



## EDITORIAL

# Intensify the fight against the US-Duterte regime

Like wildfire, the united front aiming to end the puppet, fascist, and oppressive regime of Rodrigo Duterte is rapidly spreading. His relentless attacks are uniting the ranks of almost all democratic sectors in the fight against his tyrannical rule.

His ostensible plots to grab power and extend his term are rousing more and more people to stand up and act. The opening of Congress this Monday is an opportunity for the people to demonstrate the broadening ranks of resistance.

At the forefront of this movement are workers, semi-proletariat and farmers, together with national minorities – the social classes that bear the brunt of Duterte's machinations. On their side stand the youth, professionals, church people, small businessmen, former officials of the government, and the media – sectors that are being continually attacked and whose rights are persistently violated.

Recently, Duterte's political rivals have openly joined forces with this

movement. They are rigorously preparing to challenge his rule, resist his schemes, and confront him in political struggles until next year's elections.

In just two years, the people have grown utterly disgusted with Duterte, and his regime has become extremely isolated. He has implemented the most shameless neoliberal schemes that have aggravated the people's welfare and livelihood. His triple wars of death and destruction have induced unprecedented damage. The stench of corruption and criminality reeking from his family and police and military henchmen have reached nauseating levels. He has repeatedly displayed his puppetry to US imperialism, while brazenly selling off the nation's territory to China for multibillion dollar

## NPA-ICR seizes machine gun, 3 HPR

THREE TACTICAL offensives were successively launched in Mountain Province and Abra by units of the New People's Army-Ilocos-Cordillera (Chadli Molintas Command or NPA-CMC) against military and police forces last July 14 and 15. The NPA was able to seize one K3 Squad Automatic Weapon, an M203 grenade launcher, two M4 assault rifles and bullets. These offensives are meant to serve as an opening salvo for Duterte's third State of the Nation Address (SONA).

On July 15, the NPA-Antonio Licawen Front Operations Command ambushed the combined forces of the 81st IB and the Regional Mobile Force (RMF) of the police in

*... continued on page 3*

loans to line his pockets. His foul mouth reveals his hatred of women and the poor. His promises of progress and change have all become but a fading echo.

Under Duterte's reign, the ruling system's political crisis has exacerbated. The fissures among the ranks of the ruling class have deepened because of his repeated attempts to establish a fascist dictatorship and consolidate state power. Despite his posturing and ceaseless brandishing of violence, he has so far failed in his legal and extralegal attempts. His first attempt to declare a "revolutionary government" and install himself as overlord by the end of 2017 conked out flagrantly. By January, his attempt to call for a constituent assembly or con-ass to amend the constitution and establish the federal form of government also failed. With the scheduled opening of Congress, Duterte is again set on railroading his fake federalism through con-ass. However, even at the onset, majority of senators have expressed their vehement opposition to this scheme. Even more are opposed to the attached "no-el" scenario (no election or cancellation of 2019 polls) being floated by his chief puppet in Con-

gress. He vainly hopes to placate the people's wrath by repeatedly declaring his plan to resign once the new constitution is ratified. No one is falling for his cheap tricks anymore.

In the coming weeks and months, the contradictions between Duterte and the united anti-Duterte front are set to intensify. Factional strife among ranks of reactionary forces will surely worsen. And the people's movement will undoubtedly strengthen and gain ground. These contradictions and struggles will further weaken Duterte's already weak control over the state. While his power weakens, it is certain that his attacks against various classes, sectors and groups that are hindering his fascist ambition will escalate. He is set to use his regime's terror-tagging campaign against the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army (NPA) to justify the declaration of martial law nationwide.

In the face of all this, it has become a more urgent task for revolutionary forces to unite and mobilize the broadest sections of society to oust Duterte. Enjoin all classes and sectors that Duterte

has trampled upon. Reach out and mobilize the Moro people. Let the disadvantaged politicians and officials to take part in resisting Duterte's one-man rule ambition. Reach out as well to elements and officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police who are disgruntled over Duterte's criminal reign.

Ceaselessly expose and fight the Duterte regime's fascism, puppetry, rottenness, corruption and criminality. Strengthen the people's resolve to fight. Duterte's reign of terror has permeated in the whole nation, especially in the countryside. His "Oplan Kapayapaan" needs to be unmasked and fought, while at the same time stepping up the fight against martial law in Mindanao.

Strengthen and broaden the mobilization of basic and democratic classes. They are the most determined to see the end of this regime that has done nothing but persecute, oppress, and inflict violence against them. Launch and mount more workers strikes and protest actions across the country, like those in the National Capital Region, Southern Tagalog, Central Luzon and Southern Mindanao. Gather the widespread wrath of the poverty-stricken victims of the "war against drugs" and the abusive "anti-vagrancy" campaign. Unite the urban toiling masses in the fight against contractualization, for wage increase, free public services and affordable housing.

Fortify the united struggle of peasants for genuine land reform and the national minorities' defense of their ancestral lands. Relentlessly expose and oppose the harsh fascist attacks against them, especially in barrios occupied by the AFP's fascist troops. Condemn the attacks against their schools and the military's scheme of forcing them to surrender as NPA combatants. Demand the immediate pull-out of military troops in their areas. Frustrate the regime's plot of using them as pawns in the sham localized peace talks.

Broaden and further strengthen the NPA. Launch solid tactical offensives and widespread military actions to inflict heavy blows

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against the enemy and make him suffer a thousand wounds. Cause the AFP to overstretch its forces through widespread armed offensives of the NPA across the nation and by applying guerilla war tactics.

Target the worst of the fascist units of the AFP, especially “peace and development teams” (PDT) which the AFP has deployed in barrios to sow terror under the banner of “peace.” Strike against the destructive operations of big foreign and local mining companies and

commercial plantations, the owners of which are part of the main financiers of the regime’s fascist campaigns.

In the countryside and in the cities, strengthen all committees, sections, and branches of the Party at all levels and in all aspects. Ensure that the Party is solid, broad, and deeply rooted among the masses to effectively lead their struggle to end the US-Duterte regime and carry forward the people’s democratic revolution. **AB**

*"Machine gun...," from page 1*

Barangay Tamboan, Besao, Mountain Province. Four enemies were killed and numerous others were injured.

