

EDITORIAL:

## **Reject US-NATO interference in South China Sea affairs**

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**Reject US-NATO interference in South China Sea affairs**


The recent signing of the Philippine Maritime Zones Act and the Philippine Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act is being touted by the reactionary government as a move to “safeguard” the country’s national interests. These laws institutionalize the 2016 decision of the International Arbitral Tribunal, which affirmed the Philippines’ rights over its exclusive economic zone and rejected China’s expansive claims in the South China Sea. While these measures are framed as a victory for national sovereignty, they risk serving as instruments for the United States and NATO to exploit the ongoing dispute and provoke China militarily, further entangling the Philippines in a war not of its own making.

The South China Sea has been a flashpoint for disputes, including those involving the Philippines and China. These conflicts stem from overlapping territorial claims and the strategic importance of the region’s rich resources. Despite the complexities, the only viable and sustainable path forward lies in peaceful resolution through dialogue, diplomacy, and adherence to international legal mechanisms like the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). However, the involvement of external powers, particularly the United States, NATO allies such as France and the UK, and Japan, risks transforming a regional issue into a proxy battleground for inter-imperialist war.

The US and its NATO allies have seized on the maritime disputes as an opportunity to assert their military and political dominance in Asia under the guise of promoting “freedom of navigation.” France and the UK, both former colonial powers in Southeast Asia, have recently issued inflammatory statements and deployed naval forces to the region, claiming to support the Philippines and other claimants against China. Meanwhile, Japan, itself a former imperialist aggressor in the Philippines, has amplified its rhetoric and committed to deeper military cooperation with Manila.

Filipinos must reject these overtures with vigilance. History shows us that these imperialist powers are not concerned with protecting the sovereignty of the Philippines, but are more concerned about advancing their hegemonic agendas. The US, under its “Pivot to Asia” strategy, has long sought to contain China’s rise by militarizing the region and fostering divisions among Asian nations. NATO’s involvement, driven by its members’ waning global influence, further complicates the situation, dragging the Philippines into conflicts it should have no part in.

On the other hand, Marcos Jr. has allowed the U.S. to expand its military footprint in the country, transforming it into a strategic stronghold for American forces. By granting greater access to military bases through the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) and permitting U.S. troops to participate in war exercises and maritime operations, Marcos Jr. is recklessly entangling the Philippines in U.S.-led provocations against China. This subservience undermines the Philippines’ sovereignty and puts its people at risk of becoming collateral damage in the brewing inter-imperialist war.

The Filipino people must remain vigilant against imperialist maneuvers that exploit regional tensions to justify the militarization of the South China Sea. These actions are part of a broader strategy to provoke armed conflict with China and drag the Philippines into an inter-imperialist war that serves the interests of foreign powers, not the Filipino people. Our nation’s sovereignty and peace cannot be sacrificed at the altar of imperialist rivalry. It is imperative to resist these schemes and demand a peaceful resolution to the South China Sea conflict. 

**Groups call for intensified struggles in the next four years under Trump**

Two international coalitions call for more intensified people’s struggles against US imperialism in the coming years as Donald Trump, the most undeniable champion of US monopoly capitalism, has been declared the winner of the recent US presidential elections.

The International League of Peoples’ Struggle (ILPS) US Chapter, in a statement on 7 November 2024, called on the people of the United States and the world to prepare for another four years of organizing the people to strike imperialism and all forms of local reaction as the crisis of US imperialism continues to unravel under another Trump regime.

The ILPS explains, Trumps reelection marks the outright failure of the Democrats under Biden and Harris to deliver genuine solutions to the people and does not primarily mark a “rightward shift” among the masses of the US. “Trump came to power because his campaign rhetoric unmasked the Democrats’ true nature as an anti-people party. Given his own viciously anti-people policies and his unapologetic backing of the richest and most powerful monopoly capitalists, his election reflects the critical urgent need for people to build a genuine alternative for themselves that would guard peoples’ rights and deliver a just and equitable society.”

ILPS says, under Trump, we should expect to see an exponential rise in anti-people policies, racist, anti-LGBTQIA rights, against equal pay and opportunity for women, and ultimately an intensification of the anti-socialist and anti-Muslim witchhunts and attacks, from both state and non-state forces, and a rising concentration of power in a shrinking handful of monopoly capitalists, particularly in the tech, energy, financial, real estate, and weapons industries.






image: philippinerevolution.nu

“Trump has promised to use military might to maintain US imperialism’s declining superpower status in the world. He threatens more aggression towards China at the expense of Filipino, Korean, Hawaiian and other peoples’ sovereignty, continued funding of the Zionist genocide of Palestine and war moves towards Iran. Despite his public criticism of the NATO alliance and his supposed desire to make a peace deal with Russia over the war in Ukraine, Trump has cozied up to the far right and neofascist movements taking power in Europe, and these elements are nearly all united in keeping NATO.”

Meanwhile, in a statement published on 8 November 2024, The International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) urged all its member organizations and the wider international community to brace for a sharper and more fast-moving campaign to uphold the basic rights of the Filipino people.

ICHRP renewed its call for an end to the US-led counterinsurgency campaign in the Philippines, and a stop to its widespread indiscriminate bombing and artillery strikes in the countryside. ICHRP called for the respect of agreements made in peace talks between the government of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, including the accord on the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. It is essential to address the root causes of the social conflict to bring the armed conflict to a just end.

