seven were wounded.

On February 9, a PBC team in Sitio Daw-an, Brgy. San Jose, Caraga, Davao Oriental, exploded



three KM450 trucks of 67th IB troops that were sent as reinforcements to the previous encounter.

Panay. On February 7, around 6 a.m., an NPA platoon under the Jose Percival Estocada Jr. Command (JPEC) ambushed a 16-man 61st IB operating unit in Sitio Tina, Brgy. Acuna, Tapaz, Capiz. Two enemy troopers were confirmed killed and four were wounded, while the Red fighters were able to withdraw safely. The NPA seized one M4 rifle with an M203 grenade launcher.

On February 4, around 11 a.m., a JPEC unit fired at 61st IB troops encamped in the barangay hall of Brgy. Cabatangan, Lambunao, Iloilo. The NPA Red fighters were also able to withdraw safely.

North Central Mindanao. An NPA unit arrested PO2 Jerome Anthony Natividad at a checkpoint in Tikalaan, Talakag, Bukidnon on February 9, around 6 a.m. Confiscated from him were a Glock pistol, one carbine, and three shotguns. This brings to six the total number of prisoners of war in NPA custody in various Mindanao regions. AB

Paid thugs attack Capiz farmers' campout

HACIENDA MONTECARBA thugs shot farmers on a campout in Barangay Culilang, Pres. Roxas City, Capiz on the afternoon of February 11. The farmers set up camp to assert their right to the land.

Killed in the shooting was Orlando Eslana while Melinda Arroyo Eslana was put in critical condition. Lida Amo, Ana Bocala, Rita Bocala and Adel Vergara were wounded. Suspects in the shooting were the hacienda administrator Ferdinand Bacanto, his brother Jun, and Leopoldo Lachica. A victim was able to capture the incident on video and posted it on Facebook. The municipal police force who witnessed the incident did not lift a finger. The next night, hacienda thugs burned down the camp.

On February 5, some 68 peasant worker families set up camp in Hacienda Montecarba which was being claimed by the Tan clan. The hacienda covers 300 hectares of land in the boundaries of Brgy. Dulangan in Pilar town and Culilang in Pres. Roxas. Since 1997, 199 hectares of hacienda land has been awarded under the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) to 132 beneficiaries but these never went to the farmers' hands.

Since 2010, the hacienda administrator started to eject the beneficiaries gradually. Bacanto is the barangay

captain of Culilang. Despite threats and intimidation, the farmers went on with their campout.

Anakpawis, Bayan-Panay, Buylog Capiznon, Kamaca and Pamanggas expressed their solidarity. DAR Secretary Ka Paeng Mariano also directed the DAR local office to exert all efforts to avoid a repeat of the incident and to immediately help the families of the victims.

Meanwhile, the NPA-Panay (Coronacion Chiva Command) declared its strong condemnation of the violent dispersal and shooting. In a statement, Ka Julian Paisano expressed support for the farmers' struggle. He said that the NPA is aware of the plight of hacienda peasants because most members of the people's army were farmers who became victims of social injustice and took up arms to solve the land problem. "The struggle for land...must be strongly connected to the people's revolutionary armed struggle," he added.

BHB-Panay advised the farmers to use the incident as guide to understand their class struggle and the importance of strengthening their ranks to fight against the oppressive and exploitative classes. AB



Farmers' enemies punished

AMID LEFT AND right shooting of peasants by landlords' armed groups, the revolutionary forces continue to mete punishment on big corporations and landlords oppressing workers and peasants.

On February 6, Red fighters of the NPA-Mindoro (Lucio De Guzman Command or LdGC) successfully disarmed the Sidekick Security Agency of landlord Annaliza Pojas-Lopez who is a landgrabber in Occidental Mindoro.

The disarming was in response to the violent demolition of a fishing community in Brgy. Salvacion, Rizal, Occidental Mindoro, according to Madaay Gasic, spokesperson of LdGC.

Red fighters confiscated three shotguns, ammunition and other military equipment from the guards in the said raid. Afterwards, a warning letter was read to the guards who were indicted for maltreatment and grave threats to the lives of demolition victims.

