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EDITORIAL

Transform rural unrest to revolutionary mass action

The raging flames of rural unrest is being fueled further by the Duterte regime. Its successive anti-peasant and anti-people policies are set to displace thousands upon thousands of peasants, fisherfolk and minority people from their farms, fishing grounds and ancestral land that serve the interests of big bourgeois compradors and big foreign capitalists. Duterte remains deaf to the clamor of millions of landless peasants for genuine land reform.

Duterte has accelerated land grabbing and land-use conversion to pave the way for infrastructure, tourism and energy projects. In Central Luzon, tens of thousands of families are set to be driven away from their agricultural land and fishing grounds by the construction of expressways, airports, so-called ecozones and other real estate projects covering thousands of hectares.

Several thousand families are also set to be displaced in South-

ern Luzon as the Duterte government fast-tracks the construction of facilities to address the transportation and logistic operations of big business enterprises. Tens of thousands of families will also be dislocated with at least ten major infrastructure projects planned in Davao and other Mindanao regions.

Megadam projects such as those in Kalinga, Tarlac, Quezon and Iloilo which are set to dis-

"Transform..." continued on page 2

NPA-Bukidnon seizes 6 firearms

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Bukidnon seized three R4 assault rifles (attached to one of which is an M203 grenade launcher), two M14s, a .45 caliber pistol, eight ammunition and vests in a successful raid against a base of the 1st Special Forces Battalion (SFB)-Civilian Active Auxiliary in Sitio Green Valley, Barangay Dalwangan, Malaybalay City on February 14, 9:40 p.m. Four enemy troopers were confirmed killed. Meanwhile, a Red fighter was martyred and two others were wounded.

The Red fighters were able to control the camp which was situated along a major road in Bukidnon within five minutes. Ka Malem Mabini, spokesperson of the NPA-North Central Mindanao Region, said that 1st SFB elements serve as a mercenaries of

"NPA-Bukidnon..." continued on page 3

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place tens of thousands of families and inundate close to a hundred thousand hectares of land, mostly ancestral lands of minority peoples.

In compliance with imperialist dictates, Duterte has paved the way for the complete liberalization of rice importation through the rice tarrification law. This will cause a sharp loss of income and grave sufferings to more than two million rice tenant farmers and farm workers even as they continue to be burdened by feudal rent, absence of mechanization and state subsidy. Under the guise of lowering domestic rice prices, the liberalization of rice imports is bound to debilitate local rice production and result in import dependence of the country's rice supply and high prices in the long-run. The ultimate aim of the measure is to force rice farmers into bankruptcy, force rice lands to

become idle and thus pave the way for conversion.

The economic dislocation of hundreds of thousands of rice tenant farmers will add to the grave state of rural unemployment. Over the past two years, more than one million agricultural jobs were lost, mainly as a result of widespread land conversion and continuing downtrend in agricultural production. The Philippine countryside is overflowing with surplus labor.

Duterte's measures aggravate the socioeconomic conditions of millions of peasant tillers who continue to suffer from landlessness in the absence of a genuine land reform program. The reactionary land reform program of the past 30 years failed to address the peasant's clamor for social justice and free free distribution of land to the tillers of the land. It has merely served as a real estate transaction. More than 90% of






"beneficiaries" have yet to complete payment of their amortization. The rest remain essentially landless with many compelled to enter into agreements or arrangements where they have been deprived control over their land.

Land remains concentrated in the hands of a few. Large haciendas remain in the hands of the Cojuangcos, Roxases, Aranetas and other big landlords. Hundreds of thousands of hectares of agricultural land are controlled by big plantations. Peasants and farm workers continue to suffer from feudal and semifeudal forms of exploitation, including onerous land rent, usury, high costs of inputs and extremely low wages.

To placate widespread peasant discontent over landlessness, displacement due to land-use conversions, rise in rural joblessness and loss of income, Duterte is busy drumbeating and staging shows of "land distribution." Duterte's "land reform," however, is a big fake. In fact, he is distributing mere documents requiring recipients to pay regular amortization. His order to prioritize the distribution of government lands amounts to nothing and aims only to cover-up his fealty to the big landlord class and plantation owners and refusal to subject them to land reform.

Duterte's false land reform declarations aim only to hoodwink the peasant masses to give up their cause for land reform and thus condemn them to a lifelong of suffering. He pretends to be a champion of land reform in the futile attempt of drawing the peasant masses away from the New People's Army (NPA).

Duterte is using his fake land reform to justify all-out suppression against the peasant masses. He seeks to justify the abuses and brutalities committed with impunity by his military, police and

 <p>Vol. L No. 4 February 21, 2019</p> <hr/> <p>Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English. Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p> <p> instagram.com/sine.proletaryo</p> <p> @prwc_info</p> <p> fb.com/groups/prwcnewsroomv2</p> <p> cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Contents</h2> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/> <p>Editorial: Transform rural unrest to revolutionary action 1</p> <p>NPA-Bukidnon seizes 6 firearms 1</p> <p>NPA-NEMR releases 16 POWs 4</p> <p>Rice tarrification a bane to farmers 5</p> <p>Duterte junks coco levy bill 5</p> <p>#AyokongMagmahal 2019 5</p> <p>Women stand for human rights 6</p> <p>Reclamation protests 6</p> <p>US interests in Sulu and its seas 7</p> <p>Megaprofits by internet companies 9</p> <p>DDos and other attacks 10</p> <p>DDos and other attacks 10</p> <p>Enforced disappearances 10</p> <p>Peasant leader arrested in Palawan 11</p> <p>1st SFB arrests 3 civilians, a baby 12</p> <p>Venezuelans against US intervention 12</p>
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paramilitary forces. There is a rising number of cases of extrajudicial killings, warrantless arrests, arbitrary detention, intimidation and threats, forced "surrender" of entire communities and other human rights violations.

Duterte, however, is unable to conceal the gross socioeconomic conditions of the peasant masses who are gravely suffering the consequences of his anti-peasant and anti-people neoliberal policies. He will fail to attenuate the growing restiveness in wide countryside.

Widespread peasant unrest demands mass action. The peasant masses should be aroused, organized and mobilized in great numbers to wage all forms of

struggle to oppose land grabbing and land-use conversion, rice import liberalization and other neoliberal policies, clamor for the return of the coco levy funds to the small coconut farmers, and to advance their demand for genuine land reform. They should be emboldened to resist martial law and assert their democratic rights guaranteed under international humanitarian laws as well as under the reactionary constitution. Peasant demonstrations must be mounted in order to harness their strength in numbers, to advance their anti-feudal struggles and shatter Duterte's reign of terror.

