



EDITORIAL:

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Marcos Jr.'s "openness to peace talks" remains hollow and unconvincing

The Marcos Jr. regime wants the Filipino people to believe that it is serious about pursuing peace. The regime now speaks of being "open to peace talks" with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. Yet these declarations ring hollow when measured against the administration's actual record. Peace cannot be built on empty rhetoric while military offensives intensify, political dissent is criminalized, peace consultants remain imprisoned or killed, and the state continues to wage an all-out campaign of repression against those it considers enemies.

The reality is that the Marcos Jr. regime has invested far more in war than in peace. Under the guise of counterinsurgency, billions of pesos continue to be funneled into the AFP while the NTF-Elcac sustains its campaign of red-tagging, harassment, surveillance, and political persecution against activists, trade unionists, church workers, journalists, and human rights defenders. In April 2026, 19 individuals were killed in a military operation in Toboso, Negros Occidental, an incident that immediately drew widespread questions regarding the circumstances of the killings and the Marcos government's outright disregard for international humanitarian law. Elsewhere, aerial bombardments and combat operations in rural and indigenous communities have displaced civilians, disrupted livelihoods, and placed entire communities in the crossfire of the government's relentless war campaign. These are not the actions of a government genuinely preparing the ground for meaningful negotiations.

More fundamentally, the administration's approach to the peace talks remain focused on seeking the surrender of the revolutionary movement. If there is to be a "mutual agenda," as Secretary Sarmiento suggests, then the Marcos regime must first abandon its obsession with capitulation. Genuine peace negotiations require recognition that there are two parties to a conflict seeking political solutions to political problems. There can be no meaningful negotiations when one side enters the process demanding that the other first surrender its arms and abandon its principles. The armed conflict persists because the conditions that gave rise to it persist.

The administration's credibility is further undermined by its continued imprisonment of NDFP peace consultants and hundreds of political prisoners. The detention of individuals who should be protected under existing agreements such as the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) signals that the Marcos regime remains committed to coercion and repression even while speaking the language of peace.

If Marcos Jr. genuinely wishes for the peace talks to resume, he must uphold the agreements forged through more than three decades of negotiations. Previous agreements constitute hard-won commitments that established the framework for negotiations. Ignoring them would reveal that the Marcos regime views peace talks not as a serious

process but as a mere public relations exercise.

The contradictions within the regime itself further expose the emptiness of its declarations. While Secretary Sarmiento speaks of openness, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro and other hardliners continue to promote the language of military victory and total defeat of the revolutionary movement.

The administration's claim of openness is further contradicted by its insistence on maintaining the terrorist designation of the CPP, NPA, and NDFP. One cannot seriously negotiate peace while simultaneously criminalizing the very parties with whom negotiations are supposed to take place.

Ultimately, the sincerity of the Marcos administration will be judged by whether it dismantles the barriers that it and previous administrations have erected against meaningful negotiations. It will be judged by whether it releases detained peace consultants and political prisoners, respects existing agreements, and abandons the bankrupt framework of demanding surrender before dialogue.

The Filipino people deserve a just and lasting peace. Genuine peace requires confronting the roots of armed conflict: landlessness, poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption, and foreign domination. Until the Marcos Jr. regime demonstrates a willingness to address these fundamental issues, its supposed openness to peace talks will remain hollow and unconvincing. 

There is no peace in "Pax Silica" project in the Philippines

An unusually broad resistance from all sectors is mounting in the wake of the 49th Asean Summit in Manila where the U.S. and Philippine governments plan to finalize "Pax Silica"—a sweeping economic security initiative to reshape the Luzon corridor.

In the quiet farmlands of New Clark City in Central Luzon, a storm of protests is gathering over a 4,000-acre plot for the Philippine Pax Silica Hub. Elsewhere in the country, farmers, factory workers, religious leaders, and students are uniting against what they view as a high-stakes geopolitical gamble. Opposition is intensifying across five key fronts:

- **Sovereignty Risks:** Protests erupted following disclosures that U.S. negotiators initially sought extraterritorial arrangements, including U.S. legal jurisdiction and diplomatic immunity inside the enclave. Progressive lawmakers from the Makabayan Bloc and legal scholars argue these concessions violate Philippine sovereignty—echoing former U.S. military bases in Clark and Subic. Skepticism over opaque bilateral talks persists despite assurances from the Bases Conversion

and Development Authority (BCDA) that local laws will apply.

- **Environmental Strain:** Environmental and scientific groups warn that AI data centers and semiconductor plants will impose massive power and water demands, exacerbating Central Luzon's utility shortages. Accelerating the extraction of critical minerals (nickel, copper, cobalt) also threatens widespread deforestation and watershed contamination.

- **Livelihood Displacement:** The peasant organization Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and fisherfolk group Pamalakaya warn that converting agricultural and coastal lands threatens food security while displacing rural communities. Trade unions add that the model reinforces raw mineral extraction while intellectual property profits remain concentrated abroad.

