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## 6 firearms seized in Bicol

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Bicol confiscated six firearms from two consecutive ambushes this August. Five offensives were likewise launched by NPA units in Southern Mindanao, Far South Mindanao, North Central Mindanao and Central Luzon. The island of Negros likewise recorded 17 armed actions since January this year. Meanwhile, at least four offensives were launched by the NPA-Southern Tagalog last July.

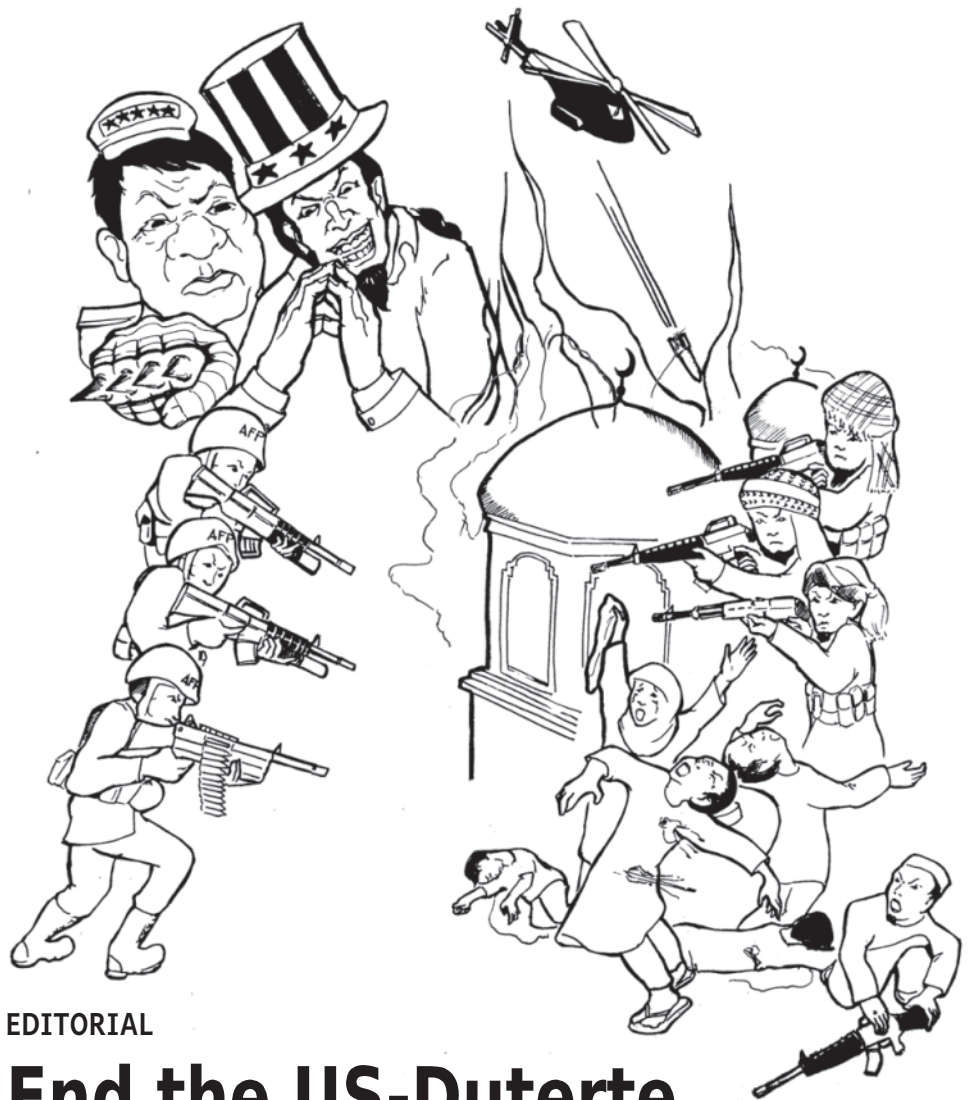
**Bicol.** The NPA-Sorsogon (Celso Minguez Command or CMC) ambushed 30 elements of the 31st IB, at 5:25 a.m. last August 7 in Brgy. Casili, Gubat. Four soldiers were immediately killed by a command-detonated explosive, including 2Lt. Lee Tramedal, the commanding officer of Alpha Coy, as well as SSgt. Alan Bercasio, SSgt. Rol-len Cabangon and another soldier. Seven more were wounded.

Confiscated from them were three M4s, magazines and ammunitions, and other military equipment. The firefight lasted for 45 minutes.

According to the CMC, the Red fighters seized three sachets of shabu from Tramedal's military pack. This confirms the long-standing knowledge of the residents that 31st IB troopers use illegal drugs.

The second ambush was

*continued on p. 3*



EDITORIAL

## End the US-Duterte regime's anti-Moro war

**T**he US-Duterte regime's nearly 100-day Marawi siege is now a full blown war of suppression against various Moro groups which have taken upon themselves to continue the armed struggle to defend and advance the Moro people's right to self-determination. Its relentless airstrikes and bombings of the city have resulted in widespread destruction of property and livelihood, and the deaths of at least a thousand civilians. This has brought about economic destruction and a massive humanitarian crisis.

The intensity of Duterte's war against the Moro people has taken genocidal proportions, forcing them to kneel to his whims and decisions. It has given the AFP the license to undertake mass killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, harassments

and abuses against civilians. The soldiers have free rein in plundering personal properties of Marawi residents, from the millions of pesos of business earnings to house appliances of ordinary families.

The Duterte regime has served

Marawi to the AFP and the US on a silver platter. It gave the US a rare chance to undertake more extensive military intervention. The US took the opportunity to launch a wide-spread military operation similar to Syria (a combination of airstrikes and special forces operations) in the country, alongside dumping old and obsolete weapons and undertake various military exercises between its troops and that of the AFP.

That the US aims to reclaim Marawi as its base and maintain a large and more permanent number of troops here has become clear. A 1953 decree allocating 80% of the city as its military reservation has been revived. The US is also intent on drawing up a new military treaty using the "ISIS" black scare in the country and in

Asia as its justification.

Duterte has been portraying his war and the AFP's Marawi siege as a "war against terrorism" and against the foreign "ISIS" as a desperate attempt to conceal the real reasons of the growing armed resistance in Marawi and other parts of the Bangsamoro. He has mistakenly presumed that his martial law declaration in Mindanao will suppress the struggles of the Moro and Filipino peoples. Instead of being cowed, Duterte has only fanned their growing anger. Their contempt



for Duterte is unprecedented, who even insultingly claims having Maranao blood. They are fully aware of the reasons behind the attack against their city at the pretext of fighting the ISIS which they

also know as a US creation.







