

EDITORIAL

Fight and take back the people's economic and social rights

Standards of living of the majority of the Filipino people are rapidly falling under the Marcos regime. Millions of families suffer poverty and could no longer tighten their belts any further. Quality of life is steadily deteriorating. They have not enough to spend on food and other necessities.

People have suffered more than enough from incessant increases in the prices of fuel, food, fare, water and electricity bills and other daily expenses. These are worsened by losses to their homes and livelihoods due to widespread floods over the past weeks. The toiling masses could no longer keep up with abject wages, landlessness and joblessness, amid relentless seizure of their land and

sources of livelihood and income.

The Filipino people must hold the Marcos regime directly responsible for the rapid deterioration of their standards of living. Soaring prices are the direct result of the Marcos regime's neoliberal policies. These further destroy productive forces and deepen the agrarian, non-industrial and backward economy. The capacity to produce food and other

commodities is weakened, making the economy increasingly dependent on importation, foreign debt and foreign investments.

In exchange for loans, the Marcos regime implements anti-people and anti-poor measures in accordance with policies set by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other imperialist agencies. These measures serve the interests of foreign large banks and monopoly capitalists, and trample on the basic social and economic rights of the people.

Foremost among these is the



policy of wage suppression to perpetuate an army of cheap labor as offering to foreign capitalist investors. Public spending for education, health and other social services are being cut. To service the country's debt, taxes are being imposed on the masses of consumers, even as foreign investors enjoy tax exemptions and other perks.

Marcos also aggressively pushes import liberalization, particularly of agricultural products, which in recent decades have bankrupted millions of people and destroyed local production. He is also railroading measures allowing foreign monopoly capitalists and domestic big bourgeois compradors to take away the sources of income of millions of people.

Unemployment is acute where at least 20 million are unemployed or have only temporary jobs. Millions of farmers, fishermen, even jeepney drivers and operators, small businessmen and small income earners, are losing their livelihood because as these are taken away by foreign and domestic big capitalists.

The situation is worst in the countryside where the Marcos

regime allows big landlords, bourgeois compradors and foreign capitalist to encroach on hundreds of thousands of hectares of land for plantations and mines, "green" energy, ecotourism and other infrastructure projects. The World Bank is further pushing to make the agricultural lands more "marketable" and "saleable". Hundreds of thousands of farmers are driven out from the land and are deprived of other means of production and livelihood causing widespread bankruptcy and poverty.

Under the Marcos regime, corruption at the highest levels of the bureaucracy has become more brazen. Through the Maharlika Investment Fund, Marcos will funnel ₱500 billion in public funds to favored large bourgeois compradors, cronies and minions. These handful of millionaires and billionaires live

lives of luxury while majority of the Filipino people wallow in poverty and intolerable conditions. Marcos himself holds billion of pesos in unaudited "confidential" and "intelligence" funds. Using the people's money, he goes on foreign junkets and uses Malacañang to host

one party after another.

The Filipino people must fight to defend and take back their social and economic rights and resist the fall in their standard of living. They must fight for lower prices of oil, food and other basic needs and services; wage and salary increases for workers and ordinary employees; scrapping of burdensome taxes and fees; lowering of land rent and prices of seed and other agricultural inputs; abolition of usury; fair farm-gate prices; and overall protection and defense of the people's livelihood. The struggle for these and other urgent democratic demands must be waged by the broad masses of workers, peasants and other toiling people to prevent the further decline in their social and economic status.

The Marcos regime is feeding the Filipino people to the profit-hungry foreign monopoly capitalists, local big comprador bourgeoisie, big landlords, and bureaucrat capitalists. The worsening conditions of the Filipino people underscore the urgent need to advance the struggle to end the semicolonial and semifeudal social system and its backward, agrarian and non-industrial economy, that condemn the people to a state of permanent crisis.

The struggle for social and economic rights is tightly linked to the struggle for national democracy. This aims to carry out genuine land reform to end several centuries of landlessness that fetter the majority of the Filipino people to the backward and oppressive feudal and semifeudal system. It also aims to undertake national industrialization to develop the country's productive forces, make good use of the country's natural and human resources, and realize the full potential to produce for people's needs.