A day earlier, on July 14, 81st IB troops were operating in Sitio Dandanac of the same barangay when they were ambushed by a unit of the Leonardo Pacsi Command (LPC) of the NPA-Mountain Province. Two soldiers were killed from the ambush while many others sustained injuries.

In the afternoon of the same day, a unit of the NPA-Abra (Agustin Begnalen Command) launched quick offensives against the scattered Alpha Coy platoon of the 24th IB conducting combat operations in Sitio Gambang, Barangay Bazar, in the town of Sallapadan, Abra. The 24th IB made it appear that only one soldier was injured in the offensive, but reports from village folk reveal that three soldiers were killed and one was injured, all of whom were secretly retrieved by passing through the rear of the battle-ground.

### NEMR launches 21 offensives

Twenty-one consecutive military actions were mounted by units of the New People’s Army in Northeastern Mindanao Region (NPA-NEMR) from July 5-12.

These actions killed over 27 soldiers and injured many other forces of the 3rd Special Forces Battalion (SFB), 29th IB, 36th IB, Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) and other paramilitaries.

According to Ka Ariel Montero, spokesperson of the NPA-NEMR Regional Operations Command, most of the casualties sustained by the enemy were hit by the punitive actions using command-detonated explosives, snipe operations and

harassment.

Red fighters of the NPA-Front 8 defeated more than 300 troops of the 3rd SFB and 401st Brigade under the command of Brig. Gen. Andres Centino through surprise attacks in the mountains of Barangay Mount Carmel, Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur, from July 5 to 11.

During the said period, four encounters took place killing 16 and injuring four AFP forces.

Details of the offensives are as follows:

**July 5.** Forces of the 3rd SFB sustained one casualty after they were attacked by the NPA in Mt. Carmel. The soldiers retaliated by firing eight mortar shells, flying MG520 helicopters and employing drones.

**July 6.** A unit of NPA-Front 8 ambushed the attacking soldiers. No less than 16 soldiers were killed, while others were injured and went missing after the Red fighters fired at them. The soldiers retaliated by firing four mortar shells, and dropping 16 bombs from a plane in the mountains and farms of New Salem, Villa Udayon, and Mt. Carmel.

**July 7.** The military fired nine mortar shells near the mining areas in Humalos, Bahay and Dakulang in Barangay La Purisima, Prosperidad. This was followed by the dropping of eight bombs and the firing of machine guns from a helicopter. The AFP also used drones. These attacks continued until July 8.

**July 11.** An NPA unit launched a harassment operation in Barangay La Purisima. A casualty was reportedly sustained by the enemy.

### NCMR launches 6 military actions

Six military actions were carried out by units of the NPA-North Central Mindanao Region from June 27 to July 16. The enemy sustained no less than 13 casualties.

In Bukidnon, an encounter oc-

cured between the NPA-Bukidnon and the 8th IB in Sitio Ulayanon, Calabugao, Impasug-ong last June 27, at around 3 p.m. Last July 19, an NPA unit ambushed soldiers of the 8th IB on board a six-by-six truck in Nabawang, Busdi in Malaybalay City, killing one and wounding two AFP soldiers. Meanwhile, Red fighters harassed a column of the 8th IB twice in Sitio Mahan-aw, Bulonay at around 11 a.m. last July 14, and 2 p.m. last July 15.

In Agusan del Norte, the NPA-Agusan del Norte harassed operating troops of the 23rd IB in Sitio Tagpangi, Simbalan, Buenavista last July 11, at around 11 a.m. Three soldiers and four CAFGU elements were killed while three were injured. Last July 14, at around 5:40 in the afternoon, the NPA ambushed an official and five CAFGU troops in Minbahandi, Nasipit, Agusan del Norte. Three CAFGU elements were killed.

In Misamis Oriental, the NPA-MisOr harassed the 23rd IB CAFGU Detachment in Barangay Tibon-tibon, Magsaysay last July 13, at around 11 p.m. Two soldiers were killed while four were injured.

### NPA slams lies peddled by 9th IB

The NPA-Far South Mindanao Region (Valentin Palamine Operations Command or VPOC) strongly belied claims made by Lt. Col. Erick Paraso, commanding officer of the 19th IB, that the NPA in North Cotabato will kill anyone planning to surrender to the enemy. Dencio Magdangal, spokesperson of the VPOC, said that the fascist military is clearly conjuring lies to cover up the issues hounding their scheme of forcing civilians to surrender as members or supporters of the NPA. **AB**

# Cha-cha: Duterte's dictatorship dance

Rodrigo Duterte is forcing not only members of Congress, but the Filipino people as well, to dance to the tune of charter change (cha-cha) or the amendment of the 1987 Constitution that his regime is currently railroading. Duterte is trying to conceal his ultimate goal of becoming a dictator with unlimited power through amending the constitution and changing the form of government.

Since the start of his term, he has attempted to play the cha-cha tune in Congress, but has failed repeatedly. In his latest attempt, Duterte used former Chief Justice Reynato Puno and former Senate President Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. to head the consultative committee (ConCom) tasked to draft the proposed constitution in an attempt to attract broader support for cha-cha.

## Dictatorship dance

The Duterte regime is making federalism appear like the primary goal of his cha-cha scheme. Under federalism, it claims, excessive centralization of power in the central government will be gone, and in effect empower the regions to govern more freely. But a closer look at the draft "Federal Constitution" prepared by Duterte's ConCom reveals what a fabrication this so-called decentralization of power is. (*See related article on Page 5.*)

Duterte's real cha-cha goals lie in Article 22 or the transitory provisions (steps to be taken to shift from the current to the new constitution). It stipulates the creation of an almost all-powerful Transition Commission that can enforce necessary rules, regulations, orders, proclamations, and other issuances during the "transition" period. In the ConCom's first draft, it was explicitly stated that Duterte will be the one heading the commission. In the face of criticism over this apparent power grab, the ConCom revised the provisions and instead required for the election of a trans-



sition president and vice-president.

The revised provisions also barred Duterte from running for office in 2022. However, the new transitory provisions did not forbid him to run as transition president. Thus, if the constitution is ratified in 2019, and Duterte clinches the transition president post, he will be given no less than three years to become a president with almost unlimited powers - a dictator in other words.

## Rhythm of dissent

Throughout the years, attempts to amend the 1987 Constitution have always been met by widespread opposition. Repeated attempts have been done and eventually defeated by the people from the time of the Ramos regime to the Benigno Aquino regime.

