

## NPA seizes 36 firearms

THIRTY-ONE FIREARMS, including 15 high powered rifles, were added to the New People's Army (NPA) arsenal from several punitive military actions this past two weeks of October. Five other firearms were confiscated in Quezon province in the first week of this month.

**Bukidnon.** Red fighters disarmed security forces of the Davao Ventures Corporation (Davco) on October 8, at 4:15 p.m. in Barangay Merangeran, Quezon. The operation was carried out without firing a single shot by the NPA-South Central Bukidnon Subregional Command (under NPA-North Central Mindanao).

Davco is a multinational company formerly owned by the Del Rosario family and Antonio Leviste. It is presently being operated by a foreign investor from Brazil. The NPA attack on Davco was a punishment for the company's violation of the revolutionary movement's policies on land use and environmental protection.

Davco is ceaselessly arrogating lands for its continuous expansion of plantations.

Because of environmental damage, the area is always in peril of widespread flooding. It also uses poisonous chemicals that cause diseases in populated areas around the plantations.

Red fighters paralyzed a boom spray, tractor, water

"NPA seizes...", continued on p. 3



### EDITORIAL

## The people will frustrate Duterte's threat of a dictatorship

**G**RP strongman Rodrigo Duterte incessantly threatens to establish a dictatorship. He declared recently that he will set up a "revolutionary government until the end of my term" in order to quell all dissent and arrogate the power to remove every one in government and appoint only those people who will not criticize his rule. Duterte thirsts for absolute power that is unconstrained by the GRP constitution or any other law.

Duterte's bombast and threats are indications of his growing desperation to cling to power. He is generating much noise about so-called "destabilization" and "rebellion" in order to drown the clamor for him to be ousted and made to account for all the crimes perpetrated under his regime's triple war. Like Marcos before, he claims there is a conspiracy

between the armed revolutionary movement and the various democratic and progressive forces as well as his political rivals in order to persecute them and justify armed suppression.

Duterte is rushing to strengthen and consolidate his control of the military and police in order to mount a dictatorship and defend it by force

through suppression of all forms of dissent and resistance.

Duterte is seeking the imprimatur of US imperialist chieftain Trump and the US security and defense establishment by giving all leeway for US military intervention in the Philippines and power projection in the South China Sea. He is exhibiting out-and-out subservience to the US.

Duterte wants to break down all barriers to his bureaucrat capitalist rule in order to give his cronies, big bourgeois comprador compadres and favored criminal syndicates unlimited opportunity to use public money and government privilege to accumulate profit and wealth.

Duterte is increasingly impatient in his plan to impose new taxes as collateral or guarantee for new loans from the World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and for Japanese ODA (official development aid). He also plans to cut corporate taxes as incentive for foreign investments. He is also rushing the overhaul of the 1987 GRP con-

stitution to pave the way for all-out liberalization and his plan to establish a federal form of government and allow him an extended rule. Duterte is aware he is fast losing time to allow his supporters a return of their hundreds of millions of pesos in campaign contributions.

Amid the deep-going economic and social crisis of the ruling semi-colonial and semifeudal system, a Duterte dictatorship will most probably not last long, even if Duterte could afford to extend his life. Contrary to his aim of wresting complete control of the state, a

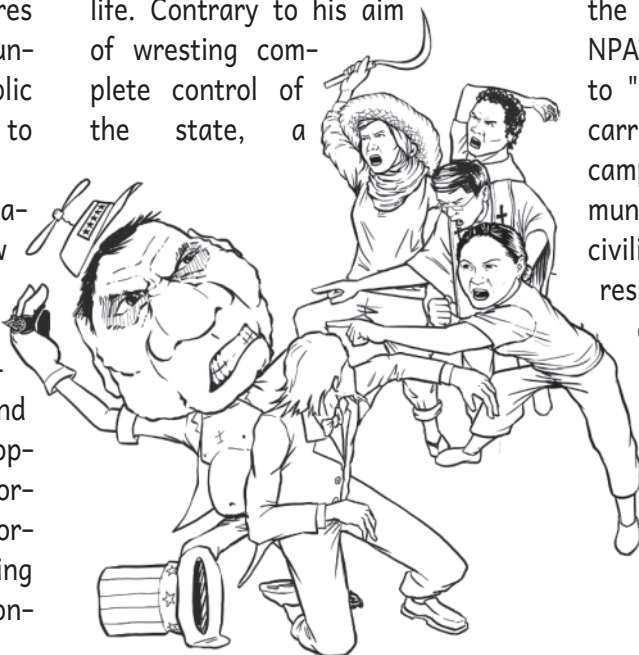
Duterte dictatorship will surely deepen fissures among the ruling classes and within his regime, especially in the AFP and PNP and its corrupt officials who maintain fealty to anti-Duterte political factions.

In threatening to mount a palace coup, Duterte declared he will launch a "full-scale" war against the New People's Army (NPA). In reality, the AFP has not slowed down in waging its nationwide all-out war since (even during the five-month ceasefire with the NPA). In line with Duterte's order to "flatten the hills," the AFP has carried out aerial bombardment campaigns against peasant communities endangering the lives of civilians. The AFP's all-out war has resulted in widespread violations of human rights across the country.

Duterte said he is ready to wage another 50-year war against the NPA. Given the acute crisis of the ruling system, this is more than enough time for the NPA to defeat the AFP. The truth, however, is that the AFP and the reactionary government has failed in its attempts to quickly end the people's war through successive all-out war campaigns. The AFP could not even decisively finish its limited war in Marawi City to quell an armed Moro uprising.