More groups have joined the armed Moro groups, including the Maute group, which has bonded together in Marawi City for a *rido* (clan war). What started as a *rido* between rival clans is now a *rido* against the AFP, against the US and the Duterte regime.

In imposing martial law, Duterte managed to consolidate his control over the reactionary and ensure the perpetuation of his power. He swept aside the civilian authority of local Moro officials. He managed to silence Moro groups with threats and bribes. He poured funds into the AFP. The state has already spent P3 billion for the Philippine Army in three months alone, excluding the daily P1.3 million spent for missiles and rockets for jetfighters and helicopters. He has reportedly raised millions of pesos from his oligarch cronies to benefit wounded and slain soldiers.

In launching the anti-Moro war in Marawi and all-out war in the entire country, the Duterte regime has completely subsumed itself to the dictates and interests of US imperialism. He welcomed US aid and weapons with open arms. This August, he warmly received in Malacañang US State Department Sec. Rex Tillerson, a representative of American monopoly capitalists.

As the war in Marawi rages, the Moro people's armed resistance is spreading. They are intent on taking up arms to defend their interests and welfare. Together with the New People's Army, the Bangsamoro armed revolution for self-determination is bound to unprecedentedly advance in the years to come. AB

*Read the special report about the truth behind the AFP's Marawi siege on page 6.*

<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>ANG Bayan</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Vol XLVIII No. 16   Agosto 21, 2017</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Hiligaynon, Waray and English.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">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> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/prwcinfo">instagram.com/prwcinfo</a></div> <div> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/PhilippineRevolutionWebCentral">youtube.com/PhilippineRevolutionWebCentral</a></div> <div> <a href="https://twitter.com/prwc_info">@prwc_info</a></div> <div> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/philrevwebcentral">fb.com/philrevwebcentral</a></div> <div> <a href="mailto:cppinformationbureau@gmail.com">cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</a></div> </div>	<h2 style="text-align: center; border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 10px;">Contents</h2> <p><b>Editorial:</b> End the US-Duterte regime's anti-Moro war 1</p> <p>6 firearms seized in Bicol 1</p> <p><b>Editorial:</b> Unite the people to resist Duterte's heightened tyrannical rule 4</p> <p>Fight against the anti-drug campaign 5</p> <p>Uncover the truth behind Marawi siege 6</p> <p>The US-created AFP-LRR 10</p> <p>Destruction of tricycles condemned 11</p> <p><i>Bungkalan</i> in Batangas 11</p> <p>10th International Day of Minorities 11</p> <p>Human rights violations in Palawan 11</p> <p>CA rejects Sec. Judy Taguiwalo 12</p> <p>Duterte's 2018 budget is anti-poor 13</p>
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launched by the NPA-Catanduanes (Nerissa San Juan Command or NS-JC) against the elements of the Catanduanes Police Public Safety Company last August 10, at 12:30 noontime, in Brgy. Sagrada, Viga.

The NSJC seized two M16 rifles and a 9mm Glock pistol, magazines and ammunition.

Two policemen were killed, while nine others were wounded, including P/Insp. Montes. Meanwhile, a police officer who surrendered was treated humanely by the comrades. One Red fighter, Ka Jeremy, was martyred in the battle.

**Southern Mindanao.** A member of the 60th IB who was active in the Duterte regime's anti-Lumad campaign was killed in a partisan operation last August 8 in Sitio Megcauwayan, Brgy. Tapak, Paquibato District in Davao City. According to the NPA-Davao City-Bukidnon Subregional Command, the 60th IB is aggressive in exploiting the Lumad in its counterinsurgency campaign.

Two soldiers of the 71st IB were likewise killed in a partisan operation by the ComVal-Davao Gulf Subregional Command, at 10:30 a.m. last August 14, in Brgy. Poblacion, Mawab, Compostela Valley. According to the residents, PFC Jerome Adlawan and his companion were involved in a series of Lumad and peasant killings in Mawab, Mabini and Pantukan.

Meanwhile, 14 members of the paramilitary group Alamara surrendered to the unit of the Davao City-Bukidnon Subregional Command last August 20. According to the Lumads, they were actively being exploited by the 60th IB in its counterinsurgency campaign in order to sow discord within the Matigsalog tribe in Talaingod and nearby municipalities. The Lumads admitted being employed by the 60th IB in terrorizing and driving away their fellow Lumads, destroying a school in Sitio Labuo and in the heinous murder of student

Alibando Tingkas in January 17, 2016.

#### **Far South Mindanao.**

On August 13, the NPA-Far South Mindanao (Valentine Palamine Command or VPC) attacked the armed personnel of

Silvicultural Industries Inc., one of the subsidiaries of David M. Consunji Incorporated (DMCI), in Sitio Bermuda, Barangay Sto. Niño, Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat. Three guards were killed and some were wounded. These guards were trained by the 38th IB-CAA and are culpable in many cases of murder and other crimes against Lumads and peasants in Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato.

**North Central Mindanao.** The NPA-South Central Bukidnon (SCB) Subregional Command set off a command-detonated explosive against operating troops from the 8th IB and 72nd Division Recon Company in Sitio Binanglasan, Brgy. Canangaan, Cabanglasan, Bukidnon last August 5 at around 1 p.m.

**Central Luzon.** The NPA-Pangasinan announced the successful ambush by the Red fighters against the PNP-RPSB on July 28, at around 9:30 a.m., at Villa Verde Road, Barangay Sta. Maria East, San Nicolas. Two members of the RPSB, including Sgt. Aris Tamondong, were killed and two were wounded.

According to the NPA-Pangasinan, the successful ambush supports the struggle of peasants and indigenous people of San Nicolas in defending their farms and ancestral lands.

**Southern Tagalog.** A unit of the NPA-Laguna (Cesar Batralo Command or CBC) harassed troops belonging to the 80th IB on July 25,



5:30 a.m. Two were killed and three were wounded among the soldiers. That night, another unit of the CBC set off a command-detonated explosive against elements of the RPSB-4A in Barangay Mahipon, Cavinti, Laguna. A police officer was killed.