Only by achieving genuine freedom from foreign control, can we establish a nation that is developed, addresses the needs of the people, self-reliant, and promotes a modern and progressive future socialist system.



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AB

People's SONA:

Nothing new in the Philippines

Approximately 12,000 people gathered on July 24 in protest actions in various cities in the Philippines to state the real conditions of the people as Ferdinand Marcos Jr delivered his second state of the nation address (SONA).

According to the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), 10,000 people participated in the protest along the Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City from morning to noon. Their common demand: "Wage increase, livelihood, and food on the table! Stop the violence! People's welfare, not Maharlika!"

During the protest, they burned the "Doble Kara" effigy of a golden coin with two faces of Marcos. On one side of the coin, the smiling face of Marcos with a peace sign symbolizing his promises, while the other side showed Marcos as a thief.

Progressive groups from Southern Tagalog, which began their caravan from the region on July 21, took part in the mass action. Before the SONA, the group mounted protests at the Chinese Embassy in Makati and the US embassy in Manila.

Groups from Central Luzon, Cordillera and other nearby regions also participated in the protest in the national capital.

At the same time, democratic groups gathered in the cities of Baguio, Naga, Iloilo, Roxas, Cebu, Tacloban, and Davao, and in Aklan and Capiz in Panay. In Cebu City,



more than 600 marched along Metro Colon.

Political prisoners in Metro Manila and Negros island also joined the protest. More than 100 political detainees in Negros island and 29 in Bicutan in Metro Manila held a 24-hour fast to call for the release of political prisoners, especially the elderly and the sick.

Drivers and jeepney operators stopped plying routes to reject the government's public utility vehicle (PUV) phaseout program. In Bacolod City, an estimated 700 jeepney drivers participated in the transport strike.

Delivery company Lalamove's approximately 7,000 drivers and riders (motorcycle- and bicycle-delivery riders) carried out a "strike booking" or non-acceptance of delivery work. Riders in Metro Manila, Batangas, Quezon, Laguna, Cebu, and Davao participated in the mass action.

Meanwhile, progressive organizations and Filipino migrants held activities and protests overseas. The situation of migrants was high-

lighted in gatherings held in Boston, Oregon, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, New York and Washington DC in the US; in Vancouver, Ottawa, Toronto, Alberta, Winnipeg and Montreal in Canada; Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, New Zealand and Australia.

Nothing new with the SONA

There is nothing new with the slogan "Bagong Pilipinas" (New Philippines) that Ferdinand Marcos Jr declared in his SONA, said Bayan in reaction to Marcos' speech. This is just an attempt to hide the widespread hunger, unemployment, low wages and poverty of the broad masses.

"Bagong Pilipinas, like the Bagong Lipunan of the Marcos dictatorship, harps on grand promises but falls short of actual benefits for the people," the group stated.

Democratic groups noted Marcos' silence on urgent issues of the Filipino people such as human rights, significant wage increases, job creation, reclamation, national industrialization and defense of sovereignty.

"There are promises of local agriculture development, but these are undermined by the policy of importation of agricultural products," Bayan said.

The groups criticized the lies, as well as the programs which Marcos pushed for in his SONA. These include among others the review of fishing rules that disadvantage small fishermen, and plans to impose extra fees on migrants and various other tax measures on the people. **AB**

CNL-Negros holds Congress

REVOLUTIONARY PRIESTS, PASTORS, religious men and women and lay Church workers gathered in Negros island recently to hold the second congress of the Christians for National Liberation chapter in the island. The congress formulated the CNL's tactical plan in the region and elected Ericson Buglas as its chairman.

The Congress reaffirmed the unity of delegates to study the national and regional social situation. It discussed the unity and Five Point Program of the CNL that was formulated at its 9th National Congress held in September 2022.

Marcos Jr's amnesty offer is garbage

The Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army rejected Ferdinand Marcos Jr's proposal to declare an amnesty for all those who will surrender the Filipino people's revolutionary armed cause. He announced this plan in his State of the Nation Address on July 24.