The revolutionary forces must exert all-out effort to transform

peasant unrest into revolutionary resistance. The NPA and the revolutionary masses must continue to intensify people's war by waging armed struggle, building organs of political power, and carrying out agrarian revolution.

By carrying out land reform, the NPA continues to gain the deep and wide support of the broad masses of peasants. Amid worsening socioeconomic conditions under the Duterte regime, the peasant masses are being further roused to support and join the people's army and take part in the revolutionary armed struggle to overthrow the reactionary state of the big landlord class and the big bourgeois compradors. **AB**

"NPA-Bukidnon..." from page 1

DOLE and Del Monte, plantation corporations which operate in approximately 50,000 hectares of farmland and Lumad ancestral territories, and are notorious for employing unfair labor practices.

The said military unit intensively suppresses hundreds of farmers who are struggling to take back their lands. It was dubbed as a "massacre battalion" for perpetrating brutal killings in the province. Among the crimes it perpetrated were the massacres in Bugna on March 2015; in Pangantucan on September 2015 wherein five civilians were killed including a blind old man and his children; and in Talagak on March 2016 wherein three civilians were killed and a pregnant woman and two others were wounded.

Quezon. A unit of the NPA-Quezon paralyzed three backhoes and a bulldozer owned by a company constructing the Kaliwa Dam in Sitio Salok, Barangay Magsaysay, Infanta, Quezon on February 7, 4:40 p.m. The action was a response to the longstanding complaints of the residents of Quezon against the project which will massively devastate their farmlands and livelihoods. The project is under the "Build, Build, Build" program of the US-Duterte regime and is a component of the New Centennial Water Source Project (NCWSP). The government is set to loan approximately P12.8 million from China for the project.

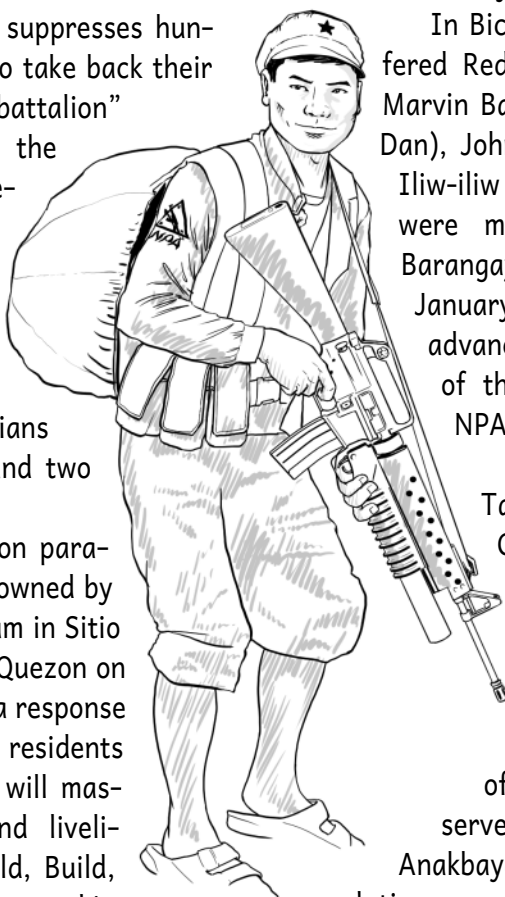
Negros Oriental. A soldier of the 94th IB conduct-

ing "peace and development" operations in Barangay Binobohan was slain in a sniping operation mounted by NPA-Negros against an enemy camp in Guihulngan City on February 17, 9:00 a.m.

In Bicol, the NPA-East Camarines Sur offered Red salutes to Randy Vega (Ka Ben), Marvin Baa (Ka Jazz), Florante Empeno (Ka Dan), Johnny Flores (Ka Mateo) at Florencio Iliw-iliw (Ka Rene), five Red fighters who were martyred during an encounter in Barangay Lupi, Tinambac, Camarines Sur on January 30. "They offered their lives in advancing the struggle for the liberation of the Filipino masses," said the local NPA command.

Meanwhile, the NPA-Southern Tagalog also paid tribute to John Carlo Alberto (Ka Yago) who was martyred in an encounter in Barangay San Buenaventura, Luisiana, Laguna on February 14.

Ka Yago was a Veterinary Medicine student of the University of the Philippines-Los Baños and served as the vice chairperson of Anakbayan-UPLB. Ka Yago joined the revolutionary armed movement in 2017, wherein he continued to share his knowledge to farmers and comrades, particularly in raising livestock. He was able to enhance his medical skills and became a doctor of the people. **AB**



NPA-NEMR releases 16 POWs

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-North Eastern Mindanao Region (NEMR) successively released 16 prisoners of war (POWs) on February 14-19.

In the first batch, the NPA-Agusan del Sur released six members of the CAFGU Active Auxiliary (CAA) on February 14 in Barangay San Juan, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur.

In the second batch, the NPA released PFC AJ Reginald Kiem of the 1st Special Forces Battalion



(SFB) and CAA Bernabe Sahanay on February 18 in Sitio Kaunlaran, Barangay Tagbongabong, Remedios T. Romualdez in Agusan Del Norte.

In the third batch, the NPA released Cpl. Eric Bulado Manangan and PFC Darlino Alipayo Cariño of the 3rd SFB, together with six other CAA members on February 19 in Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur. The eight are among the 14 soldiers and CAA members captured by the NPA without firing a shot in its raid against a detachment of the 3rd SFB in Barangay New Tubigon, Sibagat, Agusan del Sur on December 19.

The doctor who checked the prisoners up said that the latter were in good shape. The soldiers and CAA members were received by local government officials of Agusan del

Sur and religious leaders, led by Sr. Emma Teresita Cupin, who served as third-party facilitators. Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go and Sebastian Duterte, Rodrigo Duterte's representatives, also attended the program.

"We thank the NPA for attending to us in the mountains. They did not hurt us. Profuse thanks to all the Red fighters," said Janjan Iligan, one of the prisoners.

"We are thankful because we suffered not a scratch," added Jemuel Acebedo, another prisoner. He also thanked the NPA for facilitating the release despite continuing military operations.

Ka Arina Magdiwang, commander of the the unit-in-charge, said that the release was a response to the appeal of various groups and individuals who expressed their support for its facilitation. AB

Court favors martial law extension; state forces arrest journalist

THE SUPREME COURT issued a ruling in favor of the third extension of martial law in Mindanao on February 19. This was issued by the court in response to the appeal filed by the Makabayan bloc, lawyers and the opposition against the said extension. The extension was approved during a joint-session of the Congress on December 12, 2018.