Some large formations against cha-cha have already been formed, including the "No to Cha-cha Coalition" which include progressive groups and even known legal personalities like former Chief Justice Hilario Davide and Atty. Christian Monsod, both of whom took part in the crafting of the current constitution.

According to the Movement

Against Tyranny, Duterte's cha-cha is a "self-serving recipe for term extension, enrichment, and dictatorship." Various protests have already been conducted against cha-cha.

More than 300 academics, professors, and presidents of universities have meanwhile signed a statement opposing

the planned con-ass that Congress is set to launch to amend the constitution. There are other more pressing issues that the country is facing that needs immediate government attention including the rising death toll linked to the anti-drugs campaign, political infighting, and the rising prices of basic commodities, their statement read. They are also against the proposal to suspend or cancel the 2019 elections to give way to the process of amending the constitution.

Those who signed the statement prepared by the group "Professors for Peace" include the presidents of each of the five campuses of Ateneo namely Fr. Jose Ramon Villarin of Ateneo de Manila, Fr. Roberto Yap of Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan, Fr. Roberto Rivera of Ateneo de Naga, Fr. Karel San Juan of Ateneo de Zamboanga and Fr. Joel Tabora of Ateneo de Davao. President Armin Luistro of De La Salle University, Chancellor Michael Tan of the University of the Philippines-Diliman, and President Dionisio Mirandau of the University of San Carlos in Cebu also signed the joint statement.

Majority of senators have also begun openly opposing cha-cha, following Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, Jr.'s insistence that the House of Representatives is ready to convene as a constituent assembly even without the Senate.

Even in Duterte's own turf, opposition is also rife. Recently, Secretary Ernesto Pernia of NEDA (National Economic Development Authority) said that government expenses will balloon due to federalism. He explained that the state needs to spend and loan an additional P55 billion due to the large number of new offices that will be built and new officials that need to be compensated under the federal government.

As Duterte again plays the broken record that is cha-cha, its remorseful tune will certainly speed up his isolation from the people and make his downfall come sooner.

AB

# NPA rejects local talks

**M**ore and more local commands of the New People's Army (NPA) and local revolutionary formations expressed their firm rejection on the "localized peace talks" scheme of the Duterte regime.

In separate statements, NPA commands and spokespersons of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in the regions flatly refuted claims by officials of the Duterte regime including Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque. These

Duterte stooges made it appear that the earlier rejection of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) of the "localized peace talks" offer did not come from forces on the ground, but rather only from NDFP negotiators based in The Netherlands.

"Like a fool on a hill, Duterte

will be talking to himself in his government's much-vaunted localized peace talks with the NPA. The so-called localized peace talks is nothing but a deceitful psywar ploy to cover up the total trashing of the peace process in favor of a fascist pipe dream of a quick militarist solution to the armed conflict by sheer brute force," said Ka Oris, spokesperson of the National Operations Command of the NPA.

*... continued on page 6*

## 'Watered-down' BBL slammed

VARIOUS PROTESTS GREETED the successive hearings of the bicameral conference committee (bicam) composed of representatives from the House of Representatives and the Senate that was set to consolidate the House and Senate versions of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

After six days of marathon hearings, the bicam formally passed the law last July 18, renaming it into the "Bangsamoro Organic Law." Lawmakers expect Rodrigo Duterte to sign the bill into law this July 23, moments before he delivers his third State of the Nation Address.

Moro groups hounded the bicam hearings on the proposed law. Some groups converged near the venue of the bicam hearings, while thousands more massed up in cities in Mindanao to call for the passage of the original version of the BBL drafted by the Bangsamoro Transition Council. The largest of such protests took place last July 6 in Cotabato City wherein more than 10,000 Moros participated.

The Moros fear that Congress will pass a severely watered-down version of BBL, wherein the scope of the territories under the Bangsamoro will be diminished, and the powers of the Bangsamoro government over its inland waters, including Lake Lanao, and its power over the management of energy generation will be greatly limited

AB

## Under the guise of federalism

THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION prepared by Duterte's consultative committee (ConCom) will deliver nothing but large-scale bureaucrat-capitalist corruption, economic liberalization and fascist repression.

Under this proposal, the Philippines will be divided into eighteen "federated regions" (including the Bangsamoro and Cordillera). Each region is set to have its own "regional assembly" (or regional congress), regional court, and regional governor. The bureaucracy is set to overly expand: in the proposal, there will be four hundred legislators in the Federal House of Representatives, no less than 36 senators, and four chief justices. The number of local officials will also increase because of the creation of local congresses, courts, and executive offices.

This expansion of the bureaucracy will only increase bureaucratic privileges that will be apportioned amongst ruling class politicians who will assume office. However, based on the proposed article on distribution of powers between the central government and the federated regions, real power still resides largely in the central government, while the regions will only be given minor powers.

Aside from the additional power to charge taxes like real property tax and estate tax (powers which the central government currently hold), no other additional power was given to local governments. In fact, local governments currently already pos-

sess bulk of the powers that the proposed charter will give to the federated regions.

Under the proposed charter, restrictions on the ownership of natural resources and public utilities and services are set to be relaxed altogether.

Restrictions requiring at least 60% Filipino ownership shares in enterprises in the Philippines remain in the draft charter. However, the ConCom inserted provisions that empower Congress to change or even remove said restrictions. Such insertions aim to pave the way for full liberalization of the economy and for foreign businesses to completely own the nation's natural resources and public utilities.

There are also provisions in the draft charter that are set to beef up the state's repressive powers. The draft charter has relaxed the requisites for the declaration of martial law. It included as basis for martial law declaration the vague and overly broad term "lawless violence." The right to free speech and organization has also been discretely limited by confining mass actions to so-called "freedom parks," a dangerous precedent that can lead to the prohibition of protests. The military and the police were also given broad authority to conduct "surveillance."

AB

Ka Oris explained that Duterte is only using the hyped-up localized peace talks to have something to report about peace in his third State of the Nation Address. In fact, its main purpose is to sow distrust, disunity and discord among the revolutionary ranks by pitting the local forces against the national leadership, one part against another, and the masses against the movement. "In truth, the regime does not desire peace talks, just the unconditional surrender of the NPA forces," Ka Oris said.