A Duterte coup to establish a dictatorship will surely unite the Filipino people in a broad anti-dictatorial front with the national democratic forces serving as the strong core. Having learned lessons from the Marcos dictatorship, the Filipino people are determined to resist Duterte's plans to establish a fascist dictatorship.

The people are unperturbed with his threats to "arrest all of you." On the contrary, it is Duterte they want to be arrested in order for him to account for all the crimes he has perpetrated against the people.



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tanker, two backhoes, and a chemical mixer in the said attack and burned down the supply depot where the poisonous chemicals were stored.

Red fighters confiscated 22 firearms including 12 M16s, an M14, one sniper rifle, four shotguns, three .45 caliber pistols, a 9mm, various ammunition and communication equipment. The whole operation took only 40 minutes. According to NPA-NCMR, this is a warning against the US-Duterte regime's plans of increased expansion of plantations for commercial and export crops such as palm oil, pineapples, banana, cacao, and rubber and landgrabbing of millions of hectares of land.

**South Cotabato.** Red fighters of NPA-Far South Mindanao under Mt. Musa Subregional Operations Command raided the Sumifru plantation at Sitio Lakag, Barangay New Dumangas, T'boli, South Cotabato. The raid occurred around 10:30 p.m. on October 2. The Red fighters burned down the company's facilities. They seized two 9mm pistols, two shotguns and two handheld radios from the guards on duty. They also burned down its container van, tanker trucks, the packing plant and warehouse.

The sanction action was against the company's landgrabbing and oppressive workplace conditions.

**Mt. Province.** NPA-Mt. Province (Leonardo Pacsi Command) Red fighters attacked the substation of the Hydro-Electric Development Corporation (HEDCOR) Inc.-Sabangan at Barangay Otucan Norte, Bauko, Mt. Province, at 10:45 p.m. on October 10. The said substation serves as the plant's transmission station to the national electric lines.

According to Ka Magno Udyaw, LPC spokesperson, HEDCOR's Sabangan 14MW power plant directly deprived the local residents of their rights to land and water.

Ka Magno added that HEDCOR and the local government and its agencies conspired in the manipulation of "free prior and informed consent." The company consulted only government officials owners and the owners of the directly affected lands, the Napua and Namatec communities. Communities downstream and upstream of the Chico River and other areas where the transmission lines will pass were not consulted. The technical design which the company presented also lacked details, such as the size of the tunnel and height of the dam or its weirs.

Moreover, according to Ka Udyaw, while HEDCOR collects P4.56 per kilowatt hour (kwh) for generation charges, it only pays P0.005/kwh as royalty which is lower than the P0.01/kwh required by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA). HEDCOR pays only P1.50 per square meter for the land it uses, P2.00/sqm for rice fields and vegetable lands with 5% increase every five years and P2.00/sqm for lands near streets for five years.

Likewise, HEDCOR did not fulfil their agreement with the elders and selected leaders of Namatec and Napua. The Sabangan Hydro was built in 2013 and started operations in 2015 despite widespread protests in the communities.

**Sorsogon.** One platoon of the NPA-Sorsogon (Celso Minguez Command) raided a PNP-Gubat de-

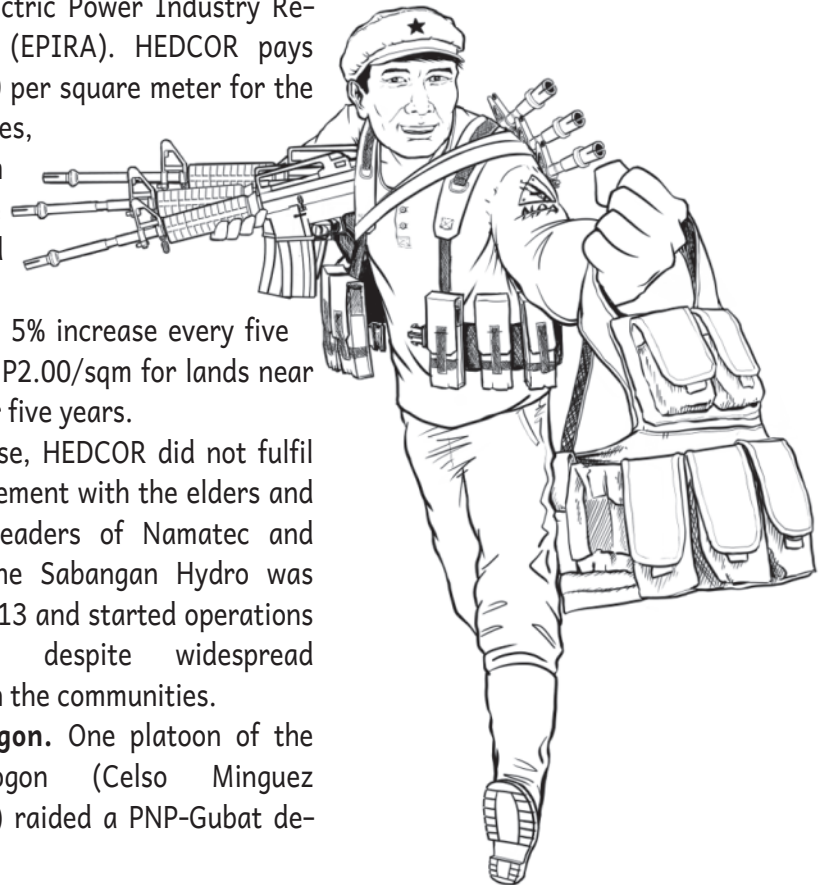
tachment, 200 meters from its headquarters on October 15, at 6 p.m. The Red fighters seized one M16 rifle and ammunition. One of the four policemen on duty was killed.