At the forefront of this folly is the National Task Force-Elcac which claims there are 30,000 "surrendeers related to the Communist Party of the Philippines" who are eligible for amnesty. Truth is, most of these "surrenderees" are civilians who were forced to surrender and are charged with trumped-up cases.

"Communists and revolutionary fighters remain true to the aspirations of the Filipino people," according to the CPP through its information officer Marco Valbuena. The revolutionary cause is far greater than any Marcos offer of amnesty. "Revolutionaries are motivated not by the selfish desire for some personal gain, rather by the selfless devotion to serve and struggle with the people."

History shows how the colonial, and later on the neocolonial counter-revolutionary state has used amnesty offers as sugar-coated bullets against revolutionary forces. The US colonial government offered amnesty to Filipino freedom fighter Macario Sakay in 1905, but executed him later in 1907. In 1946, some leaders of the Hukbalahap (Hukbong Bayan laban sa

Hapon) were enticed by the amnesty program of Elpidio Quirino only to be murdered a few months later.

Installed into power by a combination of a military coup and giant mass movements, Corazon Aquino and Gloria Arroyo were both pushed to declare amnesty and release a number political prisoners. Shortly thereafter, their regimes waged a brutal war of suppression marked by killings and massacres.

"Marcos' offer of amnesty for those who will surrender is duplicitous, considering that close to 800 political prisoners remain in jails, and everyday, people are being arrested and persecuted for their political beliefs and social commitment," the Party said. Under the banner of the "war against terror," people's organizations everywhere are being suppressed and attacked, using the extraordinary draconian powers under the so-called Anti-Terrorism Law.

Marcos' claims that his government's "community development and livelihood programs" are effectively "addressing the root cause of conflict



in the countryside" are utterly devoid of the truth, and completely out of touch with reality.

Marcos boasted of the Barangay Development Program (BDP) and the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), farm to market roads and the "New Agrarian Emancipation Act," all of which perpetuate the basic problem of social injustice and poverty, that are rooted in the problem of landlessness.

Marcos' declared plan to issue an amnesty proclamation fits into the so-called "localized peace talks" and "surrender drive" in which rural communities are placed under military occupation (hamlets) and subjected to the AFP's psywar, intelligence and combat operations. In the past five years or so, a few tens of thousands of civilians have been falsely depicted as "surrenderees" without being charged in court, in violation of their civil and political rights.

The peasant masses are subjected daily to worsening forms of oppression and exploitation. Military and police abuses, summary killings, torture, unlawful detention, enforced disappearances and other violations of human rights are most rampant in the countryside, and are being carried out with utmost impunity.

"The need to wage revolutionary armed resistance, alongside all other forms of struggle, is now more than ever, urgent, just and necessary," the CPP said. Marcos himself, by negative example, is showing the people the need to bear arms and take the road of revolutionary resistance.

AB

NPA-Central Negros strikes police and military forces

UNITS OF THE New People's Army (NPA)-Central Negros mounted three offensive actions against police forces and 62nd IB soldiers in the past two weeks.

A soldier of the 62nd IB stationed at the detachment in Barangay Trinidad, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental was killed and another was wounded after being fired upon by Red fighters on July 30. The armed offensive aims to disrupt the soldiers' combat operations.

From July 19 to July 30, 200 soldiers were stationed in the barangays of Trinidad, Luz and Plagatasanon Proper in Guihulngan City. Cases of illegal search of residents' houses were reported during this period. They also encamped at Kambairan Elementary School in Barangay Trinidad.

A policeman was injured when the NPA fired at the detachment in Sitio Hinugpayan, Barangay Luz, Guihulngan City on the evening of August 2.

In another harassment operation, a soldier of the 62nd IB was wounded in Barangay Sikatuna, Isabela, Negros Occidental on July 25.