Meanwhile, local revolutionary forces repeatedly stressed the earlier position of the CPP that the so-called local peace talks is only a veil the regime uses to hide its continuing anti-people war and widespread military abuses under martial law in Mindanao and Oplan Kapayapaan. The local forces all said that the fake local negotiations will certainly fail in their areas.

Separate statements of rejection and condemnation of the local

peace talks scheme were issued by the NPA commands in Northern Luzon (Venerando Villacillo Command of Cagayan Valley; and the Chadli Molintas Command of Ilocos-Cordillera), Southern Tagalog (Melito Glor Command, Cesar Batralo Command in Laguna, Eduardo Dagli Command in Batangas, Narciso Antazo Aramil Command in Rizal and the Bienvenido Vallever Command in Palawan), Bicol (Celso Mingues Command in Sorsogon), and local formations of the NDFP in Cordillera (Cordillera People's Democratic Front), Mindoro, Negros, Panay, Central Visayas, and Southern Mindanao.

Other local commands and revolutionary formations are set to release separate statements of rejection and condemnation in the next few days.

The statements flooded following Malacañang's announcement that it will release an executive order that will lay down the guidelines for the conduct of local talks



as substitute for the stalled formal peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the NDFP, that the regime has sabotaged on purpose.

The CPP reiterated that the people are not yearning for local peace talks, but rather for an end to the regime's total war against civilians, the bombings, the military sieges in communities, the campaign for forced listing of civilians as fake NPA surrenderees, widespread killings, and other state abuses.

The localized peace talks will absolutely fail because all forces and the Filipino people are united, firm, and determined to overthrow the Duterte regime. AB

## Drivers launch transport strike in Kalinga

Jeepney drivers launched the first transport strike in Kalinga on July 9. The said action was led by the Kalinga Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Associations (KaFeJODA), a newly formed federation of small associations of public transport groups in the province.

About 150 drivers, operators and their supporters converged in front of the Kalinga Provincial Hospital and marched towards the Tabuk City Hall to oppose jeepney phaseout program of the Duterte regime which will compel them to replace their jeeps with expensive solar-powered, electronic or Euro IV engine jeeps.

They said that the program will kill their source of livelihood as operators and drivers cannot afford these jeeps which price range from P800,000-P1.6 million. According to their study, these types of jeep are not applicable to the mountainous terrain of the province. The phaseout program is just another strategy of capitalist corporations

to monopolize and corporatize public transportation system for their superprofits.

### Campout against ENDO

More than 1,500 contractual workers terminated by PLDT protested in Mendiola on July 12 to assert their regularization. Earlier, they protested in front of the company office in España Avenue, Manila on July 9 and put up a camp there the next day. They also staged a protest action in front of the PLDT office in Mandaluyong to urge the company to immediately process their regularization.

On July 6-20, workers from NCR, Southern Tagalog and Southern Mindanao launched a series of

protests to assert their right to just wages and labor: terminated workers under the United Employees of Alorica in Makati; 100 contractual workers of Magnolia Inc. in General Trias, Cavite who are compensated with a meager daily wage of P373; workers of San Miguel Yamamura in Imus, Cavite, some of whom are contractuels for already two decades; farm workers of Fabian Farm in Kapalong, Davao del Norte who are currently facing threats of union busting.

Last among these actions is the collective campout of workers from Jollibee Foods Corp., PLDT, Unipak, Manila Harbour Centre among others in Mendiola on July 20 to hold him accountable for his promise to end contractualization.

### United People's SONA

In preparation for Duterte's SONA, various progressive organizations launched a series of con-

ferences to discuss the true situation of the people.

Among these are as follows: State of the Youth Address in Cagayan de Oro City on July 21, in Assumption College of Davao and Angeles City on July 20, in the Polytechnic University of the Philippines on July 14, and in the University of the Philippines Los Banos on July 7-8; State of the Women Address on July 20, and Anti-mysogynist Activists sa SONA on July 13 in Quezon City; Church-People's Solidarity Forum on July 20 in Baclaran Church; Forum on Agrarian Reform and Peace on July 19 in Quezon City; State of the Workers Address on July 18 at the Mendiola Arch; and SUMADA: State of Unrest in Mindanao Against Duterte's Tyranny on July 18 in UP Diliman.

On July 9, fisherfolk from La Union staged a protest action in front of the Department of Agriculture to hold Sec. Piñol accountable for his promise to distribute boats and fishing implements.

### Movement Against Tyranny

The Tongtongan Ti Umili, Cordillera People's Alliance and other mass organizations mounted a protest action in Baguio City to fight for the right to self-determination and ancestral domain, and oppose violence against national minorities.

Carrying placards where they wrote their calls opposing the Oplan Rody, "anti-tambay" campaign, youth activists spearheaded by the Alliance of Concerned

Students went around the streets of Baguio City on July 13.

Members of Katribu and BAI Indigenous Women's Network trooped to the office of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) in Quezon City on July 3 to file 60 cases of human rights violations perpetrated by state forces against indigenous peoples.

### For the environment

Residents from various barangays in Toledo City formed an alliance during the second week of July against the coal-fired power plant of the Aboitiz Power Corp. which causes health complications among the residents of the city and other neighboring towns. They also opposed the plan of Aboitiz to open and operate this year another new power plant in the city.

Pamalakaya and Agham led a protest action on July 9 in front of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources headquarters in Quezon City to condemn the failure of the agency to devise a clear and comprehensive plan for the rehabilitation of Boracay and for the thousands of workers who lost their jobs after the closure of the island.

On June 26, around 300 residents led by Timpuyog Ti Umili iti Karayan Buaya converged in front of the Quirino Stadium in Bantay, Ilocos Sur to oppose the proposed P3.83-billion Gregorio del Pilar Water Impounding Project in Salcedo, Ilocos Sur. AB

## Lumads of Lianga evacuate anew

**T**hree years after the brutal massacre of their leaders, some 328 Manobo families or 1,607 residents of Barangay Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur have again been forced to evacuate due to the series of harassment and abuses perpetrated by troops of the 75th IB in their community.

Evacuees include 568 Lumad students and 48 teachers from community schools Tribal Filipino Program for Surigao del Sur (TRIFPSS) and Alternative Learning Center for Agriculture and Livelihood Development (Alcadev). Bringing only some of their belongings, the Lumads walked for almost 10 hours towards the Diatagon Gym where they are temporarily staying.