Policemen of Gubat town are notorious for their abuses. Residents of Bulacao, Naagtan, Bentuco, Sangat, Union, Casili and other barangays complain that they sow fear, manhandle, threaten and kill people.

**Quezon.** Five firearms were confiscated by Red fighters of NPA-Quezon (Apolonio Mendoza Command o AMC) from separate raids in the first week of October.

Among those confiscated were four pistols and one rifle. The raid targeted the houses of criminal elements and police assets, and the house of one active CAFGU element.

Meanwhile, one CAFGU element was killed in a sniping operation by an AMC unit on a detachment in Barangay Duhat, San Francisco on October 3. AB



# Duterte's dirty and bloody politics

On October 11, Rodrigo Duterte's political party PDP-Laban swore in former president and current congresswoman Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo together with some of her former officials. The constant shifting of loyalties or transfer to other political parties are marks of the ruling system's rotten politics. Opportunist politicians cling on to whichever party is in power.

Rotten politics is characteristic of a bureaucrat capitalist. This is Duterte's mark even when he was still Davao City's mayor. He employed various schemes against fellow bureaucrat capitalists, to the point of these plots being bloody.

This was highlighted in Duterte's rivalry with Prospero Nograles, his fierce opponent in Davao City. Under the guise of "flood control," parks and basketball courts constructed by Nograles were demolished. In 2001, Duterte's camp released a scandalous video featuring Nograles, similar with his recent scheme to attack his rival Sen. Leila de Lima.

One of the highlighted bloody incidents implicating Duterte was Juan Pala's murder. Pala was a radio broadcaster who won as Davao City councilor with Nograles' support during the latter part of the 90s. He became Duterte's strong critic, whom he accused as being the brains behind the Davao Death Squad (DDS). Duterte openly threatened that he will have Pala killed before he was finally murdered by gunmen believed to be members of the DDS. Duterte is also being accused as being the brains behind the killings of other broadcasters who have criticized him.

Also during the 2010 elections, four of Nograles' campaigners and supporters were abducted and killed by the DDS. For his part, Nograles sought the help of the butcher Jovito Palparan to go up against the DDS, while campaigning for the anti-communist party Bantay. Recently, the Nograles family pledged loyalty to Duterte

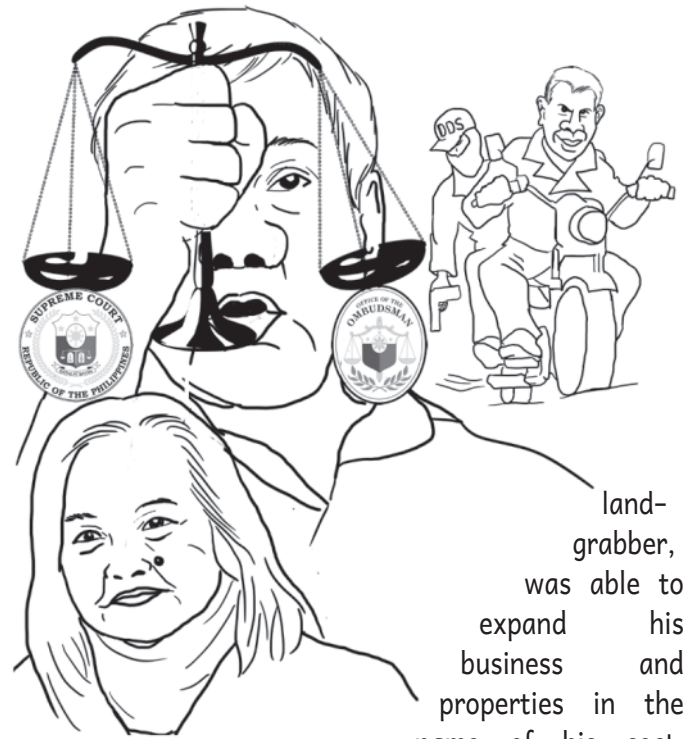
and have already joined his political party.

It is a common belief that Duterte employs the DDS and that the armed group is a key factor in his bureaucrat capitalist power in Davao City. This was organized when he started as mayor of the city in 1998. He controlled the local forces of the state's intelligence network and from here recruited the first members of the DDS, usually active members of the police and military. A big part of the group's funding and rewards come from the city's large Peace and Order Fund.

This fund comes from the office of the incumbent president and is given to mayors and governors purportedly for counterinsurgency and anti-crime programs. In 2009, this fund amounted to up to P450 million which the mayor may spend without audit. During this time, Duterte also serves as Macapagal-Arroyo's "adviser" on the government's anti-crime program.

Like other bureaucrat capitalists, Duterte likewise controls the local police which serves as his own armed force. As an added advantage, the local police also serves as his recruitment spring for the DDS.

In contrast to Duterte's rotten and bloody attacks against his enemies, the warlord Ampatuan family freely comes in and out of Davao City under his rule. Likewise, Apollo Quiboloy, also a warlord and a



land-grabber, was able to expand his business and properties in the name of his sect.

Smuggling and illegal drugs also thrived in the city as a result of (protection) provided by Duterte and his DDS to favoured syndicates.