Meanwhile, an NPA unit under the Chadli Molintas Command razed to the ground two dump trucks of the environmentally destructive Philex Mining Corporation in Ampucao Central, Itogon, Benguet on February 9. A .45 cal pistol was confiscated from the Philex guard. AB

Anti-mining struggles intensify

STRIDENT OBJECTION GREETED Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Sec. Gina Lopez' decision this month to put a stop to mining operations of up to 40 companies. Among those cancelled were contracts of 23 companies, with five companies suspended for six months.

She also cancelled contracts of 75 projects underway because these are found in watersheds in different parts of the country. Lopez' stand that these operations would be detrimental to the environment is firm. Her stand stems not only from her department and other agencies' intensive investigations but also from the decades-long struggles of entire communities against forest denudation, river and water pollution and destruction of productive lands due to mining.

In face of this, the Duterte regime dithers in its support for Lopez and there are even times when it seems to favor mining companies. It believes that the suspensions and cancellations should have gone through a "due process."

The regime even echoes the myths perpetuated by mining companies to excuse their plunderous and destructive operations. They claim that many Filipinos will lose their jobs and the government will lose revenues. However, statistics from government agencies will attest that mining does not contribute significantly to the local economy. From 2012 to 2016, it contributed only 0.65% to the GDP. Likewise, employment in the sector is also minimal (0.6% of the total employment.)

Drivers sustain protests

THE JEEPNEY OPERATORS' and drivers' struggles continue to grow against the plan to phase jeepneys out from the streets. Led by PISTON and No to Jeepney Phase-out Coalition, a national strike is slated for this month. This is a continuation of the protests at the start of 2017.

Among actions in the past is the January 16 coordinated protest that assembled more than 2,200 persons aboard 200 vehicles in a rally-caravan in Metro Manila.

A march-caravan of 37 jeepneys and 100 people in Cauayan City, Isabela and noise barrage at the passenger terminals in Santiago City and Claveria, Cagayan were launched at the same time. In Laguna, 50 people aboard 12 jeepneys and two motorcycles rode to the LTFRB office. The picket-rally in Iloilo City was joined by 80 people despite the bad weather. In Bacolod City, a caravan was held with 200 vehicles, while drivers and operators in General Santos City held a 30-jeepney rally-caravan to the local LTFRB office. On January 17, 60 operators and drivers joined a picket-rally in Cebu City. On January 21, more than 500 drivers and operators assembled in a rally in Metro Baguio.

Drivers and operators in a federation in Metro Manila stopped plying their routes on February 6. This was joined in solidarity by PISTON and No to

Jeepney Phase-out Coalition with a rally-caravan at the Department of Transportation's (DOTr) head office, participated in by 200 people. Some areas with PISTON organizations joined the transportation stoppage, such as CAMANAVA and some

routes in Quezon City, Marikina, Manila, Pasay and Taguig.

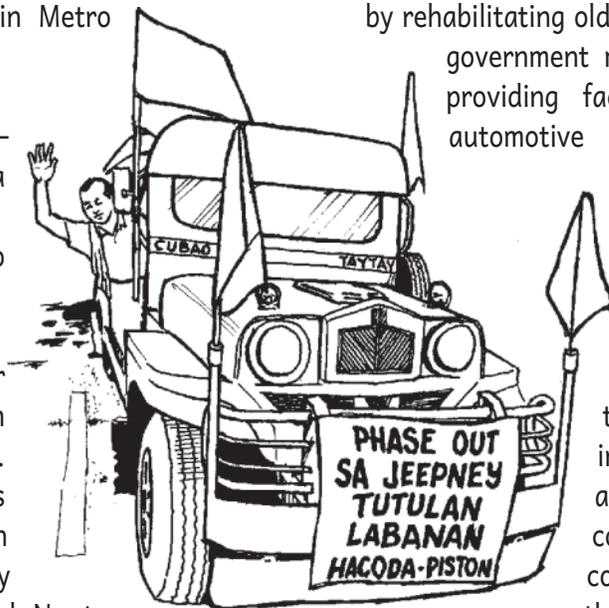
The government had been planning the Jeepney Phase-out since November 2015 and the DOTr Draft Department Order was released on August 17, 2016. Proposed bills in two houses of Congress also introduced Route Rationalization, or identifying roads that will be off-limits to jeepneys and other passenger vehicles, whereby jeepney franchises on these streets will be cancelled or their routes transferred. The DOTr's Draft Department Order set requirements that ordinary jeepney operators cannot afford, such as P7 million capitalization and a 10-unit minimum on every franchise.