Barangay Diatagon is covered by the Andap Valley which Duterte offered to mining investors. The area is said to hold the largest carbon reserves in the country. Benguet Corporation, Great Wall Mining and Power Corporation at Abacus Coal Exploration and Development have all already been awarded with permits to operate in the said area. As mining operations of these companies are set to com-

mence, the 75th IB on July 14 constructed a detachment and deployed some 100 soldiers to guard the companies. Their presence resulted in prevalent unrest in 23 sitios of the barangay.

Within 33 days, cases of threat, harassment and intimidation perpetrated by soldiers against the residents were documented. These included forcible entry of soldiers to their homes, asking residents for their names and enlisting them as CAFGU recruits without their consent. Their livestock and crops were stolen. Their schools were forcibly occupied and the cottage of its volunteer teachers was ransacked; women and children were verbally and sexually abused; and residents actively opposing the entry of plunderous concessions in their land. Residents no longer

have anything to eat because they can no longer go to their farms. Classes in TRIFPSS and Alcadev were suspended.

On July 9, some 150 residents and their supporters protested in front of the provincial capitol to demand an end to the militarization of their communities. Despite this, a local government official insisted that cannot act upon the request because of martial rule.

On July 11, a dialogue was held between leaders of the Malahutayong Pakibisog alang sa Sumusunod (MAPASU), local government officials, and representatives of the 401st Brigade, 36th IB at 75th IB. After expressing the need for sanctuary, Lumad leaders were told by Brig. Gen. Andres Centino that they could face criminal charges for evacuating.

On July 16, soldiers blocked the route of the evacuees using two six-by-six trucks while five media outfits were barred by soldiers from covering the activity.

The harassment continued even

in the evacuation site. On July 18, police and military troops encamped at and surrounded the Diatagon gym. At around 11:30 a.m., they blocked the entry of sacks of rice and food for the immediate consumption of the evacuees.

On July 20, soldiers forced their way inside the gym purportedly to distribute food for the evacuees.

This is the residents' second evacuation this year, and their fourth under martial law.

### Killings and abduction

On July 10, Bladen Skyler Abatayo, a 4-year old child, was killed on the spot after being hit by a stray bullet from the indiscriminate strafing of PNP elements while conducting an "anti-illegal drug operation" in Sitio Bato, Barangay Ermita, Cebu City.

On June 24 at around 7 a.m., elements of the 76th IB abducted Tifon Piniw together with his 10-year old nephew while they were on their way to Sityo Buswak, Barangay Lisap, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro. They have not been located since then.

### Illegal arrests

On July 11, Kristine Cabardo, chairperson of the League of Filipino Students-Northern Mindanao, was re-arrested by elements of the Philippine National Police (PNP) together with three other family members in Linamon, Lanao del Norte. Mary Ann Cabardo, Kristine's mother, was detained and forced to admit that the sachets of shabu planted by the police in their motorcycle were hers. Mary Ann is still under detention. Kristine is among the 13 activist leaders who were arrested on July 4 in General Santos City.

On July 19, Jessica and Allan Pajo were illegally arrested by elements of the PNP in Gingoog, Misamis Oriental and were falsely charged with murder and attempted murder.

On June 27, Jerry Liao, Ruel Linaw, Koko Bayok and Tata Atig, farmer residents of Barangay Tawan-tawan, Baguio District, Davao City were arrested and detained by elements of the 3rd IB after engaging NPA troops in a firefight in Barangay Carmen on the same day. On the next day, soldiers forced five civilian residents of Barangay Magsaysay, Marilog District to surrender as NPA fighters.

### Demolition

On July 6, authorities demolished the houses of the residents of Real, Calamba, Laguna. PNP elements were deployed in the area to suppress the residents' resistance. A police cocked his gun, while another threatened to arrest a volunteer of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Southern Tagalog.

### Intimidation, threat and surveillance

On July 18 in General Santos City, April Rose Avila, member of Disaster Response Center SOCCSKSARGEN (DIRECT), was harassed by an AFP agent identified as Jerson Gallego. Gallego questioned Avila about the connection of the organization with progressive organizations. He told Avila that her family and organization have long been under military surveillance.

On July 9, two members of media group Eastern Vista were put under surveillance by PNP agents on their way back to their office in Tacloban City. On June 18, another member of Eastern Vista was harassed in Magsaysay Boulevard and asked if he was a genuine member of the media.

On the early morning of July 3, 78th IB troopers armed with rifles surrounded the house of Alberto Ligutan, vice chairperson of the Municipal Farmers Association of Carigara (MUFAC), in Barangay Kaghalo, Carigara, Leyte. was surrounded by elements of the 78th IB who were armed with rifles. The soldiers threatened his life and forced him to surrender as an NPA fighter.

On July 3, at around 4 p.m., Romy Portugal, member of KADAMAY-Metro Tacloban, was summoned by elements of the 3rd Maneuver Platoon of the PNP and was threatened to be arrested if he participates again in his organization's activities.

On June 27, Ongbak Ihem and Butsoy Puypoy were harassed and threatened by soldiers in Barangay Lisap, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro. The operating military troops entered the barangay at around 4 a.m. and initially went to Ongbak's house.

Soldiers ordered Ongbak to lie face down. He was held at knife-point while being forced to surrender as an NPA member. He was then brought to the basketball court and was again forced to lie face down. The soldiers asked him the name of the members of their cooperative and questioned its existence. While interrogating Ongbak, other soldiers forcibly entered the house of Butsoy Puypoy.

On July 16, suspected state agents were caught conducting surveillance in front of the Anakpawis office in Pulo, Cabuyao, Laguna. AB



## Attacks against Lumad communities and schools in Sultan Kudarat

ON JULY 16, students of the Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc. (MISFI) Academy and Center for Lumad Advocacy and Networking, Inc. (CLANS) conducted a program in their camp in front of the Department of Education Region 12 office to greet the first day of Allan G. Farnazo as regional director. Together with their teachers and parents, they challenged Farnazo to issue the Lumad schools with permits to operate and to demilitarize their communities in Barangay Basak, Lebak, Sultan Kudarat.

They attempted to submit a letter containing their calls and data on violations perpetrated by the military against the rights of the Lumad in schools and communities, but no one from the office received the letter. They were able to document 225 cases of attacks with eight cases of forcible evacuation, eight illegal arrests, 67 cases of threats, harassment and intimidation, four cases of destruction of school and private property, and 11 cases of violation of domicile.