NLUA: Expansion of saleable land

During his last state of the nation address, Ferdinand Marcos Jr once again declared the National Land Use Act (NLUA) as a priority measure of his regime. Under this proposal, the state will review the use of land purportedly for comprehensive development. It aims to consolidate land classification into the following: protected land, land for production, for housing and for infrastructure. This will cover all the country's land, water and natural resources.

The proposal is framed along the neoliberal land scheme promoted by imperialist agencies such as the World Bank. It aims to expand the Philippines land market and offer land to international market speculation. This will give a new impetus to widespread land grabbing where millions of farmers, farm workers, indigenous groups, fisherfolk and other small producers will be displaced from their land or denied their livelihood.

Land reclassification



under the guise of land-use consolidation or management policies is not new. Since 1994, several attempts have been made to have Congress enact this into a law. It is supported by big bourgeoisie organizations,

such as the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Associations, big landlords and bureaucrats.

Still, even without a law, Marcos had already cleared the way for the local bourgeoisie to accelerate monopolization of the land that would enter the market. On July 3, he signed Executive Order No. 34 which allows construction of subdivisions and commercial centers in all "idle" public lands.

In the proposal's most recent version in Congress, its proponents used fancy words like "ridge-to-reef" or "watershed ecosystem management" that pretend to protect nature and fight climate change. This is to cunningly permit foreign companies to use farms,

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Simultaneous price increase of oil, LPG, fares, toll fees and rice

Private utility companies simultaneously increased the prices of basic goods and services in just the first few days of August. This highlighted the Marcos regime's inability to lower prices and fees.

With clear collusion, companies raised the prices of oil products on August 1. This is the fourth increase in the last four weeks. This resulted in a net increase of ₱11 per liter for gasoline, ₱3.60 for diesel and ₱5.45 for kerosene in the last seven months. According to jeepney drivers, this will mean a reduction of ₱90 per day or ₱2,250 per month from their income. Another big time increase looms on August 8 where ₱3.60 will be added to diesel and ₱2.65 to kerosene.

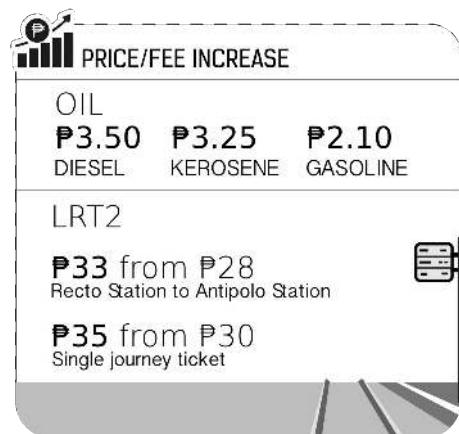
At the same time, companies also increased the price of LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) by up to ₱4.55 per kilo or ₱50.05 per 11-kilogram tank. It cancelled out the price cuts that companies implemented in the past two months.

The following day, the Depart-

ment of Transportation increased by ₱5 the maximum fare on the Light Rail Transit Line 2 (LRT2) from Recto Station to Antipolo Station, as well as its single journey ticket. The minimum load of the beep card was also set at ₱14 from the previous ₱12.

Starting August 8, the Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation will charge a toll fee of ₱86 to ₱302 per vehicle to use the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) Connector Road. The MPTC first raised the toll fee at NLEX from ₱19 to ₱100 for trucks and other big vehicles on July 15.

The price of rice also rose by ₱1.50-₱2 per kilo. The Department of Agriculture blamed this on the effects of Typhoon Egay, which destroyed at least 137,000 hectares of rice farms and left damages worth more than ₱2.9 billion.



It is possible that price increases will reach ₱4 per kilo in the next few months due to the Marcos regime's rush to import rice. This is in the face of supply restrictions in India and Vietnam, the Philippines' major source of rice. Farmers blame the seemingly inevitable price hike on Marcos' failure to provide local farmers adequate support. The regime did not boost local production, and instead relied solely on imports. The prices of most vegetables also increased.

AFP: An ever-bloated leech

The Marcos regime is set to allot a whopping ₱170 billion next year for pension funds of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and other uniformed personnel of the reactionary state. This shows that declared plans to reform the pension system which has "hemorrhaged" the national budget is all hollow talk.