Before this, the Red fighters harassed the RPSB in Barangay San Antonio, Kalayaan on July 20, at 10:30 p.m. One RPSB element was wounded.

Meanwhile, a soldier was killed in a sniping operation by a unit of the NPA-Mt. Sierra Madre (Rosario Lodronio Rosal Command) in Mauban, Quezon on July 24.

**Negros.** In a summing-up by the NPA-Negros (Apolinario Gatmaitan Command or AGC), the NPA in the island has launched a total of 17 armed actions from January until July of this year. Ten high powered firearms and 15 pistols, along with various ammunition and military equipment, were seized from these offensives. Most relevant of these tactical offensives was the ambush launched against the PNP-Guihulungan last July 21.

According to the AGC, in the past six months, the NPA also successfully meted out punishment on 14 landgrabbers, criminal elements and intelligence agents of the 303rd IBde. These are involved in many cases of human rights violations and anti-peasant activities, including the killing of four activist-leaders.

AB

# Unite the people to resist Duterte's heightened tyrannical rule

Rodrigo Duterte is obsessed with his strongman ambitions. He is set on establishing himself as a fascist despot. His resort to tyrannical methods has heightened since having unravelled as a camp-follower of the US imperialists. He has become ever more brazen and unapologetic in carrying out repressive policies and measures.

He has escalated the campaign of extrajudicial killings against street peddlers and users of shabu. He expresses satisfaction over news that more than a hundred have been killed by his police in three days. He has publicly applauded the murderous rampage of his police force and has repeated his vow to save them from punishment, stoking greater public indignation after police were caught on camera manhandling a 17-year old boy prior to his fatal shooting. There is widespread clamor for justice for all the victims of Duterte's anti-people "war against drugs."

This escalation of police killings comes at the heels of the discovery of a P6.4 billion shipment of shabu from China at a warehouse of the Bureau of Customs. The involvement of Duterte scion Paolo and his Davao gang of businessmen cum drug smugglers has also been exposed. Duterte has defended his appointee at the BOC despite (or perhaps because of) the drug smuggling.

Duterte is himself rousing widespread public suspicion that his "war against drugs" is nothing but a smokescreen for a major turf war among major drug syndicates, and that he has been using the police to provide favor and protection for one syndicate against another or that he himself is a drug kingpin. Employing trusted and tested police officers, he liquidated the Parojinogs of Ozamiz City, long known for controlling the illegal drug trade in

large parts of Mindanao and elsewhere.

He has likewise used his war against drugs as a blanket tool against his political rivals. He brandishes his thick book of dossiers of supposed drug personalities which not even the police chief can cite a basis for. He has arbitrarily included and excluded people and has used the list to arm-twist rivals with threats of killings showcasing the Parojinogs and Espinozas (of Albuerra, Leyte) in order to force them to accede to his political and criminal agenda.

The brutality of Duterte's "war against drugs" is matched only by the brutality of his all-out war against the revolutionary forces under Oplan Kapayapaan, his imposition of martial law and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao and the anti-Moro war and siege of Marawi. In the countryside, the military rules and respects no rights or freedom. Killings of peasants and national minorities run unabated. It has relentlessly carried out aerial bombing, shelling and strafing of civilian communities. Almost half a million people have forcibly evacuated.

Duterte has used his congressional supermajority to earn approval and extension of his Mindanao martial law. He has also

rammed through his new tax laws and is seeking quick approval of his 2018 budget. With complete or nearly complete control of congress, Duterte aims to push for charter change to enshrine the neoliberal policies of liberalization, privatization and deregulation and realize his ambition of completely monopolizing power under the guise of establishing a federal government.

Duterte wants everyone to remain silent and blindly accept his planned infrastructure-binge with all its burdensome debt deals and commissions. He has repeatedly threatened the Supreme Court against issuing TROs and had his political allies file an impeachment case against the chief justice. Threats of impeachment have also been dished out against other officials who have not been cooperative with the Duterte regime such as Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales.

Duterte has completely abandoned his cordial relations with the national democratic movement having failed to entice the people's revolutionary forces to silence their guns in a protracted ceasefire prior



to substantively addressing the roots of the civil war. His congressional minions have voted to reject the appointment of social activist Judy Taguiwalo as social welfare secretary, signalling his termination of earlier efforts to explore a possible alliance with the Left. He has repeatedly declared he no longer wants peace negotiations with the NDFP.

The Duterte regime has carried out policies that favor foreign big capitalists, bourgeois compradors, big landlords, bureaucrat capitalists and the fascist military and police. It plans to impose additional tax burdens and pursues a debt-driven infrastructure program which are bound to be detrimental to the people's welfare. It has waged wars of death and destruction against the people, especially against the peasants, the Moro and national minority peoples, the workers and the urban poor.

As a result, the Duterte regime has become increasingly politically isolated from the people and has resorted to more and more tyrannical measures to perpetuate itself in power. No amount of media and social media manipulation and news

and public opinion fakery can withstand the assertion of the truth concerning the concrete conditions of the oppressed and exploited people.

It is the task of the Party and revolutionary forces to unite all sectors in a broad people's alliance, provide it core strength and leadership in the struggle against the US-Duterte regime's tyrannical, criminal and corrupt rule. Indeed, many of the Duterte regime's victims are now rising from the depths of fear and raising their voices against his regime.

The mass organizations and alliances must unite and mobilize the people in greater numbers by intensifying the mass struggles of peasants, workers, students, the urban poor, the women, the Moro and minority peoples, the church people, teachers, the migrant workers and their families and other democratic sectors and groups. They must carry out mass struggles and campaigns along anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-fascist lines.

They must give attention to waging a propaganda offensive against Duterte's demagoguery. They must

encourage, unleash the initiative and give full swing to their members and their mass base to confront and confute Duterte and his band of paid trolls in all forms of media. They can do so by carrying out regular educational discussions among their members and the masses in the factories, communities, schools, offices and so on.

The broadest possible online network of activists, propagandists and members of the national democratic mass organizations must be built.

Under the direction of the Party, the New People's Army (NPA) must continue to seize nationwide initiative, carry out more and more tactical offensives, increase the number of its weapons and arm a rapidly increasing number of new Red fighters.