Adding to his schemes in consolidating his power over the city, Duterte appointed deputies in all of Davao City's three districts in order to repel maneuvers coming from the opposition camp. This design is seemingly being replicated at the national level as Duterte suspended the barangay elections until 2020 and will instead appoint barangay captains. It is to Duterte's favor that recently barangay captains are being killed (six in Metro Manila since January), allowing him to appoint his loyalists.

It is a widespread belief that the utilization of the DDS is what the regime currently employs in running its "war against drugs" and in giving protection to favored criminal syndicates and defeating his political rivals. It is not far-fetched that like his exploitation of Davao City's intelligence fund before, he will likewise use his 2018 P2.5 billion intelligence fund to expand his death squads.

AB

## Burgos abductor acquitted

THE REACTIONARY JUSTICE system has once again proven its bias for the ruling classes against victims of human rights violations when it acquitted the military officer accused of abducting activist Jonas Burgos. The Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 216 decided on October 12 that there was lack of evidence in the case against Army Maj. Harry Baliaga, Jr.

This was due to the disappearance of two witnesses who pointed to Baliaga as the soldier they saw abducting Burgos. The last that the family's lawyer knew was that one of the witnesses was being held by the military. Burgos was abducted on April 28, 2007 in Quezon City. Baliaga was then a lieutenant of the 56th IB. He was charged in court in October 2013 but was immediately bailed out by the military, and has since been promoted to the rank of major.

Lawyers of the Burgos family assert that Baliaga was a person of authority in the 56th IB at that time. They plan to refile charges against officers who were earlier cleared by the Department of Justice in 2013-Lt. Col. Melquiades Feliciano, then Col. Eduardo Año, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, Lt. Gen. Alexander B. Yano and Dir. Gen. Avelino Razon Jr.

"We shall respect the decision, but that doesn't mean we have been defeated," said Edita Burgos, Jonas' mother, at a picket outside the Quezon City Hall of Justice.

Jonas Burgos is one of the 900 victims of abduction and forced disappearances under the US-Arroyo regime reported by Karapatan. There are now five cases of enforced disappearances under the US-Duterte regime, and 91 cases of political killings of peasants.

## IACLA: make-over of an old oppressor

IN SETTING UP the PNP-AFP Inter-Agency Committee on Legal Action (IACLA) in October 10, the US-Duterte regime has now formalized its ongoing persecution of activists and progressive leaders. The said resolution was signed on the occasion of the 20th AFP-PNP National Joint Peace and Security Coordination Council meeting at Camp Crame, Quezon City.

IACLA will "legalize" political persecution, arbitrary arrests and detention of anyone opposing the government, including progressive organizations and political opposition. This is part of the US-Duterte regime's measures to take full control of the state and military machinery in preparation for setting up his dictatorship.

The IACLA will focus and refine on inventing false charges against arrested activists and members of the opposition. This is a make-over of Gloria Arroyo's old Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG), which filed trumped-up criminal charges to silence the progressive representatives within the congress and harass leaders of mass organizations. This had been reported by United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur Philip Alston as one of the more repressive government institutions.

By design, IALAC is worse than IALAG. It has no pretension of respecting legal processes, unlike IALAG which was formed with the Department of Justice, Department of Interior and Local Government and other civilian agencies. IALAC is composed solely of the PNP and AFP, the two main machineries used by the regime in its tyranny. Despite IALAG's abolition in 2012, arrests and detention of activists have continued. This form of "legal offensive" is an integral feature of the various counter-insurgency oplans since Arroyo's Oplan Bantay Laya. This will surely facilitate and intensify the persecution the regime has been carrying out.

According to Karapatan, even during IALAG of IACLA absence, it has recorded 1,112 victims of illegal arrests from July 2016 to September 2017. Of these, 219 were detained. Thus, there are at least 85 new political detainees, bringing the total to 430 political prisoners who have been charged with trumped-up criminal cases. AB

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## Duterte is desperate for foreign capital

**T**he Duterte regime is desperate to draw in foreign capital and generate funds for its anti-national programs. Its key officials are now in the US and Europe to convince capitalists there to invest in the country.

This was after new equity investments fell by 91% from \$1.448 billion to \$141 million during the first half of the year. Foreign direct investments, in general, fell by 24% from \$3.95 billion in 2016 to \$3.01 billion this year. Despite Duterte's boast of investments in China, no large investment came from that country.

In truth, a big part of this 'foreign investments' do not come from outside the country. More than 80% (\$2.45 billion) is in the form of intercompany borrowings between foreign companies and their local subsidiaries. More than 10% (\$345 million) are reinvestments.

The Philippine's ranking in the World Economic Forum's

competitive list already fell last year from 46 in 2015 to 56 in 2016. This is despite the regime's economists' all-out defense of its liberalization, privatization and deregulation policies.

According to Duterte's economists, the fall in the foreign investments is due to constitutional restrictions and the prolonged "war against terrorism." Yet, the restrictions are have long been there and investments already fell even before Duterte declared martial law. In any case, the economists use this to push for the shortened foreign investment negative list, build new and larger export processing zones and aggressively push for tax reform to lower corporate taxes.

These measures are the latest in the long line of neoliberal policies that successive regimes have implemented. Loans from China and imperialist institutions like the Asian Development Bank and World Bank for its "Build, build, build" program, a program designed for them, are conditional on these measures. Imposing conditionalities in exchange for loans is a policy long practiced by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

### **Competition among colonies**

Economists of the reactionary state have long preached about the importance of foreign capital to the country's development. Major economic programs of successive regimes, including the Duterte regime, are dependent on foreign capital. It is a big concern of theirs that foreign investments in the country are lower compared to other Asian countries. Vietnam, for example, registered \$21.9 billion foreign investments during the first seven months of the year (com-

pared to only \$150 million in the Philippines). Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand registered higher foreign investments.