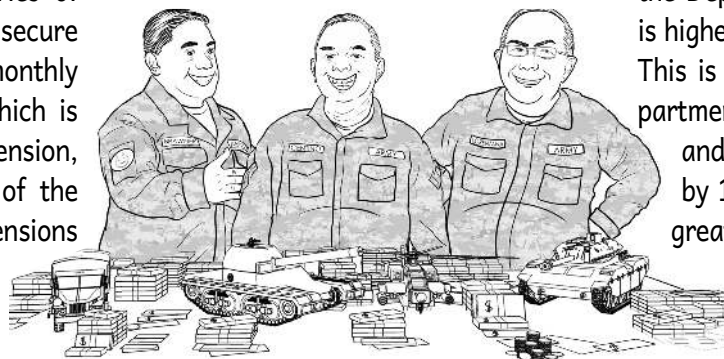
In fact, the state plans to take ₱120 billion from the its "savings" next year. This is despite widespread opposition to this anomalous system: even without a single contribution to the fund, retired military and police personnel receive massive pensions. It also plans to institutionalize a 3% annual salary increases for uniformed personnel for the next 10 years to "negate" any deduction for pensions.

The AFP pension system is a heavy onus on the Filipino people. In recent years, allotted funds for military pension stood as the second largest item in the national budget. It grew even larger after the Duterte government doubled the salaries of AFP officers and personnel to secure their loyalty. Their average monthly pension is around ₱40,000 which is almost ten times than SSS pension, and almost three times that of the GSIS. (See the article "AFP pensions burden the nation" in Ang Bayan May 21, 2023 issue.)

Apart from the huge pen-

sion, the AFP and PNP also eat up a large part of the national budget for salaries, various gratuities and payments to soldiers, and gargantuan expenses for the purchase of equipment. In recent years, the AFP has been overly pampered. This is part of the intensifying militarism of the ruling state and the ruling clique's attempt to gain the loyalty of AFP generals and personnel.

The 2023 national budget reveals how the AFP, PNP and other uniformed personnel are favored, far more than civilian agencies. Of the total allocation for salaries and other compensation for government employees, 30% goes to military person-



nel.

Soldiers and police receive extra pay for every action they take. They receive "Combat Duty Pay", apart from "Combat Incentive Pay"; they receive a "Hazardous Duty Pay", there is also "Hazard Duty Pay" and "High Risk Duty Pay". When they board a ship, there is a "Sea Duty Pay"; when tasked to ride a helicopter or plane, they receive a "Flying Pay." When they jump, there is a "Parachutist's Pay." There is also an "Instructor's Duty Pay" and "Reservist's Pay."

For soldiers and police (who retire at age 56), ₱36.427 billion is allocated for "longevity pay", which is 43 times bigger, than the budget allocated to the "longevity" of all other government personnel (₱842 million).

The 2024 budget requested by the Department of National Defense is higher by 14.16% to ₱232.2 billion. This is while the budget for the departments of labor and employment and for migrant workers was cut by 14% at ₱40.5 billion. It is also greater than the regime's boasted assistance for 18 million families which is only ₱200 billion. AB

From page 5

oceans and forests for the construction of large energy plants under the guise of renewable energy.

The NLUA will expand the coverage of schemes that ease the transfer of land ownership. These include clearing individual titles by forgiving farmers' debt and individualization of collective titles under the World Bank's SPLIT program. Both remove obstacles to selling distributed land for easier grabbing by big local and foreign businessmen and their bureaucrat partners.

The NLUA proposal is the opposite of agrarian reform. At its core is facilitating the conversion of vast agricultural lands for various industrial and commercial use. In fact, it

does not have a separate category for agriculture to ensure the country's food security. The only "agricultural land" recognized by the NLUA are those categorized under the bogus Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). According to state data, there are approximately 12 million hectares of land considered agricultural. Only more than seven million of these are under CARP. Many parts have already undergone land-use conversion.