The data came from the National Fact Finding Mission conducted by the Save Our Schools Network on June 27-30 to probe the incidents of harassment perpetrated by the Marine Battalion Landing Team 2 since they entered and encamped in the said community on May 10.

On July 9, the Lumads held an early T'nalak Festival to condemn the refusal of then Director Arturo Bayucot to hold a dialogue with them. AB

## Women against the macho-fascist regime

**T**housands of women will participate in protest actions against the Duterte regime in his third State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 23. Various women's group will unite under the #AmaSONA (Anti-Misogynist Activists sa SONA) to oppose all forms of Duterte's oppression against women.

This will be led by the #BabaeAko Movement which successfully earned global support against Duterte and his minion's trampling on and belittling women rights.

Ever since Duterte came to power, he spewed ceaseless unhumorous gags on rape and repeatedly issued coarse remarks that disrespect women. With his regime's heightening attacks against women, along with his extant policy of killings and oppression that has plagued the toiling masses especially poor women, he is further stoking the fire of their rage and readiness to fight. It is clear that the current regime is the face of the oppressive feudal and patriarchal society.

Duterte has repeatedly incited the police and military troops to violate the human rights of women. After the declaration of martial law in Mindanao on May 2017, he even encouraged soldiers to rape. A study by the Center for Women's Resources indicate that there are at least 13 rape cases perpetrated by state forces including seven which are also related to the war against drugs. At least 33 officers are involved in various crimes against women including the rape of two women inmates in Olongapo City and Hagonoy, Bulacan.

Lascivious acts and rape threats against women by soldiers are prevalent in barrios and communities they besiege in the countryside under the guise of "peace" operations.

His henchmen's claim that cases of rape decreased in the country since the implementation of Oplan Tokhang is a blatant lie. In fact, police officers themselves are involved in numerous cases of violence against women. Philippine National Police-Women and Children Protection Center data indicate that there are still more than 50,000 documented cases of rape and violence against women and children. Recently, a dehumanizing strip-search of a woman illegally arrested by police officers under the anti-tambay campaign was met with public condemnation.

On top of Duterte's lascivious acts and expletives against women, they are further exploited by extant anti-people policies. Thousands of mothers, wives, and children still mourn for their loved ones killed by the regime's annihilative wars against the people.

Labor opportunities for women are mostly low-paying and contractual. Majority of women laborers are found in garment and food processing factories, and the electronics industry. They also comprise the ma-

jority of workers in malls and retail stores as salesladies and cashiers. More than 1.7 million women are employed as domestic workers and receive very low wages. They also comprise the majority of 1.9 million unpaid family workers and 4.4 million small entrepreneurs in the country. Approximately 373,974 women OFWs were deployed this year. Conservative estimates by the government indicate that there are about 10 million excluded from the labor force, while 877,000 are officially considered as unemployed.

Approximately 16 million women who earn a meager P179.04-P365.88 daily wage are further impoverished by unabated inflation resulting from Duterte's regressive tax reform. In the agricultural sector, where average wages are relatively lower, women are compensated even less.

Based on government estimates for 2016, women farm workers' wages are P17.45 lower compared to men's.

Half of landless peasants are women. Like men, they struggle against landgrabbing, high loan interest rates, expensive seeds, and conversion of agricultural lands. Simultaneously, they experience feudal exploitation and slavery as women.

Amid all these, women are left with no choice but to fight back to overthrow the macho-fascist Duterte regime. Like men, they are welcome to join various fields of struggle, including the armed revolution in the countryside. AB

# Unabated housing crisis

**O**n his first day as president, Duterte vowed to give the people a comfortable life. He also vowed to ensure peace and order in communities, as well as jobs and housing for the poor. It has become clear, however, that these are mere propaganda to woo voters and supporters, majority of whom are from the urban poor.

After two years, nothing is left of Duterte's publicity stunts. It has become clear that he is patently anti-poor.

He unleashed a series of brutal and violent wars aimed at the poor. On top of Oplan Tokhang, his bogus war against drugs, he also mounted Oplan Rody (Rid the Streets of Drunkards and Youth) and Oplan Tanggal-Tambay. After a month of implementation of these campaigns, more than 50,000 were arrested and fell victim to extortion, hundreds were abused, while two were killed while under custody of the PNP.

He did nothing to address poverty. Instead, he further impoverished the poor by imposing regressive taxes, demolishing their homes and refusing to ensure the regularization of the majority of urban poor who work as contractuals.

Decent and affordable housing is among the key issues faced by the urban poor. Majority of those who were branded as "tambays" (loiterers) live in shanties that neither have gardens nor living rooms where they can rest. Most of urban poor families are compelled to fit themselves in one room, reason why the streets have become the extension of their homes.

The National Capital Region is the most populated regions with a total of 12 million residents. Three million of whom live in slums. At present, NCR is the most congested region in the world with 19,988

people per square kilometer of land. Families of hundreds of thousands of workers and semi-proletariats whose wages are insufficient to meet the cost of decent housing squeeze themselves within the region because it is the closest to their workplaces.

The urban poor are alarmed by massive demolitions due to the infrastructure programs of the regime. Estimates by Kadamay indicate that more than 200,000 families are currently facing threats of demolition while 104,229 more families have been declared residing in danger zones which also essentially means that they will also be forcibly evicted.

Relocation sites are often in far-flung areas, away from their sources of livelihood, and housing units are often costly. Data by Kadamay indicate that a housing unit with an area of 22 square meters costs P305,000-P600,000. In-city relocation is more expensive with an average amortization rate of P2,000 monthly. Failure to pay these dues will result in their

eviction.

In relocation areas such as the Northville at Southville in Pampanga and Bulacan, some 600,000 residents are not able to pay the required amortization of their homes.