The Supreme Court decision legitimizes the prevalence of fascism and impunity in Mindanao. It is blind and deaf to the abuses perpetrated by the police and military under the guise of martial law and fails to address the people's clamor for justice.

Students of the University of the Philippines-Diliman in Quezon City met the issuance of the ruling with a lightning rally. They condemned the uselessness of the reactionary court and its servility to the reactionary regime.

In a related news, elements of the National Bureau of Investigation arrested Maria Ressa of Rappler, an online news outfit, in its

office in Pasig City on February 13, 5:00 p.m. based on a warrant of arrest for cyber libel issued by the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 46.

Using the subterfuge that the case is no longer covered by the judge's jurisdiction, Ressa was not allowed to post bail during the scheduled "night court" in Pasay City. Ressa's arrest is part of the Duterte regime's continuing suppression campaign against its critics in the media.

Media groups and progressive organizations condemned the harassment against Ressa. According to the National Union of Journalist of the Philippines, the trumped-up

cyber libel case against Rappler and its chief executive officer is a clear picture of how a tyrannical government persecutes its critics. They added that this is part of the regime's scheme to silence critical media and curtail press freedom. On February 14-15, various youth and media groups mounted coordinated protests in defense of press freedom.

Meanwhile, on February 18, Kadamay members marched from the Department of Interior and Local Government headquarters to Camp Aguinaldo to oppose the continuing harassment of the police and military against the people. They said that the attacks may be a precursor to the formal implementation of martial law across the country. The group splattered red paint at the gates of the camp which symbolizes the pervasiveness of violence and killings in the countryside. AB

Rice tariffication is a bane to small farmers

By signing the Rice Import Liberalization Law last February 14, Rodrigo Duterte brought a menace to all *palay* (unhusked rice) farmers in the country. The said law paves the way for the complete liberalization or the removal of restrictions on rice importation.

The law is compliant with the liberalization policy impositions by the World Trade Organization. Under this law, import restrictions on rice, which were implemented to protect local rice production, are dismantled. The liberalization of rice importation was railroaded amid overproduction of the said commodity and other grain products in the US, China and other countries.

The implementation of the said law will result in the influx of imported rice which will result in the eventual demise of its local production. It endangers the livelihood of 2.4 million *palay* farmers in the Philippines. (See related article in *Ang Bayan, February 21, 2018*).

By pushing the Philippine economy into becoming import-dependent on rice, local rice prices will relentlessly rise in the coming years, contrary to the claim that it

will pull prices down. No substantive measures have been made to dismantle cartels which monopolize rice supply in the Philippines and are expected to control importation as well. The profits of local cartels and foreign companies are expected increase further.

The projected P90-billion tariff on imported rice will certainly be used to fund anti-people projects and fatten the pockets of Duterte's cronies and allies and large foreign companies.

Instead of addressing widespread hunger and poverty, Duterte further undermines the potential of the country to produce agricultural products locally and ensure food security.

Earlier, during the first week of February, the Department of Agriculture issued Administrative Order 1 series of 2019 to railroad the use conversion of agricultural lands into

real estates, commercial and industrial use. This came after Duterte's signing of the law on rice importation liberalization.

Farmers' protest

Farmers from Laguna, Cavite and Bulacan marched and converged in front of the headquarters of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) in Quezon City to condemn the reactionary government's successive implementation of anti-peasant policies.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and peasant advocates are apprehensive of the impact of the said law on the rice industry, local agricultural production and food security in the country.

Meanwhile, the National Food Authority Employees Association plans to file a case against the government in the Supreme Court for violating RA 11203 or their right to security of tenure. They asserted that they were not even consulted by the regime before implementing the said law. AB

Duterte junks bill on coco levy

RODRIGO DUTERTE REFUSED to sign and enact into law the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Act last February 10. Clearly, Duterte plans to absolutely control the utilization of the P10-billion coco levy fund.

The said bill, which orders the distribution of the fund to small coconut farmers, was formally passed by the Congress on December 1, 2018. To administer utilization of the fund, the bill requires the formation of a new Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Board composed by six farmers and eight government representatives. Failing to place his henchmen in said board and disregard the peasant representatives, Duterte refused to sign the bill and just alibied that the program was budget-intensive. The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas stated that a Genuine Small Coconut Farmers Fund and a Genuine Small Coconut Farmers Council has to be established to administer utilization of the said fund, instead of its proposed PCA board. AB

#AyokongMagmahal 2019

#AYOKONGMAGMAHAL was the slogan of the student-youth amid looming hikes in tuition and other school fees. On February 15, the Rise for Education-Cebu protested in front of the office of the Commission on Higher Education Region 7 to condemn proposals to increase tuition and other school fees in various colleges and universities. This came after the filing of petition by 1,400 private schools last February 7 to increase fees by 6-8% for school year 2019-2020. Private school administrators are citing TRAIN law as pretext for their proposals.

At present, there are 1,710 private universities in the country while only 233 are public. Thus, majority of schools and students are not covered by the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act or RA 10931, which is supposed to ensure free education in public educational institutions. In addition, the law does not cover all types of fees in public universities.

At present, fees and other expenses for private senior high school and college such as food and lodging, uniforms can reach up to P100,000-P200,000 and P160,000-230,000 annually, respectively. AB

Women stand for human rights

ON THE SEVENTH year of the One Billion Rising, hundreds of women led by Gabriela converged at the Rajah Sulayman Park, Roxas Boulevard, Manila last February 14 to dance in protest against intensifying fascism and tyranny in the country.

The extensive plunder of resources and wealth in compliance with neoliberal policies pushed by the US and through Chinese intervention was highlighted during the activity. The Duterte regime is selling off the sovereignty of the country and its territories to cling in power and continue to benefit from agreements worth billions of pesos.

Women's situation

According to the Center for Women's Resources (CWR), attacks and violations against the rights of women intensified under the macho-fascist regime. The group said that even data by the Philippine National Police indicate that 2,962 cases of rape were recorded since January until May 2018 or an average of 20 cases daily. The group also stated that 56 elements and officials of the PNP were among the reported perpetrators. Majority of the victims were 17 years old and younger, and apprehended under the guise of "war on drugs." Not one was made accountable of these cases.

Duterte and his henchmen also continue to disrespect women despite having been repeatedly criticized by the general public. Attacks by the regime against women mass leaders, activists, church and media workers are relentless. Of the 540 political prisoners still detained at present, 45 are women. Meanwhile, 33 of 141 victims of political killings are women.