In reports by the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) and the World Economic Forum (WEF), they identified efficiency of the bureaucracy, in particular the ease of doing business and entry of their products in customs; availability of raw materials and support infrastructure, low levels of corruption, more relaxed regulations and low taxes, and the number and coverage of new incentives.

In the WEF's Global Competitive Index, "political stability," which pertains to the state, notwithstanding if it is "democratic" or not, is a low priority. They have low regard for crime, inflation and workers' conditions. In AmCham's report, capitalists identified low wages, availability of trained workers and positive sentiment towards the US as favorable factors.

In the Philippines, contrary to what the US and the EU claim that they are worried about the extrajudicial killings in the regime's "war against drugs," it barely qualifies as a consideration to their investment to the country.

### **A regime on its knees**

To attract capital, the US-Duterte regime is doing its utmost to compete with its fellow semi-colonies in Asia in implementing pro-imperialist conditionalities. Even now, incentives and privileges abound for foreign companies, especially in EPZs. These include tax exemptions on profits for up to eight years, no tariffs on machinery imports, spare parts, as well as raw materials and other supplies in the production, no VAT (value added tax) and subsidies in training costs. Through executive

orders, the Duterte regime insured that these tax exemptions and incentives will continue.

At the same time, the regime is going all-out to keep foreign companies threatening to leave the countries if restrictions are imposed or their privileges are taken away. An example is when the business process outsourcing sector (call centers) threatened to reduce investments after the lower house approved the a 12% VAT imposition on their services. The senate immediately removed this provision.

Part of the regime's subservience is to fix wages at low levels and suppress workers' rights so foreign companies can extract the highest profit possible. Before he became president, Duterte had threatened workers in export processing zone against launching strikes. At the same time, the regime is pushing for the construction of bigger and more extensive export processing zones as "support structures." This October, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority announced the transformation of 8,000-hectare mining land in Mt. Diwalwal into an EPZ that will dislocate thousand of small miners and their families. In addition, the regime is pushing for the construction of other support infrastructure like electricity and water.

The Duterte regime has repeatedly proved its subservience to its imperialist American and European masters, both in the economic and military fields. Thus, Duterte's prattle and curses against their criticisms on his drug war is just empty talk. On the other hand, the regime knows that his wars of suppression are of no great consideration to his imperialist masters as long as these do not interfere with their profits. AB

# Nationwide Protest

This Peasant Month, farmers continue to launch actions in different parts of the country to express their dissatisfaction of the US-Duterte regime and to call for the implementation of a genuine land reform. In the past months up to the present, "bungkalans" (collective farming) have been launched in the provinces of Southern Tagalog, Central Luzon, Panay and Negros, as well as struggles to issue installation orders in Mindanao plantations.

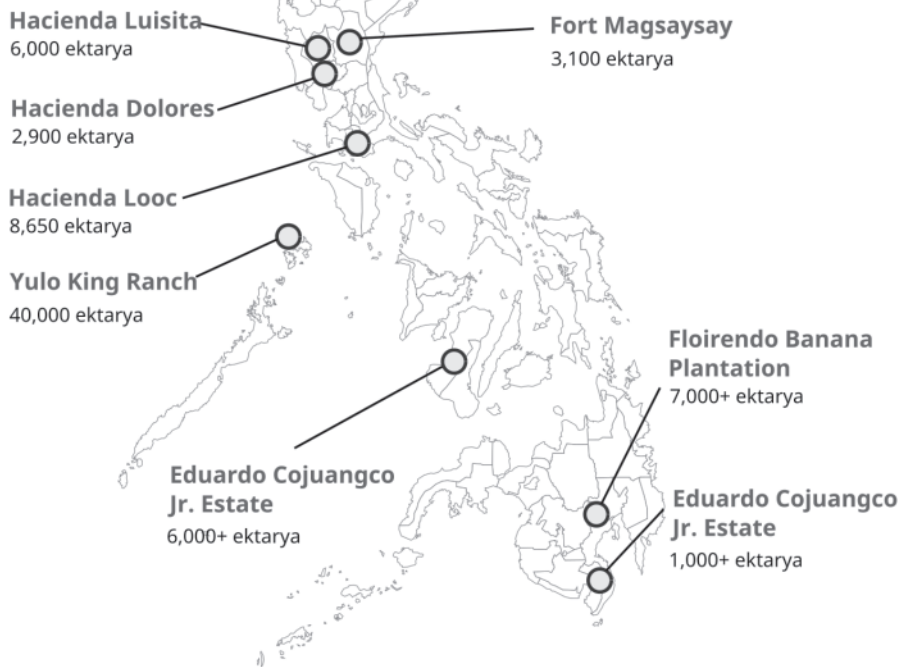
This month, two peasant *lakbayans* (march-caravan) from the Visayas and Mindanao were launched to assert their rights. (Read further details on page \_\_.) The Duterte regime and its landlord cohorts met peasant protests with violence.

Peasants make up the majority of victims of extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests and repression. On the other hand, they meet the violence and challenges head on. Because of this, they reap victories and gain support. They are also prepared to defend these victories and further their struggles to liberate their class.

## Pro-landlord and pro-plantation

Even before he became president, Rodrigo Duterte already pushed for plantation expansion in Mindanao. Together with his close friend and now Department of Agriculture secretary Manuel Piñol, Duterte once tried to gain entry for big Malaysian-Chinese agribusinesses in Davao, particularly in the Paquibato District, to operate a big oil palm plantation. In 2015, they put up the deceptive Paquibato People's Economic Empowerment Initiative and the Davao City Oil Palm Development Council in preparation to this. Paquibato residents were not fooled.