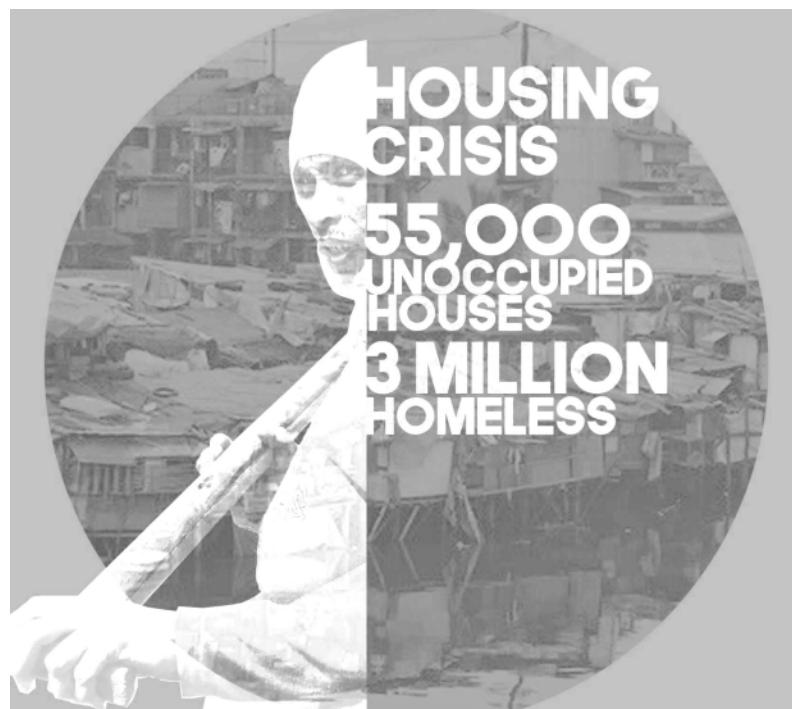
The slow and stringent housing application process which requires tons of documents is also an added burden to them. Kadamay reported that due to the difficult process and inability of the urban poor majority to pay, some 55,000 housing units remain unoccupied and are left to rot.

This prompted urban poor groups to launch the "Occupy Pambahay" campaign in Bulacan and Rizal last July 2017.

After a year, housing units have yet to be fully awarded to them. The National Housing Authority has yet to issue the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Joint Resolution No. 2 signed by Duterte, senators, and congress representatives on May 9 which ordered the awarding of unoccupied housing units to the urban poor and the issuance of entry passes needed to avail of power and water services.

The group added that they have insistently sought to hold a dialogue with the NHA to assert the implementation of the Joint Resolution No. 2 but to no avail.

The government proves itself inutile and deaf to the demands of the urban poor for decent and affordable housing. Budget allocation for housing remains minuscule. Of the P460 billion budget needed to address the housing backlog, Duterte only allocated P2.2 billion, despite allotting billions more to its all-out war against the people.



# The slavelike condition of farmers

Hacienda Luisita farmers were enraged by the Supreme Court decision issued during the first week of July favoring the Hacienda Luisita Incorporated (HLI) controlled by the Cojuanco-Aquino family.

Under the said decision, the SC scrapped the farmers' petition for compensation for the 580-hectares of land sold by HLI worth P1.33 billion which was supposed to be distributed under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

The decision is a manifestation of the continuing injustice experienced by farmers under the Duterte regime. In just two years in office, it worsened landlessness and favored big landlords and commercial plantations. Furthermore, Duterte also lined the pockets of his accomplices and supporters inside the bureaucracy.

Instead of addressing the legitimate demands of farmers, the Duterte regime answered them with brutal attacks. Thousands of barangays are currently besieged by the AFP. The collective actions mounted by peasant organizations to till their own land and fight for their rights are met with intimidation, arrests and killings. More than 140 farmers have been killed under Duterte.

Agricultural lands spanning hundreds of thousands of hectares are still controlled by landlords and commercial plantations. Among these are pineapple and banana plantations owned by the Consunjis and companies such as Dole and del Monte in various parts of Mindanao. These are set to be further expanded under Duterte. Approximately 1.7 million hectares are allotted solely for the expansion of oil palm plantations.

In Duterte's first month in office, he set aside 5.67 million hectares for Agribusiness Venture Agreements (AVAs) and foreign direct investments. AVAs are agreements that are designed for capitalists to practically control the land.

Six million hectares of agricultural lands are yet to be distrib-

uted under CARP. These lands are rapidly undergoing use-conversion to be exempted from being distributed.

Due to lack of support from the government to farmers, lands distributed under CARP are bound to be retaken from them. On top of AVA, exploitative arrangements such as aryendo are also prevalent. In Hacienda Luisita, 83% of the beneficiaries are being duped to lease their land for just P7,000 a year for every .66 hectares of land. Among the top *aryendadores* in the country are the Lorenzos closely linked to the Dutertes.

IN NUEVA ECIJA, the large number of farm workers tilling the land reflect widespread landlessness. In the town of Guimba, they are compelled to accept a meager P200-300 daily wage and do not have regular work days. During harvest season, every 10 farm workers that harvest up to 100 cavans of rice for each hectare, they only get paid seven cavans of rice which they need to divide among themselves. Often, they are also knee-deep in debt from usurers and microfinancing institutions which charge up to 20% interest.

A large portion (30%) of the amount loaned by poor peasants for capital go to the renting of farm implements: 27% to labor expenses, 20% for fertilizers and chemicals, and 11% for fuel. Under this system, farmers commonly earn only P250 daily. Farm implements are also often owned by landlords and local traders in barrios. Their op-



erational expenses are expected to increase to P1,500/month, considering the incessant surge in prices of petroleum products and other additional taxes imposed by the TRAIN law.

LANDLORDS ARE TAKING advantage of landlessness in the said province, to widely implement unfair harvest-sharing schemes which further deny farmers their right to the land they are cultivating. Under such scheme, only 10% of the harvest is given to farmers as compensation for their labor.

The regime also used the hapless condition of farmers as a pretext for corruption. Its so-called free irrigation law will spend P2.6 billion to the Department of Agriculture (DA), on top of the P41.6 billion budget already appropriated to the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) for 2018. This is higher than its P38.4-billion budget last 2017. Despite this, not even one-fourth of irrigable farmlands in the country are covered by NIA services, while facilities used to channel these are dilapidated. In Central Luzon alone, approximately 67,000 hectares are non-irrigated. The hyped P3.7 billion DA budget that will supposedly be loaned to farmers as their capital will only line the pockets of Duterte's henchmen.

# Teachers: overworked, underpaid

Thousands of members of the Quezon City Public School Teachers Association (QCPSTA) conducted two protest actions to demand salary increases and their allowance which was denied to them after the issuance of Joint Circular No. 1 on 2017. Three thousand and 1,000 teachers rallied on July 6 and 16 respectively. They achieved initial victory in having their P1,000 allowance immediately released.