Women are shouldering the incessant increases in the prices of goods, poverty and the lack of livelihood. Most women suffer from extremely low wages and the absence of stable employment. They are commonly employed in manu-

facturing factories which implement various labor flexibilization schemes. Some women workers are compensated under the pakyawan scheme such as those working in Marikina and are paid P7-P18 for every hand-woven shoe (sold at P1,500 to P2,500 each in the market) they are able to produce.

The CWR added that millions of women will certainly suffer from poverty and hunger with the implementation of the second TRAIN law package. Data by the Philippine Statistics Authority itself indicate that 21.9 million are poor



and find it hard to make ends meet. Women shoulder the heaviest burden when the prices of commodities increase as they are commonly the ones who plan the budget for their families.

Before the major activity on February 14, #OneBillionRising activities were also conducted in various schools and by various organizations including the Lyceum of the Philippines University-Manila, Sta. Isabel College-Manila, Tanauan's Assumption Academy in Leyte, University of Eastern Philippines, the local government of Catarman, Northern Samar, Barangays Bagong Silang in Caloocan, Barangay Canumay East in Valenzuela, women of Tondo and Baguio and church people from the Ecumenical Women's Forum at National Council of Churches in the Philippines. AB

Anakpawis mounts protest against reclamation

HUNDREDS OF MEMBERS of Anakpawis, Pamalakaya, Kadamay and Gabriela protested in Manila on February 18 against the 32,000-hectare Manila Bay reclamation project.

According to Pamalakaya and Kadamay, the said rehabilitation project is being used as a pretext for the reclamation of the area and the construction of commercial structures for eco-tourism which will result in the eviction of 300,000 urban poor and fisherfolk from their homes and the loss of their livelihoods.

The Philippine Reclamation Authority itself admitted that there are 43 reclamation projects in Manila Bay. A component of this plan is the 140-hectare Solar City project of the Manila Goldcoast Development Corporation, the 1,200-hectare SM Prime Holdings project which will purportedly construct a "city," and the 407-hectare City of Pearl project of UAA Kinming Development, a Chinese corporation, in partnership with Duterte's crony, Dennis Uy. Duterte subsumed the agency under his office to monopolize profits from its 120 reclamation projects across the country.

The protesters also lambasted the 50-hectare Manila Harbour Center expansion project by R-II Builders, Inc., 50-hectare project of the Baseco Rehabilitation and Development, Inc. (Bradi), the 40-hectare reclamation of the PRA and the 140-hectare Navotas Boulevard Business Park. These projects have already been approved by the local government of Manila. AB

The US' extensive interests in Sulu and its seas

After the successive bombings inside and outside a Catholic church in Jolo, Sulu, Rodrigo Duterte was quick to declare that these were suicide bombings perpetrated by “foreign terrorists.”

Nevermind that his police has just started investigating and has yet to obtain any evidence. According to Duterte, the bombings proved that ISIS minions are flourishing in Sulu and are under the protection of the pro-ISIS Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Therefore, the AFP needs to intensify its operations in Jolo and the entire Sulu province (Jolo, Basilan and Tawi-tawi).

Duterte's declaration and style regarding “foreign terrorists” in Sulu harks back to his declarations about foreign terrorists flourishing in Marawi to justify the imposition of martial rule and open US intervention in the country. Like in Marawi then, he legitimized AFP's rampage and destruction of civilian communities resulting in the eviction of residents and the eventual awarding of their lands and resources to bourgeois compradors and their foreign counterparts.

On December 17, 2018, Duterte formally created the 11th ID, a new AFP division, which will focus mainly on Sulu. Department of National Defense secretary Delfin Lorenzana admitted that the US has long been involved in AFP operations in Sulu, particularly in operations against “foreign terrorists.” In fact, US personnel and equipment were the first to arrive at the scene of the Jolo bombings this January. Their activities in the country is under the Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines, a “counterterror mission” which the US established under the pretext of the “war” in

Marawi in 2016.

More intensive AFP and US military operations also follow the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), a measure which the Sultanate of Sulu vehemently opposed. Sulu voted against the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), which established the BARMM. In spite of this, the province will still be under BARMM as it is part of the old Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, which in turn voted in favor of BOL.

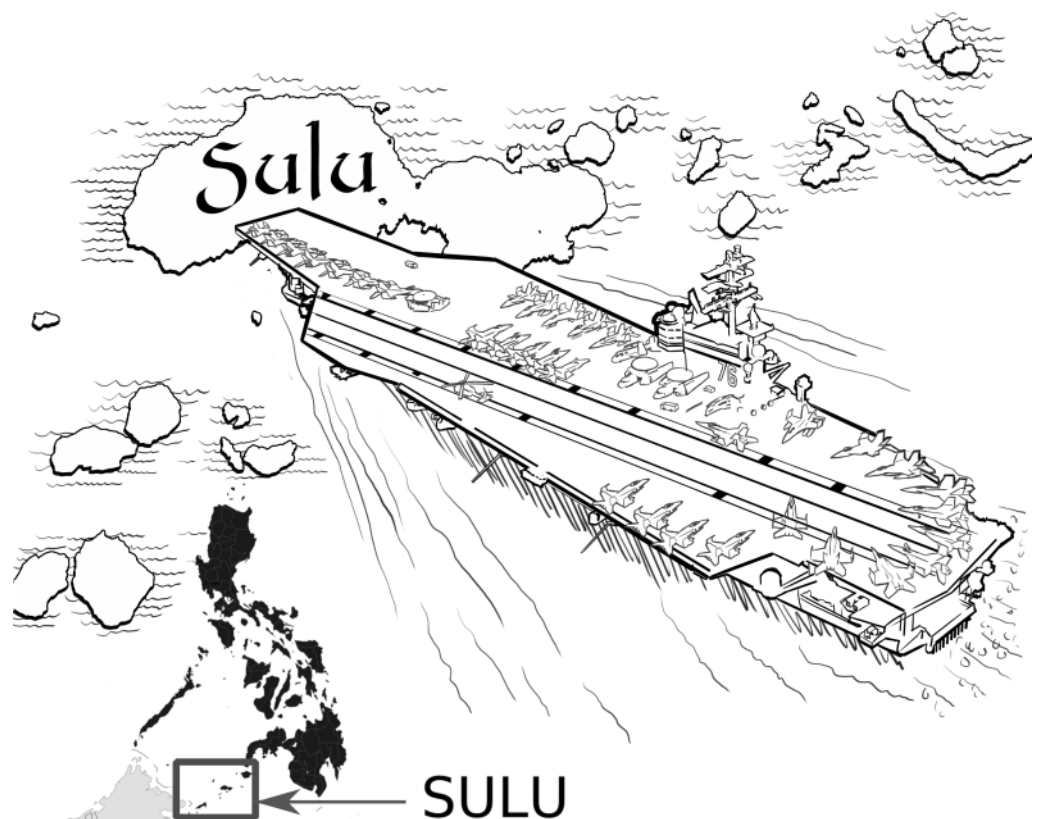
Sulu and the US' “war on terror”