Every successful tactical offensive of the NPA helps shatter the climate of shock, awe and fear imposed by the regime's brutal war and, in turn, instills fear on the drug-crazed Duterte. The victories of the NPA inspire the Filipino and Moro people to wage mass struggles and armed resistance against the US-Duterte regime. AB

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## The fight against the bloody anti-drug campaign

AS THE NUMBER of victims of extrajudicial killings in the name of Duterte's "war against drugs" continues to increase, so are the enraged people condemning it.

On August 18, members of Anakbayan from the University of the Philippines-Diliman, Polytechnic University of the Philippines and University of Sto. Tomas launched a black ribbon protest in condemnation of the "war against drugs," particularly the killing of 17-year old Kian delos Santos. Various sectors led by KADAMAY and Rise Up for Life and Rights also staged a protest on the same day at the Boy Scouts Rotonda in Quezon City.

"Duterte's martial law is not only in Mindanao, but also in poor communities where drug suspects and small-time addicts and pushers are killed without even a trial," said Fr. Gilbert Billena, spokesperson of Rise Up.

The campaign #JusticeforKian and an end to the government's killing of its citizens with impunity spread all

over social media.

This August 21, various groups, together with Stop the Killings Network and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, launched "Walk for Justice", which will wrap up in a candle-lighting activity at the crime scene, and a program during de los Santos' wake.

Caloocan Archbishop Pablo David also called for justice for the victims. According to him, the Catholic church will sound its bells every night from August 20 until November 27 as a protest on the widespread killings.

Cultural activists, including veteran directors, writers, singers and movie artists, released a statement of condemnation. According to the group, killing in the name of the "war against drugs" and the exoneration of those responsible, have seemingly become normal fare. They also called for an end to the campaign and justice to all its victims. AB

# Uncover the truth behind the AFP's Marawi siege

This *Ang Bayan* special report seeks to put together the true picture of the AFP's siege of Marawi City. Featured here are crucial data the AFP persists in covering up including the questions regarding the basis of the "ISIS" black-scare that Duterte created and inflated; and the US' central role in the initiation and continuance of the war on Marawi City; and others.

These data were culled from reports of Party cadres carrying out direct investigation, units of the New People's Army (NPA) deployed among the Moro masses, interviews with Marawi resident evacuees and research from various public information sources.

## 1. *The context of the Marawi war's outbreak was rido and not rebellion.*

Even before the outbreak of the war in Marawi, a widespread *rido* had long been brewing among clans of the local ruling class. Clans out of power agreed to unite and launch an armed action particularly against the ruling faction headed by Gandamra, the incumbent mayor who won in the 2016 elections. They planned to seize the city hall, neutralize Camp Ranao and close down the city's main avenues.

The clans involved here have deep and intertwined relations. One clan, the Romato-Maute, had established a wide alliance when it attempted to oust the incumbent mayor of Butig in November 2016. Through their mother's Romato clan, their family has direct connections with Solitario/Salic, the biggest clan in Marawi.

The plan to oust the incumbent faction in Marawi was led by the Mautes, particularly the brothers Omarkhayam and Abdullah. Their interest converged with the Abu Sayyaf's Isnilon Hapilon's interest to establish a "Dawlah Islamiya" (Islamic State) there. To draw in support within the city, they called for the "cleansing" of Marawi from non-Islamic ways, such as the thriving drug trafficking, prostitution, alcohol intoxication, indebtedness, karaoke and others. The proliferation of drugs was attributed to the AFP.

Although the brothers used ISIS symbols and the flag, there are no indications that the group's operations are controlled or funded by the Syria and Iraq-based ISIS. There are also no indications that the brothers had connections with other Moro groups that have pledged allegiance to the ISIS flag outside Lanao del Sur.

## 2. *The US' botched liquidation operations against Isnilon Hapilon triggered the fight.*

The fight between the AFP/PNP and armed Moro groups erupted at around 1:45 p.m. on May 23. The AFP launched an operation similar to that in Mamasapano with the intent of liquidating Isnilon Hapilon in pursuit of the \$5 million (P125 million) reward offered by the US.

As in the botched Mamasapano operation, US design and control of the operation is evident. At the operation's day one, the city teemed with US-trained and armed troops, mainly the Light Reaction Regiment (LRR) based in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija. This unit was bolstered by the US in 2004, using its own funds, and trained extensively for its intended military strategy. (See *related article on page 10*)

And as in the Mamasapano incident too, a huge Moro force met and outfought the first AFP assault like a "pintakasi." Almost the whole AFP force used by the US in this operation was reportedly trapped

and annihilated. The local police force did not fight. They buried their firearms and left the city together with the civilian evacuees.

## 3. *The fight that erupted in Marawi was exploited to declare martial law in Mindanao.*

The evening of May 23, Duterte declared the imposition of martial law and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in the whole Mindanao.

He did this while in Russia to show the president Vladimir Putin that he was fighting the "ISIS" in his own turf. At the same time, he begged Putin for additional missiles and weapons that according to him will be paid by the Philippines. Russia ignored his request.

AFP units that are directly controlled, funded and trained by the US for "counter-terrorism" tactics were among the first deployed to Marawi. Foremost among these were the 2nd and 4th Light Reaction Company. These were supported by a minimum of three battalions (49th IB, 44th IB and 15th IB), one mechanized battalion (5th) and one reconnaissance division company under the control of the 1st ID.

At day two, the Naval Special Operations Group from Zamboanga Peninsula and the 1st Scout Ranger Regiment with forces from the Lanao del Sur-Bukidnon boundary reinforced these units. The AFP threw its whole Mechanized Division into Marawi (four mechanized battalions, one cavalry squadron and one light armored unit), and all of its armored units (114) that were sold by the US to the AFP in 2015. Within a few days, AFP troops in Marawi reached 3,000, supported by almost all of the Philippine Air Force's fighter planes and helicopters. These were reinforced by

infantry battalions from Panay, Southern Tagalog and Bicol.

Encounters within the city were numerous and many at close quarters. AFP forces were repeatedly engaged, together with their armored units, in battles that lasted for days. Most of the units which were not trained for urban warfare found it difficult to fight within the city with criss-crossing roads and adjoining houses and buildings.

#### 4. Armed Moro groups fought intensively, widely and with strength

The Maute group is not the only group fighting in Marawi City. A non-formal alliance of various armed Moro groups, including former MILF factions that are disgusted with the deception of the successive Aquino and Duterte regimes, compose the biggest Moro force entrenched in the city at present. Many of the younger commanders and forces of the MILF sympathize with the Mautes especially considering that the Romato clan is powerful within its structure. The Romatos own the land where Camp Bushra, the MILF's second biggest camp, is located.