- **Geopolitical Vulnerability:** Peace advocates caution that integrating domestic infrastructure into U.S. supply chains targeting China converts national assets into strategic military targets during regional conflicts.

- **Labor Exploitation:** Critics oppose the selection of Foxconn (Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., Ltd.) as anchor investor. The tech giant—known for assembling

products for Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, and Sony—faces severe criticism for extreme overwork (80–100 overtime hours monthly), restricted basic rights, and underpaid student “internships.”

- Resistance has expanded rapidly beyond Metro Manila across the archipelago. The League of Filipino Students (LFS) and Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) staged demonstrations at UP Diliman, while petitions by ILPS Philippines and regional student groups gathered over 500,000 signatures demanding a project halt.

Catholic institutions—including Caritas Philippines (led by Bishop Gerardo Alminaza), CBCP President Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David, and the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP)—have issued strong denunciations.

NDFP International Office representative Marian Espinosa criticized Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr.'s defense of the project, stating: “By declaring that profits should flow to the AFP, Teodoro has confirmed what many already knew—Pax Silica is not meant to generate jobs for Filipinos as Marcos Jr. promoted, but is instead a war chest for militarization.” 

People's war intensifies amidst repression

The people's war intensifies as Marcos Jr.'s regime suppresses the people in Eastern Visayas, Negros, Mindoro and other places in the Philippines. Encounters between the armed forces of the regime and the New People's Army (NPA) and the latter's purposeful tactical offensives have become more frequent. It has been a full year since Marcos Jr declared in his 2025 state of the nation address that “there are no more guerilla groups” but military actions by the NPA have been reported all over the country.

The NPA's Efren Martires Command (NPA-EMC) reported that three fascist troops have been killed in its tactical offensives in the past months in Northern and Western Samar. On July 19, troops of the AFP's 19th Infantry Battalion were in an ambush formation in Silvino Lobos, Northern Samar, when a lone Red fighter from the Rodante Urtal Command of the NPA-EMC spotted them and fired first, killing one soldier, and safely returned to his unit.

On June 17, a team of the NPA's Arnulfo Ortiz Command was also able to fire first when it encountered 15 elements of the 19th IB in Matuguinao, Western Samar, killing two of the latter.

This is in the midst of the regime's continued oppression of the people in these areas. Residents of San Jose de Buan, Samar, complained that a certain Alhier Cabasa led troops under the AFP's 46th IB in destroying their crops and stealing their produce.

A farmer foraging for edible plants in Las Navas, Northern Samar, was shot by soldiers of the AFP 43rd IB and nearly died. This battalion has had several similar shootings in this town in recent months.

Ka Tirado Dagohoy, spokesman of the NPA-Western Samar condemned the military's behavior as gross violations of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRI-HL).

To the west of Samar, in Negros Oriental, NPA-Central Visayas fighters fired first on a 7-man 62nd IB team, just five

meters away, on the afternoon of July 1 in Hinakpan, Guihulngan City, killing one and wounding three others. This 62nd IB team was a blocking force for an encirclement maneuver by a larger 62nd IB force against the NPA unit.

Meanwhile, the local revolutionary people's court found Jerome Ceballos guilty of a series of crimes against the revolution and the people of Negros. The revolutionary court's investigation found that he was an intelligence agent of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP) involved in the massacre of 10 NPAs and 9 civilians on April 19 in Salamanca, Toboso. Ceballos by the 79th IB. He was also responsible for the kidnapping, torture, and killing by the military and police of Nonoy Ponteras, a National Democratic Front-Negros official, and staff member Marisa Pobresa in March 2025. He was armed with a .45 calibre gun.

In the island of Mindoro, the Lucio de Guzman Command NPA Mindoro pays tribute to the heroic resistance of an NPA Mindoro unit against the combined fascist troops of the 76th IB and the 5th Scout Ranger Battalion in five consecutive clashes in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro on July 29, 2026. The LDGC-NPA Mindoro bestows the highest honor on Ella May “Ka Andeng/Aira” Valdehueza, Ric “Ka Balawoy/Songling” Solangon and “Ka Julia”. Even if saddened by the loss of the three good children of the people, the suffering peasants and the entire Naujaneño masses vow to continue the struggle for land and other human rights.

No matter how much the NTF-ELCAC and the 203rd IB-de-PNP MIMAROPA insist on declaring the town of Naujan and other towns in Central Eastern Mindoro “insurgency-free”, it cannot ignore the fact that the struggle of the people of Naujuan and Mindoro for land, rights, true freedom and democracy has not disappeared and continues. During the year 2025, NPA units bravely resisted the attacks of the 203rd Bde, in the battles of Pola on February 19, the battles of Baco on August 9 and 12. Meanwhile, a tactical offensive was also launched in the PNP-Mimaropa fight in the town of Victoria in July. 

NDFP, CPP condemn imperialist plunder in the Philippines' "last frontier"



image: philippinerevolution.nu

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)-Palawan and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) strongly criticized the Marcos Jr regime for its claims of progress in the province of Palawan in its recent state of the nation address (SONA). The revolutionary groups also condemned US imperialism's and its local lackeys' plunder of Palawan's nickel and other resources and making use of Palawan as a launch pad for aggressive and provocative operations in the South China Sea.

