



EDITORIAL

## End Duterte's terror in Negros & across the country

**N**egros is drenched in blood. Once again, the Duterte monster spewed a thousand bullets against the defenseless.

His death squads in the island mounted another round of killings of ordinary people over the past month. No less than 16 were killed, including a former mayor, an elected council, a school principal and other officers in the civil bureaucracy. The killing of ordinary civilians is also relentless. Most of them were baselessly accused of supporting the revolutionary movement.

Doubtlessly, the monster Duterte is behind these killings. He was so incensed over the annihilation of his four armed men last July 18 in an ambush by the New People's Army (NPA) last July 18 in Ayungon, Negros Oriental. Because of this, he incited his minions to unleash even worse fascist terror and

directed his ire against unarmed civilians.

Since the Sagay massacre in October 2018, Negros has suffered four rounds of concentrated violent attacks by the Duterte regime. Patterned after simultaneous attacks and killings by police and military in communities under the so-called Oplan Sauron, armed agents of the AFP and PNP carried out the killings one after another. The evil aim is to terrorize the people of Negros and cripple their resistance to the fascist regime.

Landlessness in the island of Negros is one of the worst in the entire country. Here, the fraudulence of the "land reform" program of the reactionary state is starkly

*"End..." continued on page 2*

## AFP & PNP incurs 43 casualties in Negros

FOUR POLICE OFFICERS, disguised as employees of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, were ambushed by Red fighters at Sitio Yamot, Barangay Mabato, Ayungon, Negros Oriental on July 18. The policemen were killed in action, contrary to Duterte's claim that the four were tortured. Four 9mm. pistols, nine magazines and ammunition were confiscated from them.

On June 22, the NPA blasted an explosive against troopers of the 704th Regional Mobile Force Battalion at Sitio Cambugtong, Manjuyod, Negros Oriental. More than 20 police officers were killed while two others were wounded. Earlier, the people's army sniped sol-

*"AFP..." continued on page 3*

clear. Negros continues to be ruled by big hacienderos who continue to enrich themselves with thousands of hectares of sugar land. At the same time, big mining companies covet the island's rich mineral resources.

The masses of peasants and farmworkers in Negros sugarcane fields suffer severe oppression and exploitation. They go hungry everyday. Their clamor for social justice and land reform as solution to their poverty resounds. The armed revolution in Negros continues to gain strength because of the deep and wide support of the toiling masses who aspire to put an end to the century-old oppressive system.

Big landlords fund soldiers and police, as well as paramilitary "death squads" in Negros. In the interests of the hacienderos, the US-Duterte regime employs its armed agents to silence the peasant masses and suppress their struggles. Over the past months, peasant resistance in Negros has

been met with massacres, killings, arrests and incarcerations.

Through Duterte's October 2018 Memorandum Order No. 32, he claimed additional powers to impose military and police rule in the name of "suppressing lawless violence." Negros was among those placed under de facto martial law. After successive killings in July, he deployed an additional 300 troops of the Special Action Force in the island. This will tighten the armed grip and suppression against the people of the island.

The terror that reigns over Negros is the same that blankets the countryside across the country. The situation is worse in the Mindanao provinces where more than two years of martial law has reigned. In addition to Negros, Bicol and Samar are also under de facto martial law.

In the countryside and hinterlands across the country, the military rules and there are no laws higher than its command. Under the National Task Force (NTF) and its "counterinsurgency" doctrine,

the entire bureaucracy of the Duterte government is under direct and indirect military control. All civil agencies are weaponized for the war of suppression.

Across the country, killings and military abuses of power are relentless. State violence is employed to silence the clamor for genuine land reform and suppress resistance against entry of foreign mining companies, plantations and infrastructure projects under the regime's "Build, Build, Build" program. Fascism is the other face of the Dutertes' bureaucrat capitalist plunder.

Though brutal and relentless, one must not think that the Duterte monster is invincible. Its cruelty is a sign not of strength, but of weakness and inability to get the ruled to voluntarily and peaceably concede to its evil reign.

The foundations of its rule is tattered in crisis. Behind its barbarity and factitious fearlessness, Duterte is deeply frightened at how the Filipino people will collectively rise up to bring him down from power and make him account for all his crimes and corruption.

The people of Negros and the entire Filipino people will continue to rise up. They clamor for an end to Duterte's brutal reign. They continue to advance along the path of resistance. They must firmly unite and further strengthen their organizations as their weapons to assert their rights and aspiration for justice. They must raise everyone's consciousness and strengthen their determination and courage to fight.

The Party and all revolutionary forces are being strengthened. They are at the core and vanguard of the struggle of the entire people. The Party leads the NPA to pound Duterte and shatter his fascist fangs. The Party calls on the entire people to struggle and end all his infamy and advance the revolutionary struggle to establish a new order in the country. **AB**



Vol. L No. 15 | August 7, 2019

Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English.

Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items.

Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations

for improving our newspaper.