In the face of the soldier's indiscriminate attacks, many of the Marawi residents have decided to fight the AFP, at their own initiative or with the various armed Moro forces in the city.

They confront the intensity of the AFP attacks using self-made guns such as the Barrett and explosives. Their reason is that if they do not fight, they will be killed by the soldiers anyway. Some assist with the guns while others go with the armed groups believing they are more secure in such company. According to the civilians trapped in the city, during the first day, armed groups were even giving them food and advising them to hide well.

Meanwhile, other Moro groups sent additional armed forces to Marawi City. One who identified himself as a Maute spokesperson confirmed that other armed groups

"crossed the water" (Lanao Lake) at dawn on May 24. By the size of their forces, they were able to control the city's major roads and strategically positioned themselves in commercial districts.

Last August, another armed group directly attacked the 55th IB detachment at the outskirts of the city.

#### 5. The "ISIS" black-scare and "terrorism"

Ever since Duterte imposed martial law in Mindanao and ordered the Marawi City siege, he has systematically and continuously used the "ISIS" black-scare and linked this with the Maute group to enlist support for his iron-fisted measures. He used the "black scare" although he has not produced a thread of evidence of ISIS presence in Marawi City nor its links to the Maute group.

Many evacuees who were interviewed said that they heard of "ISIS" presence in their area only from television newscasts. Many also doubt the prevalent black graffiti "I love ISIS" around Marawi City because this is inconsistent with the fundamentalist-religious stand of the ISIS.

In their area, the Maute brothers are known as "jihadists" who follow a "fundamentalist" Islamic view. They have no record of hurting civilians or targeting non-Muslims. There are no accounts that they ever spread intense hatred against Christians.

A video of armed men performing sacrilege on religious symbols at St. Mary's Cathedral is being circulated but there is no evidence that this was done by the Mautes. The

reported beheading of two workers in Butig in 2016 was because they were AFP intelligence agents. Under the Shari'a law, beheading is a form of capital punishment practiced by Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia.

To make them appear as terrorists, Duterte accused the Maute group as being behind the bombing of the Davao City Market in the evening of September 2, 2016. In a rare interview, this was strongly denied by the group's spokesperson.

#### 6. War of suppression against the Moro people's armed struggle

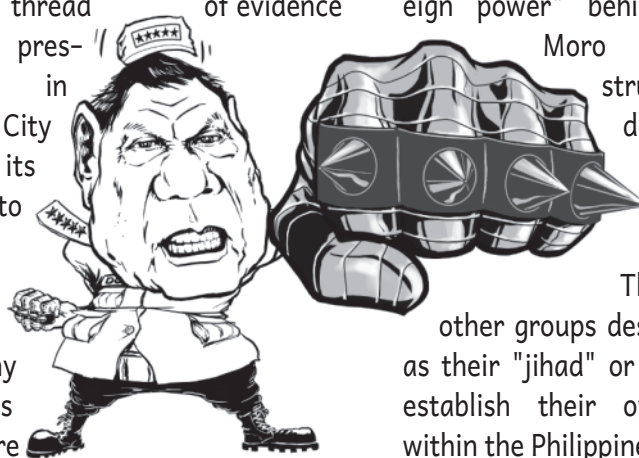
The Duterte regime ceaselessly repeats the story about the supposedly "extremist Maute group" and "terrorism of the ISIS." He insistently paints pictures of a "foreign power" behind the various Moro groups' armed struggle in Marawi, despite the repeated denials of the AFP spokesperson.

The Maute and other groups describe their fight as their "jihad" or religious war to establish their own government within the Philippines.

More than their unity as "jihadists," these armed groups are united by their common objection to the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), the proposed law drafted by the GRP and MILF to establish their nation under the reactionary constitution of the Philippine constitution.

Duterte thought that he would be able to unite the various Moro groups under an amended BBL. But even the MNLF, that he has time and again declared to be friendly to him, could not be persuaded to abide by this.

Under the "revised" BBL, which according to some Moro groups is no different from the previous BBL, Moro armed groups are required to surrender and submit to be under the reactionary GRP and the AFP



and PNP, a matter most of the groups promoting their self dignity refuse to do. They cannot accept to be integrated, or even just cooperate, with the reactionary military that has dealt countless crimes against their families and clans. Aside from this, it is not acceptable for most of the Moro to subject their territory, funds and resources to the GRP and open these to foreign plunder and exploitation (plantations and mining).

Even among the ranks of those who agree with the BBL, there is an increasing number of those who are getting exasperated with the reactionary state's delay and its unfulfilled promises. They are aware that Duterte is only deceiving them because until now he has not pushed the Congress to approve it. Many ordinary Moro warriors have declared that they are ready to return to armed struggle if the outcome of the BBL does not fulfil their aspirations.

*7. The regime is carrying out a genocidal-like war against the Moro.*

Local residents depicted the soldiers as almost "naghuhuramentado" (running amok) especially during the early days of the Marawi siege. They shot men they found in the homes, even if those who identified themselves as civilians. This has been proven by a local official who dared to carry out rescue operations during the first time the AFP allowed them to conduct "humanitarian operations." In front of the said official himself, soldiers shot two unarmed men who were pleading to be rescued.

The AFP carries out unmitigated bombing and destruction of homes, infrastructure, mosques, schools and economy of the whole Marawi City and adjoining towns whose eco-

nomies are linked to the former. Duterte is turning a deaf ear to the Moro's widespread appeal to stop the bombings because of the calamitous destruction to their lives and property.

The AFP drops 250-pound (or almost 115 kilos) bombs, rockets and other explosives from US-supplied planes and helicopters. According to residents, there are frequent incidents of midnight bombing from unknown vehicles believed to be unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) or armed drones of the US.

The AFP tries to make it appear that only 80 civilians have been killed. But based on the recorded number of missing persons and the corpses brought to the funeral homes, estimates rise to almost a thousand civilians killed during the first month of the bombing and strafing of the AFP. Many of them were purportedly Maute members or sympathizers. Marawi local officials' reports prove that corpses are strewn all over and the "smell of death" blankets the communities.

More than 400,000 residents in Marawi and nearby towns have been forced to evacuate to Iligan City and other places. Most of them are cramped in evacuation centers in very miserable conditions. Meanwhile, there are widespread cases of soldiers looting the residents' abandoned homes, plundering their savings, jewelry, computers and other possessions.

