

# UPDATES

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## EDITORIAL:

# Marcos Jr, US Puppet - Like Father, Like Son

The second US trip of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ushered in a higher level of neocolonial relations and the rehabilitation of the Dictator's family in the US.

Marcos Jr. took home pledges of "cooperation" and investments from his latest trip to the US. He bragged about the alms he received from the US ranging from arms, war equipment, intelligence sharing, capital, and investments. These are linked to closer relations of the neocolonial state and the armed forces of the Philippines with the US in the face of increasing threat of China in the Asia-Pacific.


The US overwhelmed the modernization of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) through the Security Sector Roadmap, which defines what weapons are stocked in the Philippines. The profits of American military companies are assured through the "prioritization" of purchasing made-in-USA military equipment.

Included in the guidelines is the strengthening of control and command of the US in the Pacific operation of the AFP through the cover of "interoperability," increased US intervention in intelligence gathering in the Philippines in the name of "information sharing," cyber defense and closer ties with other allies of the US in the region in the name of "multilateral cooperation." Also listed in the said guidelines is "sustaining" the strengthening of the US and AFP fight against "terrorism," the thin disguise for anti-people anti-insurgency campaign that result in widespread human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law. More than three decades later after the Filipino people ousted Marcos Sr., President Biden warmly embraced the son of the dictator, Ferdinand Marcos Jr. A newspaper in the US described the meeting of Biden and Marcos last May 1 in the White House as a "milestone" of the family Marcos transition from being a "pariah" to a "guest of honor".

Biden overflowed with praises for Marcos Jr. and his administration, which he called as "unequaled ally" of the US in Asia now, even though the New York Court slapped a contempt order against Marcos Jr. and his mother Imelda for refusing to pay reparation to victims of human rights violations during the dictatorship.

Biden's priority now is to establish at least nine military bases in the country under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). In exchange, the US will maintain Marcos Jr. in power, in the same way that the Reagan administration maintained his dictator father.

US supports fascist dictators if it benefits them. This is the expression of the undeclared US foreign policy that: "He maybe a son of a bitch, but he is our son of a bitch." In addition to the support to Marcos Sr. before and Marcos Jr. now, the US supported the previous fascist Duterte government with military aid and political support.

The US is notorious in supporting dictators in the 60s like Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua, Syngman Rhee of South Korea, Fulgencio Batista of Cuba, and Chiang Kai Shek of Taiwan. 

## Groups concerned over Red-tagger Sara Duterte as NTF-Elcac Exec

Progressive mass organizations in the Philippines expressed alarm over the designation of Vice President Sara Duterte, already serving as the Secretary of Education, as co-vice chairperson of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-Elcac). Meanwhile, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), pointed out that Sara Duterte's entry into the NTF-Elcac is a maneuver of the Duterte family to wrest more power in the Marcos administration. Ronnel Arambulo, spokesperson of PAMALAKAYA, a national movement of fisherfolk in the Philippines, said, "With the designation of Sara Duterte, a notorious Red-tagger, as a co-vice chairperson of NTF-Elcac, there is more reason to demand its abolition. The appointment of VP Duterte could intensify and institutionalize the task force's terror-labeling spree of cause-oriented organizations and democratic activists."

Raymund Basilio, Secretary General of The Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) Philippines, said that with Vice President Duterte's appointment to the NTF-Elcac, "her Red-tagging activities will just get worse and will continue to undermine teachers' freedom of association and human rights."

Human rights group Karapatan condemned said designation of Sara Duterte saying it "reinforces the fascist character of this task force... (This) shows the greater need for the

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image: philippinerevolution.nu

(continued from p. 2) ...abolition of this task force that has been responsible for numerous cases of human rights violations.”

Marco Valbuena, the Chief Information Officer of the CPP, in a statement published 11 May, 2023, said “In all likelihood, Sara Duterte’s questionable appointment by Duterte’s cohorts in the NTF-Elcac, is a maneuver to ingratiate herself to the AFP and security forces. It is a form of warning against Marcos not to use his powers to reduce the influence of the Duterte clique, especially in the security sector.”