The US has long used Mindanao, and the Sulu archipelago in particular, as a playground for its troops. The US Indo-Pacific Command considers Sulu, and its immediate border the Sulawesi Sea (formerly known as Celebes Sea), as a “primary area of interest for counterterrorism in the Pacific” and “bilateral focus of relations with countries in Southeast Asia.”

The Sulu-Sulawesi Seas measures a million square kilometer of waters and is bordered by the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Like Marawi, Duterte's drum-beating of ISIS and foreign terrorists in Sulu serve to justify US deep and extensive military intervention in the country. In 2001, the US launched Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines (OEF-P) and created the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) to base its troops once more in the country. This was 10 years after the Philippine Senate terminated the Military Bases Agreement in 1991 which closed US military bases in the country. Under the OEF-P, the US directed AFP operations in Mindanao, particularly in Sulu, using pursuit of the ASG as cover, which it linked to Al Qaeda at that time. The Al Qaeda was responsible for the bombings in the US on September 11, 2001, the attacks which resulted into decades of US wars of aggression and occupation in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Africa.

To hype its international sig-



nificance, the US linked the ASG to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a pro-Al Qaeda group based in Indonesia and Malaysia, which it then called the “triangle of terror” in Southeast Asia. The ASG, ISIS and even Al Qaeda, are direct products of covert operations of the US Central Intelligence Agency in countries which it has intervened in the past decades. The US itself funded and expanded the ASG from 2012 when it armed and used the group against Syria’s anti-US government. It is worth noting that in the Philippines, the ASG, a monster created by the US and the AFP, expands and becomes active every time the US military needs additional cover and justification for its interventions.

The US has long used the Sulu Sea as a transit and secret passage for its ships and submarines, with or without the knowledge of the sitting puppet regime. In the 2000s, it used the ASG and JI’s supposed use of the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas as an excuse to hold large-scale military drills between the US and AFP in the guise of “maritime security.” But from 2009 up to 2016, the ASG was not active in what the US deems as “terroristic activities.” Instead, its criminal and bandit character became more pronounced as it conducted successive kidnappings of foreign tourists and ordinary civilians, as well as fisherfolk in the Sulu-Sulawesi area. Because of this, the US changed its excuse for being in the area from simple “terrorism” to countering piracy and other crimes which it then termed “maritime terrorism.”

Maritime security, a cover for power projection

The truth is, the US wants to position itself in the entire Sulu-Sulawesi Sea to control an important route for its military ships and troops, as well as commerce, in the Southeast Asian region.

The route is relevant for its

deep passages which favor big warships and submarines going and leaving the South China Sea. It is also important because this is where the US can engage the Indonesia and Malaysia, countries resistant to US military basing and presence, in “maritime cooperation.”

In addition, millions of passengers and hundreds of commercial ships traverse the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas. Every year, around 18 million people and 100,000 ships carrying 55 million tons of cargo worth \$40 billion pass through these seas. In particular, oil supertankers use this route as the waters in the Malacca Strait (situated between Malaysia and Indonesia) is not deep enough. The Sulawesi Sea also intersects the Makassar Strait, the second largest operational liquid natural gas field in the world.

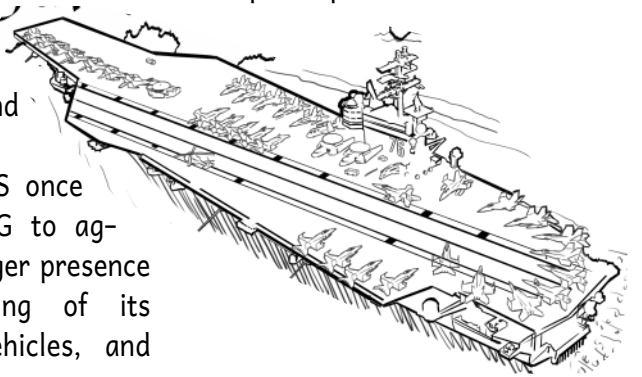
From 2008 to 2011, the US built the Coastal Watch System (CWS), a network of radars used to spy on movements in the Philippine seas. Almost 10 of these radars are in the Sulu Sea, with one each near the islands of Palawan, Mindoro and Zambales (all facing the South China Sea); Samar and in the coasts of the Davao regions facing the Sulawesi Sea and Pacific Ocean. These radars were built by the US Department of Defense and Department of Energy through direct funding and military aid. In 2015, the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the agency used to fund the project, turned over the administration of the radar network and its central command, the National Coast Watch Center, to the Aquino regime. Last year, another radar was added to the network when one was slyly built in Boracay when the island was shut down.

From 2016, the US once again revived the ASG to aggressively push for larger presence and permanent basing of its troops, ships and vehicles, and

other military materiel in the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea. Its ships almost never leave the area in the guise of “joint patrols” with the Philippine Coast Guard. This is in tandem with the never-ending drumbeating of the US, with Duterte and the AFP parroting its stance on the presence of “foreign terrorists,” to force Indonesia and Malaysia to open Sulawesi Sea to longer basing of US ships.

All of this is part of the US’ aim of projecting power against China in Southeast Asia in the guise of “countering terrorism.” This is part of the US’ Southeast Asia Maritime Security (MSI) which was first pushed forward by the then Obama regime. Under the MSI, the US constructs military structures in the Southeast Asia seas for unimpeded identification, surveillance, and if necessary, obstruction of Chinese activities in the South China Sea. Like the CWS in the Philippines, these facilities are seemingly owned by the sovereign country, but are in fact mostly ran and used by the US. Accordingly, the US is set to construct a similar radar system in Vietnam, and station even more advanced systems in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. In exchange, the US will dump obsolete war materiel, warships and aircraft.