Approximately 687,229 public school teachers across the country are dismayed with Duterte's failure to uphold his promise to increase their salaries. Teacher I and II-III salaries are still pegged at P20,179 and P22,000-P25,000 respectively.

Teachers need higher salaries especially because they have to

shell out additional funds for instructional materials and even the repair of their classrooms. A meager P2,500 chalk allowance and a P1,000-P1,500 allowance will not suffice to cover these additional expenses.

On top of low wages, teachers are also overworked. They are compelled to teach classes with

fifty to one hundred students. In Bagong Silangan Elementary School in Quezon City, two sections with forty-five students each are squeezed to fit in one classroom. Meanwhile, a usual class in Cabuyao, Laguna comprise eighty to one hundred students.

Due to lack of personnel in public schools, teachers are also compelled to perform as nurses, guidance counselors, and librarians among others. There are only 38,284 support personnel (or a ration of 1:18 teachers) in public schools. An evaluation just to qualify for benefits is an added burden to them.

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# Heightening US trade wars

Contradictions between capitalist nations are intensifying, a sign of the unsolvable worldwide capitalist crisis. The US is currently imposing tariffs to Chinese products it is importing after a long period of exchanging threats. The US is now also openly challenging the European Union (EU) and other countries in Europe. Even Canada has not escaped the attacks from the US.

At the heart of this war is the global overproduction and oversupply of steel. China is one of the biggest producers of steel (831 million metric tons in 2017 or almost half of the total 1,691 million metric tons produced worldwide). China has long refused the demand of other steel-producing countries including the EU, Canada, Japan, South Korea, US, Switzerland and Turkey to decrease its production to halt the drop in prices. The steel market has deflated because of the overall production slowdown throughout the world.

## US vs. China

In line with his "America First" declaration, US President Donald Trump implemented steps to supposedly protect American companies against unfair trade. This Feb-

ruary, Trump started to impose higher tariffs on steel and aluminum imported to the US. Its main target is China, which the US started charging tariffs worth \$50 billion. New tariffs on 818 products from China worth \$34 billion took effect this July 6, and the US warned that another \$16 billion worth of tariffs will be added if China retaliates.

China struck back by imposing tariffs worth \$50 billion on 659 products from the US, including soybeans, flat screen TVs, electric cars and whiskey. (SUVs like BMW, in particular, were levied 40% tariffs. Germany's BMW cars are built in Spartanburg, South Carolina and are exported by the US in 140 countries.) China has also shifted to other suppliers of agricultural products like Brazil, Australia, and



other countries in Eastern Europe.

Trump became more infuriated with China's "defense" measures for its economy. As counterattack, US plans to increase tariffs levied on Chinese products by 10%, equivalent to an additional \$200 billion. The US also warned that it will further increase tariffs if China retaliates again.

## US vs. EU

China was not the only one affected by the tariffs imposed by the US on steel and aluminum products. It also affected even the EU, which has long been an ally of the US. Starting this June, the US imposed 20% tariffs on vehicles coming from the EU. Trump said that the EU is a "problem as bad as China" when it comes to trade.

The EU responded by imposing tariffs on known American products including Harley-Davidson motorcycles, denim jeans, and bourbon drinks. The EU dubbed Trump's trade war as a "dangerous game." If Trump does not back down, Germany warns that it would impose taxes on "digital services" like Google, Facebook, Amazon, and others.

### **US vs. Canada, Turkey and India**

Apart from China and the EU, Trump's measures are also affecting even allied countries including Canada, Mexico and Turkey. These countries were incensed by Trump's unilateral decision and decided to take counter-measures to protect their own economies.

Starting July 1, Canada's new tariffs on American products began taking effect, including the imposition of 10-25% taxes on products including ketchup, lawnmowers, and motorboats, amounting to a total of \$12 billion. Particularly for cheese and other dairy products, Canada increased tariffs by 270% and imposed other restrictions.

Turkey and India have also joined the growing list of countries targeted by the US. Turkey imposed tariffs worth \$266.5 million on US products. Turkey's minister said that this is their response to the added tariffs imposed by the US on steel and aluminum. US products that will be affected include cars, coal, walnuts, almonds, cigarettes and tobacco, rice, whiskey, cosmet-

ics, machineries, and petrochemical products. The US is the fifth biggest source of exports in Turkey, with its trade volume worth a total of \$20.6 billion in 2017.

Aside from Turkey, India also announced it will impose taxes worth \$240 million on food products from the US. This is set to take effect on August 4.

This June, Mexico also imposed up to 15% tariffs on cheese and other dairy products, and further increased this to 25% last July 5. Mexico is the biggest market for US dairy products.

### **US economists and businessmen wary**

Even the ruling classes in the US are divided on the protectionist measures that Trump is pursuing. On one hand, the Democratic Party praised the measures which they say will defend the welfare of American companies and produce millions of jobs. On the other hand, Trump's own allies in the Republican Party expressed opposition to the measures, saying that these are against "free trade." A report from a US newspaper said that out of 30 congressional districts that supported Trump in his presidential campaign, 25 are being heavily affected by China's retaliatory tariffs.

Finance officials and economists meanwhile fear that these measures are heightening the possibility of having a full-blown global trade war. They say that the sectors that Trump vowed to protect will instead be further

harmed, as most of these industries are dependent on parts imported from China. Industries that are set to be affected include those that manufacture cars, which will most probably result in mass layoffs in other related industries.

Manufacturers of ships and other sea vessels are also expressing opposition to the steel and aluminum tariffs. The tariffs are affecting almost 300 equipment, according to the National Marines Manufacturers Association.

The trade war is also heavily affecting American farmers - a section of American society that supposedly comprise majority of the Trump regime's supporters - because their products, including famed cheeses like Sarori Cheese and other dairy products, soybeans, coal, salmon, tobacco, and whiskey, will lose their market share. According to the US Chamber of Commerce, the tariffs that Mexico imposed will affect \$578 million worth of dairy products while China's tariffs will affect \$408 million worth of cheese, whey and other products.

Motorcycle maker Harley-Davidson, meanwhile, is heavily affected by the tariffs imposed by the EU on American products. The company decided to move the manufacturing of its motorcycle parts to other countries. In a span of just a year, the company is set to lose about \$100 million due to EU's tariffs.

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