Among other indications, Valbuena pointed out that the timing of her ascent in the NTF-Elcac hierarchy comes while the ruling Marcos clique is busy reorganizing the PNP to remove the key officers appointed by Sara’s father, former president Rodrigo Duterte, and when Duterte-appointed loyalists in the AFP are set to retire, and while Marcos was overseas.

Valbuena warned, “Notorious for her militarist and fascist mindset, as well as for ambitions to become president, Sara Duterte fits in well in the NTF-Elcac, than in the Department of Education. ...In almost everything, Sara Duterte’s addresses issues by silencing those who voice out and seek solutions to the people’s problems.” 

## NPA Southern Panay mounts 4 armed actions in 6 days

At least four consecutive armed operations were launched by members of the New People’s Army (NPA) in Southern Panay since 2 May, according to NPA – Napoleon Tumagtang Command.

First in the series of offensives was an armed operation against a military detachment based in Barangay Luyang, Sibalom, Antique around 10PM last 2 May.

This was followed by a punitive action by the NPA on 5 May against Atrila Builders Inc in Barangay Cabungan, Leon, Iloilo where at least 4 construction equipment were paralyzed including a backhoe, a grader, an elf truck and a roller. According to NPA – Napoleon Tumagtang Command, Atrila Builders Inc is guilty of violating labor standards such as not paying its workers their due wages and unfair working conditions among other complaints coming from residents. The said company is located just 2 kilometers from the CAFGU Active Auxilliary (CAA) detachment in Barangay Maliao in the same municipality.

On 6 May, Red fighters successfully foiled a planned operation by the Philippine Army in response to the said attack on Atrila Builders in Iloilo.


On 8 May, an NPA unit launched a tactical offensive against another CAA detachment in Barangay Igococ, Sibalom, Antique.

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image: philippinerevolution.nu

“These armed actions demonstrate the NPA’s determination to fight and resist the intensifying attacks of the enemy under the fascist US-Marcos II regime,” said NPA-Southern Panay in a statement. “This reflects the unrelenting support of the people for the NPA and the revolutionary struggle,” the NPA added.

The backdrop of these recent armed operations includes the latest agreement between the US government and the Marcos II regime. Last 3 May, Marcos II met with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to agree on sharing real-time military intelligence. The agreement, known as the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) is meant to exchange sophisticated military intelligence in a timely manner and is set to be finalized within the year. 

## 51% of Filipino Families consider themselves poor



image: philippinerevolution.nu

The Social Weather Stations (SWS), a survey organization in the Philippines conducted a recent survey showing that 51% of Filipino families considered themselves poor.

The survey, which was conducted last March 26-29 showed that 30% rated themselves as “borderline,” meaning they placed themselves on a line between poor and not poor. 19% of respondents considered themselves not poor.

A similar survey was held last December 2022 showing similar results. Comparing the December 2022 and March 2023 data, the SWS noted that the number of self-rated poor in March was 14 million while those in December was 12.9 million. The latest figure was due to the increases in the National Capital Region, which rose from 32% to 40% and in the Visayas, which jumped from 58% to 65%. This was combined with a decline in Balance Luzon, which fell from 49% to 43% as well as a steady statistic trend in Mindanao which increased from 59% to 62%.

The SWS also reported that in the last five quarters, the national median Self-Rated Poverty Threshold (SRP Threshold) stayed at Php15,000, while the national median Self-Rated Poverty Gap (SRP Gap) rose from Php5,000 in December 2022 to Php6,000 in March 2023. The minimum monthly budget of self-rated poor families shows that their need for the expenses in the home has remained sluggish for several years despite considerable inflation. This indicates that poor families have been lowering their living standards, the SWS explained.

Another result of the survey showed that around 2.7 million Filipino families experienced hunger during the first quarter of 2023. The survey revealed that 9.8% of Filipino families experienced involuntary hunger at least once during the first three months of 2023.

The hunger rate for the first quarter of the year was slightly lower than the 11.8% hunger rate in December 2022 and 11.3% hunger rate in October 2022. 