Farmers are aware that government uses land reclassification to make it easier to exempt land from conversion or declassifying farmlands as agricultural to subject them to buy-outs. Even now, farmers are

having a hard time maintaining their land due to high rent and production costs, and being short-changed with low farmgate prices and lack of state support. This situation is exacerbated by rampant legal importation and smuggling of agricultural products.

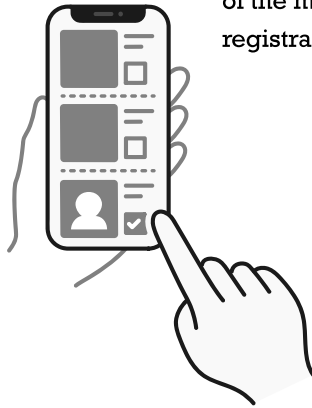
With the renewed push for the NLUA, the Marcos regime hopes to raise more revenue from land speculation and contracts and gain favors from the construction of housing, roads and bridges, power plants, dams and other infrastructure projects. It also hopes to reap big from the expansion of commercial plantations and mines to lands which the proposal will open up. AB

94,448 VICTIMS
of **human rights violations** in the first year of Ferdinand Marcos Jr in power.

Source: Ang Bayan Special Report, July 23, 2023

63.67 MILLION

unregistered SIM Cards were denied telecommunication services on July 27 after the deadline of the mandatory registration ended.



₱30B

government's lost profits due to the tax breaks givent to the biggest companies as "incentive" under the **CREATE law**.

MARCOS JR'S PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2024:

₱1.9B

for overseas travel expenses

₱4.56B

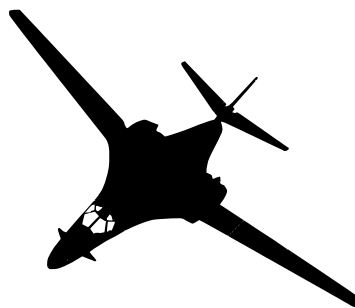
confidential and intelligence funds

70 YEARS

of defending national sovereignty and world peace by the Korean people and the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** was commemorated on July 27, victory day of the **Great Fatherland Liberation War** which ended the US imperialist war in the Korean peninsula. The 1953 Armistice Agreement was then signed to end the war and establish the Korean Demilitarized Zone.

12,000

of the hundreds of thousands who suffered in the AFP's **2017 bombardment of Marawi City** enlististed to seek reparations.



Of these, only **2,283** have complete paperwork.

10.6%

increase in the country's debt from ₱12.791 trillion on June 2022 to ₱14.1 trillion this June 2023

This value is 96.72% of the estimated amount the country will borrow the entire year.

82

individuals were arbitrarily and absurdly designated by the Anti-Terrorism Council as "terrorists."

The latest addition to the list are the 13 individual, including a runaway congressman, accused of the murder of a politician in Negros Oriental.

203rd IBde, scourge to the Mangyans and Mindoreños

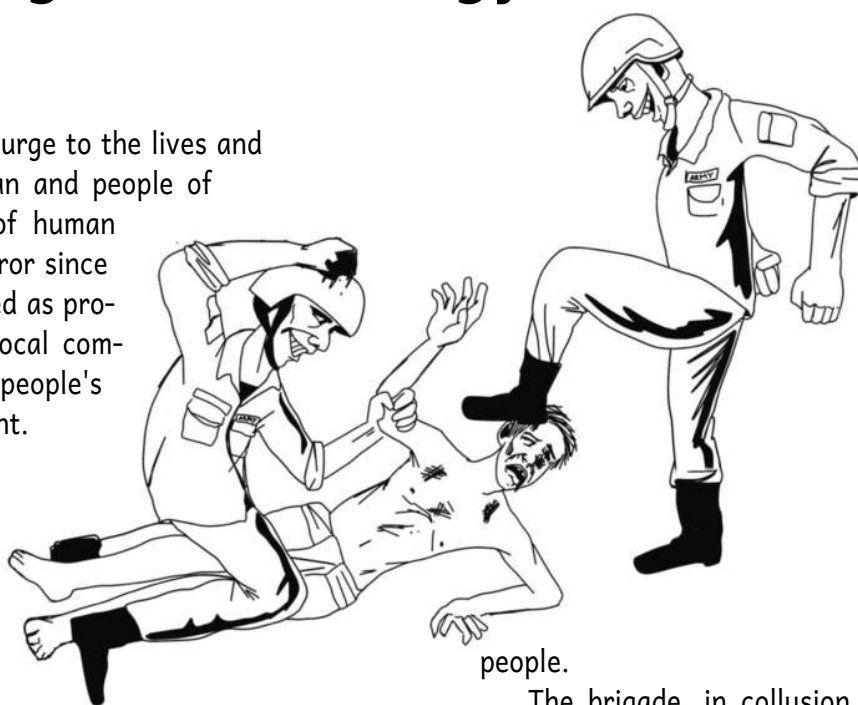
The 203rd IBde is a most horrible scourge to the lives and livelihood of the indigenous Mangyan and people of Mindoro. The brigade has a long list of human rights violation and history of sowing terror since being deployed to the island. It has served as protector of foreign companies and large local compradors who plunder the Mangyan people's ancestral land and destroy the environment.