Civilians who are able to escape from the war zone experience severe trauma not from what the

military says are Maute atrocities but from the ceaseless bombing and brutality of the AFP. During the war's first month only, around 20,000 evacuees already showed signs of severe depression.

Duterte's war is a genocide-like war against the Moro people. This is Duterte's "punishment" for the Moro groups who refused to support his peace agenda within the BBL framework and chose to continue the path of armed resistance.

*8. Military control of information*

When the armed conflict started in Marawi, Duterte's and the AFP's propaganda machinery heated up to spread false, incomplete and grossly untrue information. The AFP's directive on martial law implementation emphasized that one of its key assignments was "control of information flow."

Media personnel are not allowed to freely gather information in Marawi City. The military strictly controls their movements and the information they release. Many of them are required to report all of the stories supplied to them by the AFP spokesperson.

Higher military officers limit the media's press releases and the latter are required to request clearance for anyone they want to interview. Using the excuse of ensuring their security, they are prohibited from going far from the capitol and are only fed reports and "dramatized" encounters.

Even members of the media observed how the soldiers controlled the civilians leaving the war zone to make sure that they follow the AFP line. A few are able to give the media the true story but they are quickly silenced by the AFP and forced to retract. All civilians who get out of the war zone are subjected to "profiling," even the children.

The AFP continues to repeat its lies regarding supposed hostages of





the armed Moro, who are allegedly enslaved and made pregnant by the warriors. The AFP spokesperson also could not show proof, even just one picture of a corpse of an alleged member of the group. No agency or entity could prove their reports. Instead, there are contrary documented information by the city officials.

Many incidents that the media do not receive, such as the 14-year-old and the media personnel allegedly hit by a Maute sniper's "stray bullet" within the so-called "safe zone," a place across the big river from the position of the armed Moro. Media personnel are also witness to the traces of torture of male civilians after going through the soldiers' "interrogation". Soldiers and police also display insolence at checkpoints, even in front of cameras, in threatening and insulting residents who dared to return to the city to salvage their remaining possessions.

To justify their continued airstrikes, the AFP declares that these are "surgical" and only a few civilians are affected.

New disinformation is quickly supplied to cover the as quickly previously refuted fake news. The burning of houses, schools and other buildings are quickly attributed to the "Maute-ISIS" despite the truth that those were the handiwork of AFP soldiers.

Aside from the two incidents when the statements of Moro groups came out in the mass media on May 24, no other information comes from them or even from the Maute brothers. All avenues of information in social media were ordered closed down by the AFP. All contradicting the AFP's reports are labelled "sympathizers" of terrorism. Anyone who releases information contrary to the official line is threatened with charges of "cyber terrorism."

*9. Business and military interests fuel the destruction of Marawi City*

Even as the AFP's war and siege of Marawi City has not yet ceased, several big compradors interested in investing and making money from "reconstruction" are already falling in line. To curry Duterte's and the AFP's favor, these companies contributed hundreds of millions of pesos to the AFP support fund (to use as reward for the soldiers).

Duterte set up Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM), a group headed by Department of National Defense Secretary Lorenzana and 22 other officers of government agencies for the reconstruction of Marawi City. Not one local leader is in this group's leadership and even more, not one representative from the city's residents and evacuees. The group drafted relocation plans for the evacuees, including the construction of cramped housing (22 square meters) within and around Marawi City.

The TFBM has no plans of returning the evacuees to their communities. It dug up a 1953 decree that allocated more than 8,400 hectares of 80% of the city as a military reservation. According to this decree, almost the whole city has been declared as Camp Keithley Military Reservation and reserved for US military use. This covers even the nearby municipalities of Marantao, Piagapo and Saguiran, likewise some parts of Lake Lanao. Residents living here are in danger of being evicted from their own place. Camp Keithley was the former headquarters of the US military in Mindanao.

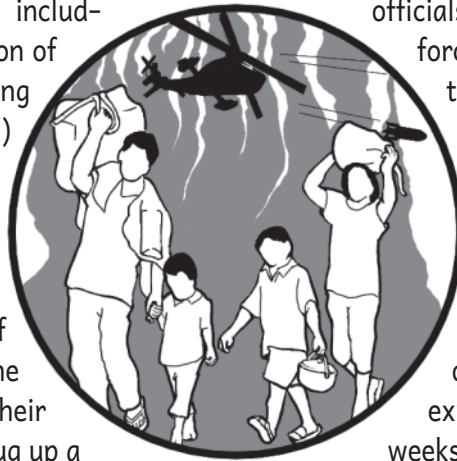
In 1961, this was reduced by more than 1,000 hectares for the establishment of the Mindanao State University. At present, the university only occupies around 300 hectares and the rest are populated by communities. Therefore, even

residents here face eviction. The city's remaining 20% land is titled to several private individuals.

*10. In US' eyes: Marawi is the new Syria*

The AFP design of the Marawi siege and destruction is very consistent with the US style of intervention in cities that have strong resistance movements like Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Using the Duterte-created "ISIS" black-scare, the US concealed its direct armed intervention behind the screen of "advise on technical matters." In reality, the US directed the whole operation through its so-called Joint Special Operations Task Force Trident, a small group under the Pentagon and composed of the high officials of their special forces and private contractors. According to the spokesperson of the US military spokesperson himself, they expect this task force to grow and the scope of its operations to expand in the next weeks.

Last August, while the AFP was preparing for its "last offensive" against the armed Moro, there emerged the US intention to carry out direct airstrikes in Marawi based on a "new treaty" for "collective self-defense." It appears that the US is pushing the revision of the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 to include internal threats such as the "ISIS" and bring back their right to maintain the huge military base and presence with the authority to intervene anytime and anywhere in the country. At the same time, US military officers are also pushing for a bigger operation with a name, such as the Operation Enduring Freedom in the 2000s. This operation became the basis of the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines that lasted for 15 years.



# The US-created AFP-LRR

THE AFP'S LIGHT Reaction Regiment (LRR) are the main elements engaged in the close-quarter battle that the Moro armed groups are currently waging in Marawi. At the minimum, two of its companies, the 4th and 5th Light Reaction Company, have been in Marawi since the first day.