The NDFP-Palawan accused the regime of openly selling Palawan's natural resources to foreign mining corporations, such as Ipilan Nickel, Coral Bay Nickel, and Rio Tuba Nickel through the CREATE Law and by extending land leases up to 99 years resulting in severe land reconcentration and the grabbing of ancestral domains from the Molbog and Cagayanen Indigenous peoples on Bug-suk Island in favor of San Miguel Corp. and the Cojuangco family.

Palawan province holds one of the richest deposits of nickel needed for the production of batteries for electric vehicles, semiconductors and other advanced technologies that imperialist countries are fiercely jostling over. Most mining on the island is focused on nickel extraction. The Palaweno masses have long opposed destructive mining in Palawan, regarded as the Philippines' "last ecological frontier."

NDFP-Palawan described the regime's reported achievements as "hollow and a bane to the people", citing diesel prices of more than P140 per liter, rising rice prices and a provincial minimum wage of P455 as signs that many Palawenos continue to struggle with the cost of living. Inflation on the island accelerated by 5.5%, highlighted by a 13.6% surge in rice prices. It also condemned the province's failed power service, where Palawan Electric Cooperative (Paleco) lines reached only 59% of the area, while Busuanga Island Electric Cooperative Inc. (Bisleco) still charges the highest in the country at P24.92/kWh. As blackouts persist, Prime Energy continues to exploit the

Malampaya natural gas field for private business rather than for the benefit of the local population.

The NDFP-Palawan also condemned the US-Marcos regime of using the West Philippine Sea issue to advance U.S. interests and plans against China. "While the regime constantly hype China's military presence in the WPS, it allows US warships and aircraft carriers to navigate the area and expand EDCA sites in southern Palawan and Ulugan Bay," NDF-Palawan stated. It warned that if war breaks out between the two imperialist countries, Palawan will be used as the launching pad and the Palawenos will become "cannon fodder."

Earlier, the CPP urged resistance against US 'imperialist war' and plunder in Philippines' 'last frontier' amidst the US' announcement in July that it will rehabilitate Buliluyan Port, a civilian port in Bataraza, Palawan, to serve as an additional naval base on the island. The CPP said that though the rehabilitation is being framed as an upgrade for the Philippine Coast Guard, the US has long used the port and nearby coastlines for amphibious exercises under the Balikatan and Kamandag joint military drills.

"The people must resist the US' use of Palawan as a launch pad for its aggressive and provocative operations in the South China Sea and reject heavy presence of its troops on the island," said Marco Valbuena, chief information officer of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in a statement last August 1. Buliluyan Port adds to the US bases and facilities on the island, including two EDCA sites—Antonio Bautista Air Base in Puerto Princesa, and the 300-hectare island of Balabac.

The provincial local government last year passed an ordinance imposing a 50-year moratorium on new mining operations on the island. The NDF-Palawan welcomed the move, calling the ordinance "a major blow to imperialism and its plunder of the nation's wealth, as well as to the US-Marcos Jr regime that bows and submits to the class interests of the imperialists and foreign mining corporations." 

Workers condemn suspension of P85 Metro Manila wage hike

The already paltry P85 daily wage increase for workers in the National Capital Region (NCR) was effectively rolled back after a Pasig City court issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) halting its implementation, drawing strong condemnation from workers' groups.

On July 30, the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 152 issued the TRO against NCR Wage Order No. 27, favoring a petition filed by two construction companies. The decision came after officials of the Marcos administration had touted the wage increase as "historic."

"It's already just a pittance compared to what they are demanding, and now even that is being rolled back," Kabataan party-list Rep. Renee Co said.

ACT party-list Rep. Antonio Tinio said the suspension further aggravated workers' hardships and highlighted the need for a genuine legislative wage increase.

Workers' groups protested outside the Pasig RTC on August 3, denouncing the court action. They also held a separate protest at the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) office in Intramuros, Manila, condemning what they described as the department's inaction and

empty promises. Workers noted that this was the first time a wage increase mandated by a regional wage board had been challenged in court, raising fears that other companies could resort to similar legal actions to block future wage increases.

The controversy has intensified broader labor mobilizations across the country. Workers are demanding a living wage, which stood at P1,301 per day nationwide in July.

In Laguna, more than 800 workers of San Miguel Integrated Logistics Services Inc. went on strike against mass dismissals. In Cavite, workers of YYD System Interiors Inc. protested job losses and the non-remittance of mandatory benefits. Workers in Zambales demanded substantial wage increases and additional benefits, while in Caraga, union leaders at Adnama Mining Resources Inc. reported harassment allegedly involving soldiers.

For workers, the P85 increase is not only insufficient—it is now being denied altogether. They maintain that only sustained collective action can win meaningful wage increases, benefits, and decent working conditions. 



image: philippinerevolution.nu