At present, Duterte and Piñol are pushing for the Inclusive Partnerships for Agricultural Competitiveness (IPAC), a World Bank program which links 300,000



farmers in 44 provinces in an expansion program for plantations of oil palm, rubber, cacao, coffee, abaca and other export crops.

According to the KMP, the IPAC, in essence, is a hybrid PPP (Public-Private Partnership) and AVA (agricultural venture agreement) which commercial plantations are already using to grab lands from small farmers. Under

this, the P5 billion foreign fund will be combined with state funds (P6.7 billion) to absorb the target peasants into agribusiness contracts. In actuality, foreign funds from the World Bank are on loan and will be paid by the peasants for 25 years. As supposed partners in this huge business, the farmers are expected to generate up to P1.4 billion within five years. **AB**

## Peasants launch *lakbayan*

Two *lakbayans* (journeys) were launched by peasants this October to assert their rights and livelihood. The peasants went to Manila from Bukidnon and Davao del Norte while peasants from the Visayas assembled at Cebu City.

Peasants from Bukidnon launched *Baktas* (*Lakbay*) BTL from October 12 to call for the distribution of 517 hectares of land claimed by Central Mindanao University (CMU) which the peasants have long been cultivating and to call for stopping political killings. They were warmly met by members of *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas* (KMP) and students who ac-

companied them as they marched to the *Bantayog ng mga Bayani* in Quezon City before setting up camp in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

Since the 1970s, peasants have been farming the land within the CMU, first as agricultural workers of the Philippine Packing Corporation and later as tenants. In 1989, DAR awarded them 400

hectares, but their CLOAs were cancelled by the Supreme Court in 1992. For the past two decades, the peasants had to continuously fight for the land that should have long been really given to them. While denying their right to land, the CMU pulls out all stops to rent out land to commercial plantations and other agribusiness corporations. Almost 1,500 hectares of CMU land are being leased by big landlords and compradors.

In October 17, peasants protested in front of DAR, holding placards calling for the dismantling of haciendas and free distribution of land to the peasants. They will stay in Manila until October 25.

At the same time, peasants from the Visayas launched Lakbay-

an ng Visayas to Cebu City on October 17. Here, they assembled for the Rural Poor Summit led by KMP-Visayas, BAYAN, NFSW and PAMALAKAYA. The activity focused against hunger, political killings, neoliberal policies and for lifting martial law in Mindanao.

Peasant masses in the Visayas experience extreme hunger. Seven of ten peasants do not own land while 80% of land remain in the hands of big landlords. Peasants are tied down as tenants and some only rent from landlords. In south Cebu, the Garcia family owns 500 hectares of land. Peasants in the towns of Naga, San Fernando, and Carcar are also affected by the mining and quarry operations of APO Mining Corporation.

Two thousand peasants travelled from Negros to Sta. Rosario, Cebu City and marched to Fuente Cebu, the designated main camp site for the delegates.

Before this, on October 12, PNP elements harassed KMP-Negros coordinator Albert Delacerna by accusing him as an NPA commander. The police spread intrigues against Delacerna whom they alleged asked them for firearms. Red-tagging or labelling an activist of a progressive organization as an NPA member or a communist has long been done by the military and endangers the life of the subject of their intrigue. Eleven Negros farmers have been victims of extrajudicial killing since Duterte came to power. AB

## Transport strike declared a success

**P**ISTON successfully launched its 2-day transport strike last October 16-17 in various parts of the country to oppose and fight the ongoing plan to phase-out jeepneys under the guise of modernization.

Major city roads were barricaded by drivers, together with the workers, youth, women and different commuters who joined the strike.

PISTON paralyzed major routes in Metro Manila, Dasmariñas in Cavite, San Pablo in Laguna, Tanauan and Lipa in Batangas, Rizal, Bicol, San Fernando in Pampanga and Bataan. In Mindanao, drivers from Davao City, Cagayan de Oro, Bukidnon, Iligan and Butuan also joined the strike. A huge transport strike was also held in Cebu.

According to George San Mateo, national chairperson of PISTON, Duterte's program to phase-out jeepneys is a "massacre" of the livelihood of 650,000 jeepney drivers and 300,000 small operators.

While drivers lose jobs and livelihood, the US-Duterte regime will fatten huge corporations like Ayala, Aboitiz, Metro Pacific, Nissan, Hyundai, Toyota and Mitsubishi which will fund the P417-billion project

administered by the LTRFB. Duterte blatantly insulted the drivers when he spewed profanities in a gathering in Naga City, "You're poor? Be hungry, I don't care!"

With the US-Duterte regime's program, old jeepneys will be replaced by e-jeeps which cost P1.5 million each and will result in the increase of jeepney fare to P20.00. Some e-jeeps are already operating in various areas in Quezon City.

Different sectors and groups, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, slammed Duterte's response to the drivers and his anti-poor statements. Last October 19, members of Anakbayan held a picket in front of Gate 7, Malacañang to condemn Duterte's remark against poor drivers.

### Picket-protest against contractualization

Members of Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan and Gabriela held protests in seven branches of SM last October 11 against anti-



worker policies of big bourgeois capitalist Henry Sy.