[instagram.com/progressiveviews](https://www.instagram.com/progressiveviews)



[@prwc\\_info](https://twitter.com/prwc_info)



[cppinformationbureau@gmail.com](mailto:cppinformationbureau@gmail.com)

## Contents

<b>Editorial: End Duterte's terror in Negros &amp; across the country</b>	1
AFP, PNP incurs 43 casualties in Negros	1
Negros bloodbath	3
PH, dangerous for environmental activists	3
Lt. Gen. Noel Clement, butcher	4
State forces gun down peasant	5
Victorious strike in Monde	5
NLUA, a neoliberal scheme	6
Pro-peasant bills	7
Bureaucrat-capitalist plunder of the Villars	7
SONA protests	8
Victories vs. Kentex and OceanaGold	8
Dwindling resources in the SCS	9
Bogus Boracay land reform	9
Dethroning the king of the road	10
Duterte vetoes SOT	10

Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines

# Negros bloodbath

In the evening of July 25, several armed men forcibly entered the hut of the Ocampo family in Barangay San Jose, Sta. Catalina, Negros Oriental. They gunned down Marjon, a one-year old baby, and his father, Marlon Ocampo, who they accused as a supporter of the New People's Army (NPA). Marlon's wife sustained a gunshot wound. Their two other children witnessed the shooting. The Ocampos were the last among the 87 victims of extrajudicial killings in Negros since the monster Duterte sat in power.

In Guihulngan, Atty. Anthony Trinidad was also gunned down on July 23. He was among the lawyers who were maliciously linked to the revolutionary movement by the group Kawsa Guihulnganon Batok Komunista. The said group is funded by and operates as a death squad of the Philippine National Police. Wounded during the incident were his wife, Novie Marie, and another pedicab driver. On July 25, siblings Arthur Bayawa, principal of Guihulngan Science High School, and Ardale Bayawa, head of the Guihulngan City Division of the Department of Education, were murdered in Barangay Hibaiyo. Killed on the same day was Romeo Alipan, a farmer and captain of Barangay Buenavista. The killings were made to appear as NPA killings even through the victims were earlier tagged by the AFP as supporters or members of the NPA.

Former Ayungon Mayor Edcel Enardecido and his cousin Leo Enardecido were also killed on July 27. Earlier, Sunny Caldera, captain of

Barangay Mabato, also died in the said town, after purportedly ingesting pesticide on July 25. Another farmer, Reden Eleuterio, was also shot in Barangay Tampocon II. These attacks were the cowardly retaliation of the Duterte regime against the legitimate ambush of Red fighters against four policemen in Ayungon on July 18.

On July 26, Federico Sabejon was killed in Barangay 3, Siaton. In Canlaon City, Ernesto Posadas, captain of Barangay Panubigan, and city councilor Ramon Jalandoni were also murdered. Barangay Bucalan watchman Andanacio Rosalita was gunned down by Duterte's death squad at the Oval Public Market in an adjacent barangay on July 28.

Two farmers, Wenny Alegre and Felimino Janayan, president of the United Calango Farmers Association in Zamboanguita, Negros Oriental were also gunned down on July 24. The perpetrators disguised as Red fighters to vilify the revolutionary movement. AB

"AFP...", from page 1

diers of the 94th IB at Sitio Bulo. The operation resulted in three enemy casualties.

On July 2, at 4:30 a.m., Red fighters foiled an attempted attack of the 11th IB against an NPA unit at Sitio Small Samac, Barangay Nalunhdan in Bindoy town. Five soldiers were killed while six others were wounded.

**Sorsogon.** The NPA-Sorsogon also conducted a demolition operation against troopers of the PNP Special Action Force (SAF) in Barangay Tulatula Sur, Magallanes on July 30, at 3 p.m. Ten SAF troopers were killed in

action.

**Agusan del Norte.** The NPA also blasted an explosive against 23rd IB troopers at Sitio Hinandayan, Barangay Camagong, Nasipit on July 12, at 9:40 a.m. Five soldiers were reported killed while five others were wounded.

**Quezon.** Three harass operations were successively mounted by the NPA-Quezon against joint forces of the 80th IB and PNP Regional Mobile Force Battalion at Sitio Lagmak, Pagsangahan, Gen. Nakar on July 28-30. A soldier was killed while two others were wounded. AB

## PH, most dangerous place for environmental activists

THE INTERNATIONAL community turned the spotlight on the Philippines after being listed as the most dangerous place for environmental activists, and fourth for civilians.

A report published on July 30 by the Global Witness, an London-based independent group, exposed that the Philippines has replaced Brazil as the most murderous country for environmental activists. The report indicates that 30 defenders were killed last year, following 48 in 2017, which was the highest ever recorded in Asia. A third of the victims were from Mindanao where Duterte plans to allocate 1.6 million hectares of land to plantations, majority of which are Lumad ancestral lands. Half of the killings were related to agribusiness.