The LRR is a military formation under the Philippine Army currently with six companies (600 personnel). It was created and exclusively trained and armed by the US through the \$25 million aid from its Department of State in 2001. It was first established as a Light Reaction Company in 2000 as a special "anti-terrorism" force against the Abu Sayyaf. During the early part of 2001, the US sent special forces from its Okinawa base to launch a six-month training program for the said unit. The first elements came from the Scout Rangers and the Philippine Army's Special Forces.

When the terrorist attacks in the US occurred in September 11, 2001 and the US' military intervention in the Philippines intensified, the LRC was one of the units the US

strengthened. Under its Operation Enduring Freedom (2001-2014), the US Special Operations Command sent the Task Force 510 (which later became the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines) in 2002. The LRC was put under this command and after two years of training, it was activated on 2004. The unit specialized in counter-sniper operations and close quarter combat, as well as counter-guerrilla tactics. It was expanded into a battalion in May 2002, and into a regiment in 2014.

The unit's "counter-terrorism" operations are not limited to the pursuit of the bandit group Abu Sayyaf. It was twice used against coup plotters from the military ranks (2003 and 2009). It was instrumental in wiping out a unit of



the New People's Army in Tarlac. There was a period when it was used against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). In 2008, 50 of its elements were charged for killing seven civilians while in pursuit of MILF fighters. In 2014, it was used as an attack force in the Zamboanga Siege, where the Moro National Liberation Front attempted to seize parts of Zamboanga City and establish their own territories. This was also the unit used in Bohol to pursue Abu Sayyaf members who came to the island. It conducts secret strike missions to liquidate high value targets, as it did in Sulu this year. AB

## Lakbayan 2017: Solidarity against fascism

"Solidarity of national minorities and the whole Filipino people in the face of the US-Duterte regime's intensifying fascism." This is the general theme of the fifth Lakbayan ng Pambansang Minorya headed by Sandugo, an alliance of Moro people, Lumads, Cordillera people and other national minorities.

Approximately more than 1,500 Lumads and Moros from Mindanao's different regions will travel to Metro Manila this last week of August until September. The Lumads and Moros of Mindanao will be welcomed by tribes and other national minorities from various parts of Luzon and Visayas for a month-long campout and series of protest actions.

For this year's Lakbayan, the primary call will be the lifting of martial law in Mindanao which the AFP and the PNP used as pretext in order to intensify their fascist attacks on the Bangsamoro, Lumad and peasant communities and other civilians in the island.

During interviews following his second State of the Nation Address

last July, Duterte threatened to bomb Lumad schools while riding on the old and deceptive AFP line that these schools are "illegal" and "un-registered" with the government.

Also since July up to the present, more than 100 Lumad students headed by Save our Schools Network set up camp at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City as a protest to Duterte's threats. The religious sector, academics as well as artists, gave their support to the campaign of ending the harassment, rebel-baiting, and destruction of Lumads schools.

Alongside this, massive protest actions were consecutively held by the people of Mindanao against the Duterte regime's martial law.

Lumad students and their supporters likewise trooped to the Department of Education office and the AFP Eastern Mindanao Command headquarters in Davao City to protest the harassment and threats by government agencies on their schools. Hundreds of Lumads likewise staged a protest last August 9 in Davao City in commemoration of the International Day of National Minorities.

On August 15-16, more than 500 Lumads and peasants from Compostela Valley province launched the People's Caravan for Justice and Peace. The rallyists camped out in front of the provincial capitol and called for justice for the victims of killings under the Duterte regime's Oplan Kapayapaan and martial law. According to Karapatan-SMR, in this province dubbed "valley of death," no less than 11 have become victims of extrajudicial killings since January. AB

## **Destruction of tricycles condemned**

KADAMAY MEMBERS STAGED a protest in front of the Quezon City Hall last August 9 to condemn the implementation of the ordinance SP 2337 or "one-strike policy" against unregistered tricycles. Before this, 80 tricycles were crushed in front of their owners. According to Bea Arellano, the organization's president, the local government collects so many registration fees that the hard-up operators are forced to continue with their livelihood despite pressure from authorities. DSWD Sec. Judy Taguiwalo likewise condemned this and contrasted it to the light penalties on illegal operations of transportation companies Uber and Grab. She called for a more humane and productive method in resolving the issue and not through the destruction of the people's properties.

## **Bungkalan in Batangas**

FARMERS OF SITIO Balakbakan, Barangay Laiya Aplaya, San Juan, Batangas launched their *bungkalan* (collective farming) last August 17 on the land being arrogated by Laiya Development Corporation owned by Frederico Campos III. Campos is claiming Sitio Balakbakan to be transformed as a lavish resort for tourists. Last July 3, 2014, residences were violently demolished, driving the residents to live on the sidewalk. Despite the severe harassment of the guards, the farmers continue to fight for their rights to land.

## **10th International Day of Minorities commemorated**

UNDER THE THEME "Day of Struggle and Celebration," indigenous peoples from Cordillera gathered last August 9 in Baguio City. The Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) headed the call for the heightened solidarity and struggle for rights and self-determination of national minorities and rights of other sectors of society. The CPA also called for an end to the martial law in Mindanao as Lumads bear the brunt of the widespread violations of the people's rights by the military and its paramilitaries.

# **Human rights violations in Palawan**

**C**onsecutive human rights violations were reported in Palawan from July 24 to August 17 this year. At the same time, killings, harassments and militarization continue unabated in other parts of the country.

In July 24, the AFP twice mortared indigenous communities in the Arib mountains, between Barangay Malihud, Bataraza and Barangay Culasian, Rizal. The Bagong Tinig ng Katutubo-Palawan vehemently denied the AFP Western Command's claim that there was an encounter in the said area.

On the next day, 4th Marine Battalion Landing Team elements fired on four minorities who were traversing the river. Two were wounded.

On July 27, a misencounter between AFP units was reported as a clash between them and Red fighters. AFP soldiers occupied the area, forcing the residents to evacuate. Next day, on July 28, the AFP bombed Barangay Malihud and Barangay Bulalacao, Bataraza. They illegally searched the residents' houses and arrested their leader, Chieftain Polog and his wives and children in Sitio Mar-inshawun, Barangay Bono-bono.

While they were being transported to the military camp, soldiers pushed him out of the vehicle. He was severely injured and needed hospitalization. His wives were detained in the DSWD office while his children kept in a secret location.