SM is one of the large corporations which have the most numbers of contractual workers. It has 150,000 workers, majority of whom are women, in its 63 branches. Most



of them, from sales ladies to cashiers, and even supervisors and employees in its offices, have contracts for only 3-5 months. They receive meager wages while working more than 8 hours without overtime pay and night differentials. They also pay for their uniforms, including make-up and lady shoes.

While workers in SM have to endure being on their feet the whole day, capitalist Henry Sy enjoys raking profits from his malls. Sy is the richest oligarch in the country. Last 2016, Forbes publication reported his wealth to have reached about \$12.9 billion. This year, he even gained an additional \$5 billion.

SM North Edsa in Quezon City was the main center of the picket protest. Protests were also held at SM malls in Bicutan, Manila; Calamba, Laguna; Bacolod; Delgado, Iloilo and in Clark, Pampanga. Women protesters also called for an end to contractualization, regularization of SM workers and implementation of the national minimum wage.

According to Gabriela Partylist Rep. Emmi de Jesus, SM is the promoter of contractualization in the country and opposing it is only right to expose the hellish working conditions of workers inside the said mall.

### **Fisherfolk launch protest**

Last October 12, Pamalakaya led residents of Barangay Tangos, Navotas in a picket in front of the city hall to condemn the local government of its anti-worker and anti-fisherfolk policies. The said barangay will be affected by the 650-hectare Navotas Boulevard Business Park project under the National Reclamation Plan of the Philippine Reclamation Authority which is part of the previous Public-Private Partnership project and is now included in Duterte regime's "Build, Build, Build" program.

Almost 20,000 residents will lose their livelihood and homes because of the said plan.

Pamalakaya held another protest last October 17 through a fluvial parade in Manila Bay from Barangay Tangos to Navotas Centennial Park.

### **Scavengers hold rally**

Led by Gabriela-Tondo, thousands of scavengers picketed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) last October 9. The group called on Sec. Roy Cimatu to reopen the Philippine Ecology System (PhilEco) load-and-transfer site in Tondo which is their source of income.

PhilEco is operated by Regis Romero, and was shut by the DENR due to violation of environmental standards. Barangay officials, the city hall, EMB and DENR are pointing at one another on who will face the demands of the scavengers.

They have not been able to work for 10 days, resulting in hunger among their families and lack of income to support the schooling of their children.

Gabriela-Tondo said that only national industrialization can there be humane working conditions, and the end of poor family's reliance on garbage-collection.

Meanwhile, members of United Vendors Alliance held a picket protest in Manila city hall last October 18 to condemn the demolition of their carts and stalls along the sidewalk of Morayta, dubbed as "Hepa Lane" by local government officials. The group condemned Mayor Joseph Estrada for the destruction of their stalls and goods.

Meanwhile, KALIKASAN, AGHAM and BUKAL marched to DOJ to condemn the agency's inaction on the loss of the livelihood of the residents of Lobo, Batangas caused by harassment and bombings of the AFP. AB

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## **The sugar crisis is a bane to sugar workers**

EARLIER THIS MONTH, 300 small farmers and farm workers from the sugar plantations in Negros Occidental launched a meeting to discuss the looming sugar crisis that has resulted from the importation policy.

According to John Milton Lozande, National Federation Sugarcane Workers (NFSW), sugar prices continually fell and is causing instability in the province. Sugar prices did not recover after it fell last year due to the over-importation of high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS). In September, sugar prices were at P1,370 every 50 kilo (Lkg), lower than P1800/Lkg last year. This is expected to fall further during November and December harvest time. Sugar prices were almost equal to the cost of production in September.

The NFSW denounced the state's non-action on the looming crisis. They know that this is not only due to the

HFCS over-importation but also because of the implementation of different neoliberal policies. The NFSW said that these policies only aggravate the backward industrial base of the country and lack of a genuine land reform. This crisis will affect thousands of farm workers and small farmers already suffering from severe poverty. In general, the island has 178,000 sugarcane plantation workers and 16,000 sugar mill workers.

The Negros economy is dependent on sugar. Land ownership is highly concentrated where 50% of the entire production under the hacienda system is under the control of 500 individuals. The CARP and CARPER did not help in dismantling these haciendas. At present, small farmers and farm workers victimized under the deceptive CARP to get back their lands and cultivate these according to their needs. AB

# "Bangon Marawi" will only favor few

Last October 17, on the 148th day since the declaration of martial law in Mindanao and the start of AFP airstrikes in Marawi, Rodrigo Duterte declared the city liberated from the influence of ISIS. This is just after the AFP and DND Sec. Delfin Lorenzana announced the death of Omarkhayam Maute and Isnilon Hapilon of Abu Sayyaf Group.

In his speech, Duterte mockingly apologized to the people of Marawi for the destruction of their city and the widespread dislocation caused by his war. Despite the residents' plea to return to their homes, they were still barred from entering the city in their attempt to cover up the truth behind the Marawi siege.

Up to now, the Maute group is still being blamed for the destruction while it is clear that it resulted from the persistent plane and helicopter bombings by Duterte's military and its accomplices, the US troops. The DND recently announced that the regime has spent not less than P5 billion in their 5-month siege of the city.

The Marawi Crisis Center, run by local officials of Lanao del Sur, reports more than 500,000 residents have already been displaced from their communities. Thousands are still missing and are believed dead from the bombings and AFP attacks. Based on their initial evaluation, damaged properties of businessmen and residents amount to

about P100 billion worth.

Duterte formed Task Force Bangon Marawi last June to ensure rehabilitation of the city. Through TFBM, Duterte ensures that Marawi reconstruction will be in favor of AFP, US and his business allies.