Still, not all regimes in Southeast Asia are as obsequious as Duterte. Up to the present, Indonesia and Malaysia resist US pressure to open up their seas to prolonged US presence. Instead, Indonesia conducted trilateral patrols with the Philippines and Malaysia in 2017, without direct US participation. AB



Megaprofit by internet monopolies

Only a handful of giant companies dominate the internet. Two of the biggest are Facebook and Google. These companies rake in billions of dollars in profit through monopoly and control of the biggest internet operations.

Facebook is well known as a social media website where users communicate and interact. Google, on the other hand, started off as an internet search engine. Subsequently, both companies branched out to other services.

Facebook began in 2004 with only seven workers but is now employing more than 35,500. It swallowed up more than 70 companies, whose net worth amount to more than \$23 trillion. Among the companies it owns are Instagram, the internet's largest stock of photos; WhatsApp, the most popular messaging application, and many other companies of varying technologies. In the stock market, Facebook's market capitalization amounted to \$456 billion in the third week of February this year.

On the other hand, Google acquired more than 230 smaller companies since 2001. Most of these are in advertising (17 companies); media and entertainment (32 companies including YouTube); mobile (23 companies including Android); cloud (24 companies); social media and photos (26 companies) and many other services.

Being monopoly capitalists, foremost of their concerns is to reap profits, however much they declare that they advocate "democratization of knowledge," "connecting the world in a community" and "free services."

Google and Facebook's profits primarily come from ads posted on their pages. In 2017, Facebook declared more than \$40 billion in profit, 89% of which came from ads. In the second quarter of 2018, Google's mother company Alphabet recorded a profit of more than \$26 billion, 86% of which came from Google ads.

Surveillance capitalism

The biggest source of Facebook and Google's profits, including those by Amazon and the relatively smaller company Twitter, is selling information harvested from billions of their users. While services by these companies are utilized for free, every user activity is tracked to the detail.

More than two billion Facebook users created their accounts for free to interact with "friends." In exchange, Facebook harvests, processes and analyzes all information from these interactions. A study revealed that based on the pattern of Facebook "Likes," personal traits of the users are automatically and almost exactly calculated, including their sexual orientation, race, religious and political beliefs, age and gender, location and other data.

Without heedful use of Google and its products (including Android smartphones), an individual's exact location may be determined by Google. All data stored by the user in any of Google's free services are synchronized by the company with its other services.

These data are considered "raw materials" that are harvested, processed and sold by Facebook and Google. Through digital processing, a person's current, immediate and future actions may be estimated—a matter considered gold by advertisers. This profiteering by giant internet monopolies is called surveillance capitalism. Marketing of these processed data as "products" by surveillance capitalists is their source of superprofits.

These companies argue that such data mining are intended for the creation of ads tailored for an individual's particular interests. However, such data mining is done

by Facebook without consent and in violation of the right to privacy and will of majority of its users. Seven European countries have already filed cases against Facebook, while Google is facing a string of investigations for violating the right to privacy of millions of users.

Data mined by these companies are sold not only to advertisers. In 2018, data sold by Facebook to Cambridge Analytica, a company offering political consultancy, was exposed. Personal information of millions of Facebook users, including more than a million in the Philippines, were sold without consent. These data were used to design campaigns believed to have benefited US Pres. Donald Trump and Rodrigo Duterte in the 2016 Philippine elections.

Facebook and Google likewise have close ties with the military, alongside other tech companies. Thus, the seemingly free internet services are being used in the machinery for widespread surveillance. Two of the companies owned by Facebook use facial recognition. Google on the other hand carries out widespread mapping in every corner of the globe without consent from governments and peoples. These data are used in the US National Security Agency's huge database.

In modern technology, people's digital activities may be processed and analyzed, producing summed-up information about their personalities. Under the control of monopoly capitalists, modern technology is utilized as an instrument for superprofit generation and suppression of democracy.

Democratic forces utilize the internet in general, and social media infrastructure in particular, in propagating information for the interest of the majority of the people. However, these have to be undertaken while actively defending the right to privacy and mindful of the limitations set by antidemocratic internet giants. AB

DDoS attacks and other attacks on press freedom

IN THE PAST two months, consecutive and simultaneous attacks were carried out against websites of the Communist Party of the Philippines and online alternative news outfits. Such wide-ranging and coordinated attacks through DDoS (Distributed Denial of Service) have been launched by no other than the special units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)—the so-called social media monitoring cells or cyber army.

These aim to shut down the said websites and cut their connections to the public. This is a direct method of censoring the broadcast of people's criticism and resistance against the US-Duterte regime and its policies.

The PRWC (philippinerevolution.info) was among those first attacked with DDos on December 26, 2018, coinciding the commemoration of the CPP's 50th anniversary. As a result of the attack, the website was inaccessible for a few days. Also on the same day, websites of alternative media Kodao, Bulatlat and PinoyWeekly experienced their first DDos attacks after covering CPP celebrations.

A DDoS attack is a method of attacking a website for it not to be accessed by the public. This is done through overloading the server (a computer managing the website) using botnet or a network of thousands of computers illegally controlled by the mastermind of the attack.

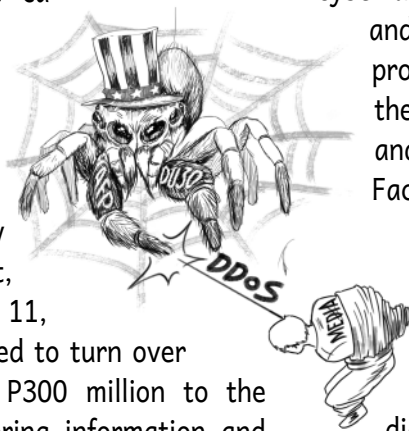
DDos attacks continue up to the present. Added to the list of targeted websites are Manila Today, Altermidya, National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) and Karapatan. These news outfits and organizations assail extrajudicial killings, TRAIN law, Oplan Tokhang and other anti-people policies of the Duterte regime. Qurium, an organization of internet and computer experts assisting progressives against DDoS, was likewise attacked.

An investigation by Qurium revealed that the DDoS attacks come from the same group, using the same resources and applying a consistent style. Only a wide-ranging organization with huge funds and resources such as the AFP's cyber-

army has the capacity to launch these.

This army was trained and continues to be funded by the US. In fact, on February 11, the US promised to turn over an additional P300 million to the AFP for gathering information and surveillance in the name of combating terrorism.

Likewise, the regime's deception and fakery continue alongside its internet censorship campaign. On December 2018, the AFP created a fake website bearing much similarity to the PWRC website in its aim to deceive the audience. The said website initially posted a fake open



letter by the CPP founding chairperson Jose Ma. Sison. Afterwards, the AFP mirrored the design of the CPP official website in order to spur confusion among those who await news of the revolution.