On August 11, four minorities were arrested in Barangay Alacalian, Taytay. They were tortured and slapped with trumped up charges. The four are Noel, Reden and Ely Peñaredondo and Elesar Buenasalbas. Elesar, Noel and Reden were accosted by troops of the Regional Public Safety Battalion and accused of being NPA members.

### **Sorsogon killings**

Successive killings were reported in Gubat, Sorsogon on August 7-8. In a statement, NPA-Sorsogon reported that on August 7, elements of the 22nd IB and 331st IB entered the house and killed Eming Estrada, a peasant resident of Barangay Casili, Gubat. The following day, August 8

at 10 p.m., elements of the 96th Military Intelligence Combat Operatives shot brothers Jayson and Jojo Escaño inside their house in Barangay Union. Jayson was killed while Jojo sustained gunshot wounds in his arm.

On August 7, the same unit entered the house of Salvador Hapa in Barangay Sangat. In the morning, the soldiers returned, forcing him to leave the area and his livelihood.

### **Violence against Lumad schools and communities**

After a clash between the 73rd IB and NPA units last August 8, soldiers militarized the neighboring sitios of Lamsalo, Kakob, Mahayag and Maybaka in Barangay Upper Suyan, Malapatan, Sarangani. Because of this, around 500 B'laan peasants were forced to relocate to Sitio Akbual in the same barangay.

Prior to this, soldiers strafed Lumad houses while they were away having a meeting with the 72nd IB commander in the area. According to Sarino Nayam and Melvin Bation, both CLANS teachers, soldiers even wrote threats in Moro language on

some houses to malign the Moros in the area.

According to CLANS, 33 schools have been forced to close due to relentless attacks against the Lumads and around 1,100 students have stopped their schooling while 52 teachers were prevented from holding classes.

Meanwhile, a two-year old child died in the evacuation center in the capitol grounds of Cabanglasan, Bukidnon on August 17. Angeline Powan was among the hundreds of evacuees who left their communities after the paramilitary groups New Indigenous People's Army and Alamara attacked them last May. She had been hospitalized three times for diarrhea and fever.

### **Threats against civilians and activist**

Repression and illegal arrests of known members of progressive organizations and human rights defenders escalated.

After an encounter between

AFP troops and Red fighters on July 27, a fact-finding mission was dispatched by Karapatan-Cagayan Valley in Nagtipunan, Quirino last August 3-4. They reported incidents of forced evacuation, attacks and intimidation.

Elements from the 86th IB refused to give Arnold Jamias, a civilian they accused of being an NPA member, medical attention. They even made it appear that he was captured by their troops on July 26. The group also reported desecration of the body of a killed Red fighter. Meanwhile, three residents suffered harassment and threats from soldiers while two were intimidated in a checkpoint set up by the 86th IB.

Residents from San Ramos, Nagtipunan, Quirino were forced to evacuate when military operations continued non-stop in their communities.

Rogelio Capulas also suffered intimidation and threats. He is an active member of Binnadang Ami-

anan, an alliance upholding indigenous rights in Cordillera, and Katribu. On August 9, a military agent who introduced himself as "Mark" visited him in his workplace in 18th Ave., Cubao, Quezon City and threatened to arrest and kill him if he did not cooperate with the military. Capulas' wife is a staff member of the NDFP Joint Monitoring Committee.

On August 15, Karapatan-Panay reported intimidation against their secretary-general Reylan Vergara. According to the group, three military agents threatened Vergara's family.

Meanwhile, the NPA-Pangasinan condemned the occupation of elements of the 84th IB, RPSB-PNP Pangasinan, PNP San Nicolas and 702nd Brigade of the barangay hall in Sta. Maria East, San Nicolas since July 28. They even positioned two military tanks in the area. The military also intimidated residents in the area, forcing them to evacuate. AB

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## **CA rejects Sec. Judy Taguiwalo**

WIDESPREAD CRITICISM GREETED the Commission on Appointments (CA) refusal to confirm Sec. Judy Taguiwalo as secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) last August 16 earned widespread criticism.

Taguiwalo's rejection is the latest anti-people and militarist moves by the Duterte regime. This became clear when the news that Monica Prieto-Teodoro, Gilbert Teodoro's wife, will replace Taguiwalo. Teodoro once served as secretary of the Department of National Defense. A few days prior, the couple was reported to have donated millions to the fund for wounded and killed soldiers.

Taguiwalo knew that her appointment was not confirmed due to her refusal to incorporate pork barrel in the DSWD budget through the

4Ps program last year. She also knew the rejection stemmed from her objection to the imposition of new taxes on the poor and her supposed links to the revolutionary movement.

Various journalists and fellow government employees expressed disgust over Taguiwalo's non-confirmation. They include Emmanuel Leyco, the newly appointed officer-in-charge of the department and Aiza Seguerra, National Youth Commission head. They challenged the CA to make public the names of those who voted for rejection. In

the 24-member CA, 13 decided against Taguiwalo through secret voting.

Three secretaries have been rejected by the CA, including Gina Lopez who stood against plunderous mining operations as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Lumad students from the Save Our Schools Network condoled with Taguiwalo after the CA deliberations.

Taguiwalo was appointed to the DSWD at the same time Sec. Rafael Mariano was appointed to the Department of Agrarian Reform as NDFP recommendees after Rodrigo Duterte offered the Left the cabinet positions. Sec. Rafael Mariano's confirmation hearings is set on August 30.

## Duterte's 2018 budget is anti-poor

ON THE FIRST day of deliberation of the 2018 national budget, the Gabriela Women's Party drew attention to the budget's stress on the construction of big infrastructure projects (more than a trillion) while allocating only a much smaller budget (P1.4 billion) to housing for poor families. In effect, this is a budget for demolition, Gabriela said, as the regime's infrastructure program is sure to dislocate the urban poor from their communities. A minimum of P48 billion has been allocated for the "right of way" alone, which means the demolition of many communities to give way to roads. Gabriela denounced Duterte's indiffer-

ence in resolving the housing shortage. The budget allocation will only build 6,000 units of cheap housing, a far cry from the 5.7 million units that are needed.

Meanwhile, the Kabataan Partylist condemned the cuts in the budget of 43 state universities and colleges (SUCs) for next year. Worse, the state expects these universities and colleges to generate P44 billion through tuition fee collection, in contradiction to the recently passed free tuition law. It is paradoxical that in the face of this law, the neo-liberal policy of pushing commercial operations of SUCs that will eventually be passed on to students is still being promoted.

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