Though the war is still ongoing, business tycoons Ramon Ang and Dennis Uy raced to express their intent to assist the rehabilitation. Some business groups also suggest that the city be developed as a tourist destination.

Duterte deviously monopolizes control in politics by threatening local officials of Lanao that they will be kicked out of office if they stop or oppose his plans.

To justify their land grab, the AFP dug up a 1953 Presidential Decree declaring that 6,000 hectares of Marawi's 8,755-hectare land is a military reservation. Also covered are the towns of Marantao, Piagapo, Saguiran and some parts of Lake Lanao. According to Pag-ibig, the government agency which administers housing loans, majority of the area where

houses were built in Marawi are government lands, including the 1,000 hectare land of the Mindanao State University which makes housing construction difficult. Therefore, the residents can no longer return to their lots.

Meanwhile, thousands of families have endured living in relocation sites and temporary shelters for five months now. The regime has only given out P1,000 cash assistance per family. Duterte and his martial law administrator, Lorenzana are bragging about housing projects and billions of financial assistance from US, World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

Despite that, evacuees have not received any relief. Instead, the regime plans to squeeze about 50,000 families in an 11-hectare housing project in Barangay Sagon-songan inside the city. According to National Housing Authority, they will only be able to construct 1,500 housing units of the target 7,500 houses for 2017. Each 26-square meter unit will house three families. The entire barangay will be divided into five areas each with a communal kitchen, comfort rooms and washing areas. This situation will only worsen the grave conditions of the people of Marawi. AB

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## Harassments against rising people's movement

The US-Duterte regime has no other response to the people's rising protest against its tyranny but relentless harassment of progressive organizations and violence against people fighting for their basic rights.

In Metro Manila, more or less 700 families lost their homes when Pasig City police demolished houses at the East Bank Manggahan Floodway in Barangay Sta. Lucia, Pasig last October 18. The community has previously opposed and defeated the demolition attempts last August 31. The residents were taken by surprise this time and even those

who did not voluntarily agree to relocate were demolished along with the rest. (*See Ang Bayan, September 7 for additional details.*)

**Pampanga.** A team of the Special Action Force took position at around 6 a.m. on October 17 at the San Fernando Crossing across Piston-Pampanga's protest center of the previous day's transport

strike. They tried to prevent the drivers from joining the widespread transport strike. According to Angeles City drivers, as early as October 16, the police have been going around the drivers' houses and threatening that they will be listed by the mayor if they did not ply their route.

**Isabela.** Two men who refused to identify themselves tailed Karapatan staff from the Makabayan office in Santiago last October 16.

They were on their way to meet families of the latest victims of extrajudicial killings in Benito Soliven town. The stalking stopped only when the staff asked for help from the barangay officials nearby.

**Misamis Oriental.** Last October 15, soldiers of the 58th IB forcibly entered the house of Joseph Paborada, chairperson of Pangalasag, an organization of Higaonon indigenous people living in BagoCBC and adjacent barangays of Opol. They accused him of being an NPA member and threatened to detain him if he did not own up and surrender.

Paborada's brother Gilbert was the previous chairperson of Pangalasag when he was killed by state agents on October 3, 2012. Paborada took over. Pangalasag is defending their ancestral land against land grabbing by the A Brown Energy and Resources Development, Inc., which is setting up an oil palm plantation in the region. The organization is presently carrying out a bungkalan on the contested land.

**Masbate.** Consecutive human rights violations were inflicted in several barangays this month. On October 15, police forces drove ral-

lyists away from the a Mass Action Center in front of Gaisano Mall in Masbate City. A policeman with a nameplate Abejuela grabbed an activist's cell phone and deleted all photographs inside.

At least 20 families of Sitio Tagaytay, Barangay Maglambong, Monreal fled the village in the early morning of October 9 for fear of the joint operating troops of the Alpha Coy, 2nd IB, 31st IB and PNP Public Safety Battalion. One resident named Jake was mauled and poked in the eye. The previous day, troops illegally entered the homes of Gina Bitangcor Almosara, Marlon Almosara, Myra Onggotan, Marichris Labustro and Vicky Almosara. Their houses were searched, their things destroyed and their farm animals stolen, while the wares in Gina Almosara's small store were put into a sack which the soldiers took with them.

On October 2, military and police elements killed Vicky M. Bunan and seriously wounded another woman and a man in Barangay Poblacion, Monreal.

**Camarines Sur.** Angelo Luka Alarcon Bisuña was killed on October 10 while in the custody of PNP-Caloocan. PNP-Baao arrested

Bisuña around late September purportedly for being a drug addict, but he was suddenly transferred to Caloocan, Metro Manila, and was not presented to his sister who tried to visit him. The feet of Bisuña's corpse had turned black and the body full of hematoma when it was released. The Caloocan Police asserted that he died of "unknown causes" and that he had no relatives. Bisuña was the son of former activists Jobski and Jo Bisuña of Baao.

**Samar.** In Basey, nine residents of Barangay Mabini were forced by 87th IB troops to pose as fake surrenderees of the NPA. Youngest among them was Benita Mabag, member of the Kabataan Partylist in Western Samar and student of Mabini National High School. She was intermittently subjected to interrogation for several days starting October 5. Afterwards, the AFP released a report at a local Eastern Visayas newspaper that Mabag was asking them for help because she was being recruited by the NPA. Other civilians who were put under interrogation were Jaypee Macasadoc, Pamfilo Incenas, Rafael Sablan, Dioricio Algera and Benita's father Amado. **AB**