For some time now, the AFP cyber army has also been attacking and monitoring activities of progressives. Using its trolls, the regime spreads fake news and insults against them on Facebook.

A number of social media accounts of the CPP have successively been reported by the AFP to be taken down. CPP social media accounts have also been prohibited to post and were suspended for several times. Various NPA commands and CPP units also underwent the same suppression on varying occasions since last year. As early as 2017, Duterte ordered the reactionary military to destroy the CPP including those it tagged as its legal fronts and the CPP's infrastructure in the internet. AB

Duterte demands removal of 625 cases of enforced disappearances to UN

THE US-DUTERTE REGIME, on February 13, formally requested to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UN-WGEID) to remove from its list the 625 cases of enforced disappearances in the country.

The list includes the names of those abducted by the reactionary state since 1975 until 2012. This scheme by the Duterte regime aims to conceal the accountability of the perpetrators of the crimes. This measure is a blatant insult to the efforts of the victims' relatives to achieve justice which has long been denied them. Reports by human rights groups indicate that there were 795 victims of enforced disappearances under the US-Marcos dictatorial regime, 821 under Corazon Aquino, 39 under Ramos, 26 under Estrada, 206 under Arroyo, 29 under Benigno Aquino and eight under Rodrigo Duterte.

Karapatan said that the impunity over cases of enforced disappearances despite laws such as the Anti-Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Law of 2012 and the Human Rights Victims Recognition and Reparation Act of 2013 is a result of Duterte's criminal negligence. Even the sentence against former Army General Jovito Palparan was not a result of the regime's compliance with legal standards but of the efforts of victims' families and human rights group to hold the perpetrator accountable. AB

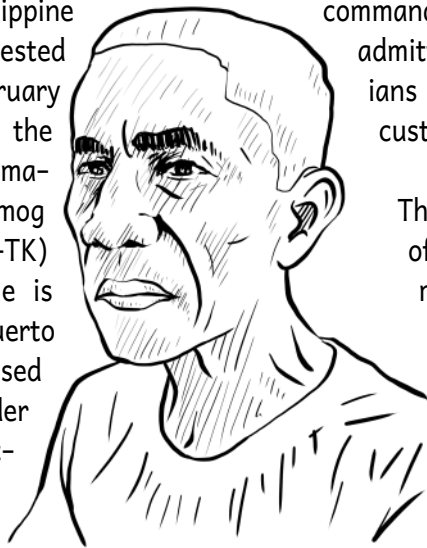
Police arrests peasant leader in Palawan

Human rights violations including a case of killing, illegal arrest and detention against civilians were successively perpetrated by the police and military of the US-Duterte regime in the past two weeks.

Elements of the Philippine National Police arrested Norly Bernabe last February 7, chairperson of the Kalipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid Sa Timog Katagalugan (KASAMA-TK) in Taytay, Palawan. He is currently detained in Puerto Princesa, Palawan based on trumped-up murder charges. Bernabe is actively campaigning for the rights of farmers in Lupang Pujalte and against the Guevent Corporation.

Killing. In Pangasinan, Robert Mejia, member of Ulopan na Umbalely ed Camp Gregg Military Reservation, an affiliate organization of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas was killed in Barangay Sancagul, Bayambang, Pangasinan on February 8. Farmers in Camp Gregg have long been struggling for their right to land and against the Cojuangco-Aquinos of the Central Azucarera De Tarlac. Mejia, popularly known as Ka Bobby, participated in collective land cultivation ("bungkalan") activities in the said area.

In Camarines Sur, 9th IB troopers abducted four civilians in Pulang Daga, Barangay Baya, Ragay on February 9 at around 5:00 a.m. The victims were identified as Christian Rañon, Boboy Esmero, Ricky Bendaña, and Rico Bendaña. Barangay officials and residents trooped to the camp of the said unit to demand the release of the civilians who were beaten and all bloody but to no avail. The group, together with media workers, went to the police to request for assistance in facilitating the release but the latter only referred them back to the 9th IB camp in Barangay Samay. Lt. Col. Abella,



commander of the 9th IB, admitted that the civilians were under their custody.

Militarization.

The tyrannical style of brutal killings, mass arrests and detention and intensive military operations have become a norm in Mindanao since the declaration of martial

law in the island. The like is now also being experienced in Samar and Negros since the implementation of the Memorandum Order No. 32 which effectively placed the said provinces under de facto martial law.

In Samar, more than 200 87th IB troopers have been occupying several barrios in San Jose de Buan since the last week of January. According to Katungod-Sinirangan Bisayas, residents are being forcibly interrogated, photographed and made to sign in blank sheets of paper. The 87th IB is also planning to construct a camp 10 meters away from a school. The military is intending to use the residents as their shield in mounting their operations which is a blatant violation of the International Humanitarian Law.

The militarization of San Jose de Buan followed the pull out of the 63rd IB in Barangay Bay-ang in San Jorge, Samar. Residents of the said barangay were forced to evacuate due to military's indiscriminate strafing and bombings in their community.

The 87th IB has long been camping in Barangay Cantato in Paranas and conducting combat operations in the barrios of Angase,

Sto. Niño, Pagsanghan and Tapul. These operations terrorize farmer residents and limit their production. A report by Katungod-Sinirangan Bisaya indicates that at least 545 barangays in Eastern Visayas are affected by militarization, 250 of which are under so-called peace and development operations which have resulted in six incidents of forcible evacuation.

The entire Negros island is currently being subjected to state terrorism. The deployment of additional 220 soldiers island resulted in the intensification of militarization.

No place is safe in Negros most especially that the Duterte Death Squad has already been actively operating in the island. Fifty cases of extrajudicial killings were recorded in the region under Duterte.

In Southern Negros, the 15th IB has been conducting military operations since February 9 in the boundary of barangays Pinggot, Ilog, and Locotan in Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental and Barangay Villasol, Bayawan City in Negros Oriental.

On the same day, Karapatan received a report that Clinton Alsong, former member of Anakbayan, was gunned down in Barangay Calamba, Guihulngan City. The victim remains in critical condition. The incident happened three days after evacuees returned to their community.