Peter Murphy, Chairperson of the ICHRP, says, “The key interest of both Biden’s and Trump’s administrations was the utility of the Philippines as the biggest base in the ‘first island chain’ for containing China’s political and military influence. As long as the Manila government remains a reliable ally against China, the US continues to turn a blind eye to the dire human rights and democracy situation.” 

## Filipinos demand Marcos Jr. accountability, justice for disaster victims in PH

On the occasion of the 11th anniversary of Super typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) last November 8, progressive groups and survivors of calamities led by People Surge National Alliance of Disaster Survivors marched in protest in front of Malacanang (Presidential Palace). This was a timely commemoration amidst the series of typhoons that devastated the Philippines in the past two months.

The group demanded justice for victims and those affected by Yolanda last November 2013 under the Aquino II regime. Supertyphoon Yolanda is considered the strongest typhoon that hit the Philippines and the world. Not less than 6,300 died and 1,062 went missing due to torrential rains, wind and storm surge and floods.

The Global Climate Risk Index 2015 listed the Philippines as the number one most affected country by climate change, using 2013’s data.


“A decade has passed and several administrations changed, but preparation against calamities due to climate change have not been attended to,” declared People’s Surge. The group was established in Eastern Visayas where Yolanda devastated the most. It took the lead in the rehabilitation, struggle and demanding accountability of previous administrations. According to People’s surge, after Yolanda it seems that the government didn’t learn its lessons and continued to aggravate these disasters by approving destructive projects like deforestation of forests, widespread quarrying and mining, and reclamation.



image: philippinerevolution.nu

As of November 14, five typhoons hit the Philippines. According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) report, the combined number of people affected by the five storms is more than 9 million people or around 2.4 million families. Records have yet to determine how many communities have been forced to evacuate multiple times. More than 617,000 people remain displaced, of which 160,000 people are in 590 evacuation centers (EC) while 460,000 people are temporarily staying elsewhere.

“Our countrymen has not recovered due to the negligence of Marcos Jr.,” said People Surge. Instead of accepting accountability in the disastrous and incompetent preparation and response to typhoons, the government hypes the so-called “resiliency” of Filipinos in the face of calamities. Adding insult to injury, politicians take advantage of calamities by distributing dole outs to promote their electoral agenda.

In a related development hundreds of protestors participated in the “Prayer March for the Environment, Justice and Truth” in Lucena City last November 8. The mass action was participated by church people, local government officials and groups defending the environment and residents of affected communities affected by river quarrying and projects that are destructive to mountains and forests. 

## Ex-GRP president Duterte admits role in mass murder of drug war suspects



image: philippinerevolution.nu

Former GRP president Rodrigo Duterte incriminated himself and admitted his direct role and policy in the mass murder of thousands under his so-called war on drugs during his bloody and repressive regime. Human rights groups have estimated the number of those killed to have reached 30,000, mostly poor and small-time drug users.

The war criminal Duterte admitted his responsibility several times during hearings conducted by the Marcos Jr.-controlled Philippine Congress last week. Under oath, he said he told police officers to provoke suspects to fight back to justify their being killed, and that he rewarded police officers for killing the suspects. He refused to admit publicly, however, that the funds for his mass murder spree came from the millions of his confidential funds.

Early on, Duterte was also implicated by a police colonel close to him of implementing a reward system for police officers based on the number of drug suspects they killed. This reward system they named the “Davao model” is a system of payment which rewarded police forces and hitmen for successful killings, funded planned operations, and refunded operational expenses. Duterte implemented the same system when he was mayor of Davao City in southern Philippines, during which time hundreds have also been murdered, which included children.

Several relatives of those killed by Duterte’s drug war who were present during the hearings expressed strong frustration and anger that the hearings would not pursue the justice they want – to arrest and put the remorseless Duterte, his lieutenants and cohorts behind bars, as a result of his admissions. The hearings only exposed to them the futility of pursuing genuine justice under the present system.

Human rights organizations, progressive politicians and individuals have joined voices in calling for the immediate prosecution of the war criminal Duterte. They also called for an investigation of politically-motivated extrajudicial killings under the former president.

Human rights alliance Karapatan in a statement called on Marcos Jr. “to take the decisive step of working and coordinating with the International Criminal Court (ICC) to have him investigated, arrested, prosecuted and tried for the killings of thousands of drug suspects when he was Davao City mayor and in his first years as the country’s president”.

Karapatan also called for Duterte’s henchmen to be arrested, prosecuted and tried for following Duterte in exchange for money.

“Duterte and his henchmen cannot be tried in Philippine courts where they can exert influence and pressure and frustrate the ends of justice. Neither should they be held in Philippine prisons where they will likely enjoy VIP treatment, given their money and influence and the corruption prevalent in our penal system,” Karapatan emphasized.

“There is no reason for Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to continue feeling bound by Duterte’s self-serving decision to withdraw from the ICC. That is, unless he believes that staying out of the ICC’s ambit will also shield him from being investigated and prosecuted in the future for the mounting war crimes being perpetrated by his military forces in the course of the counter-insurgency war,” Karapatan concluded.

The NDFP’s People’s Democratic Government has received many complaints filed by relatives of drug war and political killings. 