Based on Ang Bayan's special report on human rights violations during the Marcos Jr's first year, two were extrajudicially killed and nine were victims of arrest, abduction and threats, harassment and intimidation in the island. This includes the case of two indigenous activists Mary Joyce Lizada and Arnulfo Aumentado who were abducted by soldiers on April 26 in Barangay Sta. Teresita, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro.

Nationwide, the island ranks fifth in terms of the number of military abuses. According to the National Democratic Front-Mindoro's data, at least 55,000 civilians were victims of violent suppression and repression since Marcos came to power.

The brigade's combat operations are relentless, colluding with MIMAROPA's Regional Task Force-Elcac, since the time of the Duterte regime. Its operations caused suffering on more than 126,000 residents including 40,348 victims in 15 communities under "community operations."

The latest victim of the brigade is Pedro Ambad, a Hanunuo-Mangyan, who was abducted at Sitio Kilapnit, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro on July 13. Soldiers of the 4th IB mauled and interrogated him and forced him to pinpoint the location of the "NPA's arms cache." He was only released after



12 hours. His ribs broke due to the severity of the beating. A few days later, soldiers entered the house of his brother, Admiraw Ambad, but failed to accost him. Due to continued harassment, five families were forced to flee their community, abandon their livelihood and stop their children's education.

In addition, 68th IB forces arrested four indigenous Buhid at a checkpoint in Barangay Manoot, Rizal, Occidental Mindoro on May 23. They were forcibly taken to a military camp where they were subjected to interrogation and torture. The following day, they were forced to participate in a combat operation to "pursue NPA members" but instead beat and captured civilians, including another indigenous Buhid.

The 203rd IBde's attacks on civilians form part of its defense infrastructure projects that destroy the livelihood of Mindoreños. This includes operations for mining armour rocks (a component for cement production) which were allowed on the island. Another project is commercial tree planting on kaingin areas of the indigenous

people.

The brigade, in collusion with the local government, is using the Tamaraw Reservation and Expansion Project (TREP) to evict the indigenous peoples from their ancestral land in Rizal, under the guise of protecting the Tamaraws. The tamaraw is a type of buffalo native to the Philippines and is near extinction.

What is the 203rd IBde?

The 203rd IBde was formed in 2001 under the 2nd ID which purportedly specializes in "jungle warfare". Its primary combat forces are the 68th IB and 76th IB.

The brigade is stationed in Barangay Pag-asa, Bansud, Oriental Mindoro. Its operations cover the two provinces on the island of Mindoro.

The brigade is currently led by Brig. Gen. Randolph Cabangbang who was appointed to the position in April. Cabangbang served as the commander of the Presidential Security Group of the Duterte regime. He was also the chief of the 2nd ID and second in command of Task Force Davao. Cabangbang is a member of the Philippine Military Academy "Sambisig" Class of 1991.