Meanwhile, in Northern Negros, 79th IB and PNP elements are jointly terrorizing the residents of Don Salvador Benedicto using trumped-up charges and subsume them under the control of the Dela Cruz dynasty. This February, five civilians were arrested in the said town and were accused of NPA membership. The Northern Negros Alliance Of Human Rights Advo-

"Palawan..." continued on page 12

Venezuelans oppose threat of US intervention

Hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans flooded the major roads of the country on February 21 to lambast and oppose direct US military intervention under the guise “humanitarian aid.” This was the latest among the US imperialism’s series of interventionist measures of which aim to topple the legitimate Bolivarian government and place in power its puppet regime.

The said measure came after the failed attempt to oust Nicolas Maduro, president of Venezuela, on January 23. The US and its imperialist allies also failed to compel the Venezuelan people to reject Maduro and force him to call for an election.

The Venezuelan people actively resisted various ploys by the US. They resolutely supported Maduro and pledged to carry on the Bolivarian revolution for national liberation and advance the legacy of the late Hugo Chavez. On top of imposing economic

sanctions, the US also attempted to assassinate Maduro last year using an attack drone. The US recognized the oppositionist Juan Guaido when he declared himself “president” of Venezuela.

To sugarcoat its intervention and conceal military aggression, the US delivered 200 tons of food aid and other basic goods in the Venezuela and Colombian borders. Guaido and the Venezuelan oligarchy supported this plan.

The Maduro government exposed the plan of the US and refused its aid. It said that Venezuela

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"Palawan..." from page 11

cates said that the 79th IB, PNP and other paramilitary forces are relentlessly conducting combat operations and assemblies in peasant communities. Many are coerced to attend assemblies especially in the cities of Escalante, San Carlos and Sagay and in the towns of Toboso, Calatrava and Don Salvador Benedicto. Such operations began during the last quarter of 2018. After the brutal massacre on October 2018, many other farmers have been subjected to illegal arrests, illegal searches, threats and intimidation. Arrested civilians are tortured and are paraded as NPA members.

In Central Negros, civilians are beset by attacks by the 94th IB under the guise of its so-called Synchronized Enhanced Managing of Police Operations (SEMPO) or Oplan Sauron in Negros Oriental. The Leonardo Panaligan Command also reported the burning of the house of Arlene Pausal last February 14, a month after the NPA mounted a tactical offensive in Barangay Banwage, Guihulngan City. The 94th IB continues to conduct military operations in the area until today. They also issued a list of peasant leaders they threatened to capture whether “dead or alive.”

Harassment. In other parts of Mindanao, harassment against activists continue unabated. A member of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines-Northern Mindanao Subregion and John Timothy Romero, program coordinator of Center for Lumad Advocacy, Networking and Services (CLANS) received death threats via text messages on February 12 and 8, respectively. AB

1st SFB arrests 3 civilians, 1 baby

THE 1ST SPECIAL Forces Battalion (SFB), under the command of Capt. Lorefel Judaya, arbitrarily arrested and detained Gloria O. Jandayan and her daughter Gleceria J. Balangiao in Macabalan, Cagayan de Oro City on February 11. They were brought to the 1st SFB camp in Mampayag, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. Jandayan is a health worker in Barangay Macabalan and a member of Gabriela while Balangiao is a human rights advocate and a member of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines-Northern Mindanao Subregion based in Cagayan de Oro City. Judaya, intelligence officer of the 1st SFB, first summoned the victims to the barangay hall of Macabalan where they were subjected to interrogation. Jandayan was accused of being an NPA medic.

Meanwhile, on February 14 at 11:00 a.m., 1st SFB elements also illegally arrested Lorena Micabalo together with her three-month old daughter, Zhia, in Tagum City. According to Karapatan-Northern Mindanao, troopers under the command of a certain Major Macaranban trooped to the house of Micabalo and brought the her together with her daughter to the 1st SFB camp in Bukidnon. Although arrested without a warrant, Micabalo was slapped with trumped-up charges and coerced to surrender as an NPA member. Major Macaranban refused to release Micabalo to her family whom he accused of being connected with the NPA. The four are still being held in the military camp and are denied of their right to be visited by their lawyers and their families. AB

has already received aid reaching up to 900 tons of food and medicine from Russia, China and other countries. It also exposed the superficial aid offer of Great Britain, France and Germany which are among the countries that imposed economic blockade against Venezuela to make its people suffer from hunger and die.

Under the new sanction imposed by the US and the aforementioned countries, PDVSA, a public Venezuelan oil company, was barred from withdrawing its \$7 billion deposited in foreign banks. On top this, the PDVSA is expected to lose about \$11 billion with the US' cessation of importing oil from Venezuela. Because of this, importation of food and medicine by the Venezuelan people is also affected.

The Trump government and big American capitalists have long been wanting to replace Nicolas Maduro to control Venezuela's rich oil reserves. US National Security Adviser John Bolton himself admitted in an interview with Fox News that the real reason behind their intervention is oil and not "to defend democracy." He explicitly stated that it would be better if the head of Venezuela is to be replaced in order that American oil companies can invest there. Across the globe, Venezuela is richest in terms of oil reserves, fourth in gas, on top of gold, coltan, diamond, aluminum and iron.

History of intervention

US intervention in Venezuela has already reached 18 years. The US has eyed Venezuela since 2002 when the anti-imperialist government of Hugo Chavez came into

power. The global economic crisis resulting from neoliberal policies created the conditions for the Bolivarian spirit to flourish in Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia and Honduras, countries in the Latin America, a region which the US wants to consider its "backyard."

One of the first measures implemented by Chavez was the nationalization of leading oil companies. He used profits derived from these to fund social programs including free housing, education and health services.

Even prior to this, the US was already furious about Chavez. When the government of the younger Bush conducted a global campaign against terrorism, Chavez did not heed the dictates of the US. He boldly told the US that terrorism can never be defeated by employing terrorism. Chavez also propagated the Bolivarian spirit within the military, using his position as a former military official. Through this, he was able to weaken the capacity of the US to incite or organize coups in the

country.

The US has attempted to topple the Bolivarian regime in Venezuela several times. It failed on April 2002 when the US-sponsored coup was defeated within 24 hours. It mounted a "petroleum lockout" for its second coup. This failed when oil workers and exporters from other countries united against the said attempt. The third attempt took place a year ago through the villification of the Venezuelan elections where Maduro earned his second electoral victory. On the other hand, the US recognized as "legitimate" Guaido's coup attempt and supported his call for uprising.

The Trump government is now aggressively pushing for intervention in Venezuela amid the crisis it is facing due to falling oil prices. This was worsened by the economic sabotage by big oligarchs in the form of controlling the supply of food and other basic goods. The US is currently using other rightist and pro-US governments such as those in Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, Peru and Chile to sabotage Venezuela. AB