In opposition to this scheme, PISTON demanded that instead of "modernization," the roadworthiness of jeepneys should be ensured by rehabilitating old units, which the

government must address by providing facilities such as automotive repair shops, lower costs of spare parts and others.

According to PISTON, putting the transport system in public hands and not in the control of private corporations is the measure that

will indisputably address the people's needs and resolve the traffic problem. The government must fund mass transportation systems such as trains and others to offer affordable, if not free transportation to all.



US warship dockings resume

TWO US WARSHIPS have already docked in the country this year, proving that nothing has changed in US-Philippines military relations. On January 23, warship USS John S. McCain docked in Subic Bay, Zambales. Last February 15, USS Louisville also docked in the bay. Both ships are part of the US 7th Fleet assigned to the Asia-Pacific region. Both conducted "community activities" in nearby towns to justify their entry to the country.

Meanwhile, US encroachment in Philippine waters continued unhampered under the guise of "freedom of navigation." The latest of these is the entry of its Carrier Strike Group 1, led by the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, which started its patrol last February 18.

Prior to this, Department of National Defense Sec. Delfin Lorenzana announced that Duterte has agreed to the US construction of barracks, warehouses and airports in three locations as provided by the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). This is in contradiction to the president's previous stand against EDCA and presence of US military troops in the country.

Earlier, Duterte exposed that the US is stockpiling arms and matériel, including tanks, in the country. This was after the US senate allotted up to \$7.5 billion to strengthen its forces in Asia. Included in the funding are allotments for repair and construction of bases in Pampanga, Cagayan de Oro and Palawan, locations which the US have long occupied and where the US stockpiled war matériel.

Trump's anti-immigration policy temporarily halted

A JUDGE ISSUED a temporary order against Pres. Donald Trump's executive order banning the travel of citizens from seven countries to the US within 90 days and suspending processing refugees for 120 days.

On February 3, a Washington court declared the January 28 order unconstitutional and issued a national emergency order against it. Citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen are affected by the ban, including green card holders. Processing of Syrian refugees would be suspended indefinitely. Prior to the emergency order, courts in New York, Boston, Alexandria, Virginia and Seattle—cities with large international airports—have invalidated the order. This is to protect the rights of affected travellers who have already landed in their areas.

The anti-immigrant order immediately garnered widespread and fierce opposition. Spontaneous protests erupted in airports on the day the order was announced. On the following days, on January 29

and 30, hundreds of Americans launched protests in almost 30 cities, including New York, Boston, Washington D.C., Detroit and Los Angeles.

Among those who protested in airports and cities where immigrants were detained are member organizations of the International League of People's Struggles (ILPS)-US.

The countries included in the ban are countries which the US has bombed, militarized, destroyed or subjected to various forms of imperialist aggression to control their oil reserves and natural resources to further US international domination. The global refugee crisis and large-scale migration of the unemployed from these countries are rooted in imperialist aggression, destabilization and neoliberal eco-

nomie policies perpetuated by past US administrations, the ILPS said.

On February 16, hundreds launched "A Day Without Immigrants" where businesses closed shop, students walked out and poured into the streets to show Trump the importance of foreign-born US residents. An estimated 12% of the US population is foreign-born, and more than 40 million of them are naturalized US citizens. Protests were also held in Dallas and Los Angeles in February 18.

Outside the US, protests against Trump's order were also widespread. On February 12, thousands protested in Mexico City to criticize Trump's portrayal of Mexicans as criminals and rapists. On February 17, hundreds of Mexicans lined up on the border to form a human wall to protest the planned construction of a border wall between two countries. In London, hundreds protested on January 30 against the ban, and again on February 4. 