AB

State forces kill 3, illegally arrest 9 in 10 days

Successive cases of killings and arrests were recorded over the past two weeks, especially in Negros island.

Soldiers of the 62nd IB summarily killed Marvic Ebarle and Romy Catasio in Balunggay, Barangay Montilla, Moises Padilla, Negros Occidental on July 20. They were shot at while waiting for a ride. Ebarle was a wounded Red fighter recovering at Catasio's house in Inarawis, Barangay Quintin Remo.

In Quezon, Isagani Isita was killed by the police who claimed he "fought back" while being served an arrest warrant on July 30 in Sariaya. Isita was a former mass leader in Batangas who decided to join the people's army after relentless state state persecution.

Arrest and detention. Eight farmers were illegally arrested by the 15th IB in Tugas, Barangay Pinggot, Ilog, Negros Occidental on July 29. They are being implicated in the armed offensive of the New People's Army (NPA) in Ilog on January 28.

Before the incident, the 15th IB also detained brothers Jemson and Gaujel Villar for several hours in Camboguiot, Barangay Camindangan, Sipalay City, on July 22. They were released only after their wives' insistent demands.

The police arrested and detained Lodorico But-ay, 68, of Cunalom, Barangay Carabalan, Himamaylan City last July 28. The military accuses But-ay of being a people's militia commander and fabricated rape charges against him. He is a member of the Farmers Association of Barangay Carabalan.

Bombing. The 62nd IB shelled adjacent communities in Barangay Villegas, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental around 5 a.m. on August 5. In addition, police forces fired a

grenade launcher in Barangay Magsaysay on August 3.

Indiscriminate firing. The 31st IB fired at the house of Erwin Vista, chief of Barangay Alin, Donsol, Sorsogon last August 4. Soldiers retaliated after Vista raised complaints over the soldiers' encampment, littering and leaving human excrement in the village evacuation center's bathroom.

Forced surrender. Tonying Sulano, a farmer in Barangay Nagbagang, Santa Catalina, Negros Oriental, was paraded by the police as a "surrenderee" on July 30. The Sulano family has been repeatedly harassed by the police and military for several years.

Harassment. In Batangas, the 59th IB's combat operation in Barangay Putol, Tuy has caused distress among residents since August 3. Soldiers in the community are going from house to house looking for Jaysie Balugna, a prominent mass leader of Tuy.

In Negros Occidental, soldiers of the 79th IB ransacked the houses of farmers in Barangay Tamlang and Barangay Malasibog in Escalante City on July 18. Meanwhile, the 94th IB assaulted Betmar Pacheco and his pregnant wife on July 9 in Amaga, Barangay Buenavista, Himamaylan City.

Trumped-up charges. Five fabricated cases were filed by the 59th IB against Hailey Pecayo, spokesperson of the human rights group Tanggol Batangan, in connection with her alleged violation of the Anti-Terrorism Law. Pecayo has actively exposed the role of the 59th IB in the killing of 9-year-old Kylene Casao on July 18, 2022. AB



Lower oil prices! Workers and drivers protested in Quezon City on July 31 and August 1 to oppose the "bigtime" oil price increase that will push prices up by ₱3.50 per liter starting August 1. They also called on the regime to scrap the oil industry deregulation under which oil companies collude to raise prices.

Regularize health workers! Health workers of the All UP Workers Union-Manila/Philippine General Hospital (PGH) staged a "Friday Protest" in front of the PGH on July 28 to oppose what they consider the privatization of the hospital through the scheme of employing contract workers. This is the fourth Friday that they staged protests to oppose contractualization and demand the filling of vacant regular positions to resolve severe understaffing.

Against TOFI. More than 100 students of the University of the East under the Rise for Education gathered right in front of their campus in Manila on July 21 to oppose the looming 9.5% tuition increase for 2023-2024.

De la Cerna family walks free. The de la Cerna family was released on July 28 upon posting bail after more than three years of unjust detention. Karina de la Cerna, and her parents Albert and Ma. Pilar Dela Cerna, who are all farmer and farm worker organizers in Negros were released from prison.