Last June, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Project (Acled), a US-based group, also listed the Philippines as the fourth most dangerous place for civilians. A third of the victims were killed under the guise of Duterte's "war against drugs." Members of political parties, activists, farmers, lawyers and judges are also targeted by killings. The group exposed that Duterte's policy has resulted in direct attacks against and killing of 490 civilians this 2019.

Around 450 were directly murdered by state forces. Majority were killed in Central Luzon (23%), Calabarzon (22%) and the National Capital Region (10%). AB

# Lt. Gen. Noel Clement, a butcher in Palparan's shadow

The recent mass killing in Negros is a continuation of the horrific Oplan Sauron which sowed terror in the island since December 2018. Since its implementation, more than 40 civilians have fallen victim to extrajudicial killings. Aside from those killed, many civilians were also illegally arrested and slapped with trumped-up charges.

Oplan Sauron's implementation is headed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines Central Command (AFP Centcom) under the command of Lt. Gen. Noel Clement. Clement is notorious for being one of the junior officers trained in the past by Jovito Palparan in committing crimes under Oplan Bantay Laya 1 and 2. Whenever Palparan sowed terror, Clement has always been in his shadow. Like his idol, Clement is known for tagging those who criticize the reactionary government as communists. He zealously carried out orders of murder and other human rights violations.

Clement was under the 204th Brigade when human rights advocates Eden Marcellana and Eddie Gumanoy were abducted by the said military command in Mindoro Oriental in 2003. Palparan was the commander of the said brigade.

Upon Palparan's transfer to the 7th ID in Central Luzon in 2005, he and Clement sowed violence in the region. From January to February 2006, 25 individuals fell victims to murder, abduction, torture, physical abuse, threats, massacre, interrogation and illegal detention. Clement was the commander of the 56th IB, the most abusive military unit in the region. He is also one of the masterminds and implementors of the abduction of activist Jonas Burgos in 2007.

Meanwhile, operations commanded by Clement in Mindanao resulted in widespread devasta-

tion. As commander of the 602nd Brigade from 2015-2016, Clement became notorious to Moro residents in North Cotabato for shelling their communities.

A few days after Duterte's declaration of martial law in Mindanao last May 2017, the AFP assigned Clement to head the 10th ID. Its area of operations covers the entire Davao region, and its boundaries in the provinces of Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Sur and Bukidnon. Clement and his troops ravaged the area. In a span of 19 months, up to 50 civilians were killed by Clement's men, including two minors. Thousands were also forced to evacuate due to military shellings and ravaging of communities.

Among Clement's vicious crimes as 10th ID commander was the massacre of seven Lumads last December 3, 2017 in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. Two others were wounded in the incident. Multiple counts of murder were filed against Clement, together with Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc of the 33rd IB and Lt. Col. Benjamin Leander of the 27th IB. Soldiers under Clement's command were also the perpetrators in the abduction, torture and attempted burning of two youth miners last November 2017 in Compostela Valley.

## Command over Centcom

Clement was transferred from the 10th ID to the Centcom in November 2018. Centcom's operations cover the whole of Visayas. Under its command are two Army

divisions (8th ID in Eastern Visayas and 3rd ID in Central and Western Visayas), the 2nd Tactical Operations Wing of the Air Force, and the whole naval forces in the Visayas.

In less than a month after being transferred to the Centcom, Clement promptly implemented Oplan Sauron in Negros in line with Rodrigo Duterte's Memorandum Order No. 32. Centcom's all-out war is currently aimed at the island, where five combat battalions are deployed, apart from forces of the Philippine National Police.

Aside from ravaging Central Visayas, killings and destruction of communities in Eastern Visayas are Clement's orders. In Samar island, murders of civilians intensified since March 2019. At the onset of the year, 545 villages were reported to be militarized, 250 of which were occupied by soldiers. More than 300 families have been displaced from their residences due to the occupation of their communities by 8th ID troopers.

Meanwhile in Western Visayas, Centcom's operations is marked with psywar. In March, the 61st IB in Panay successively circulated news of fake encounters in order to cover up its cases of illegal arrests of farmers and Tumanduk minorities. Aside from this, a fake surrender of a supposed minor Red fighter was publicized.

Clement likewise submitted his troops in the Centcom to become pawns for the US military. In the recently held Pacific Partnership last March, the US brought its puppet and allied troops from the Indo-Pacific region to Visayas to train them under its command. **AB**

# State forces gun down peasant activist

Security forces of the Duterte regime fired shots at a couple who are members of a peasant organization, while inside their store at Sitio Kasiwaan, Barangay Halapitan, San Fernando, Bukidnon last August 2. Guillermo Casas died on the spot while his wife Jocelyn was wounded.

Guillermo is the 10th victim of extrajudicial killing in Bukidnon this year.

On the same day, Ernesto Estrella was gunned down in Antipas, North Cotabato. Estrella was a former pastor of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

Last July 25, Misba Masla, 60, was killed in an aerial bombing by the AFP at Sitio Butilin, Kabalasan, Pikit, North Cotabato. The 6th IB made it appear, through Maj. Gen. Diosdado Carreon, commander of the AFP-Joint Task Force Central, that a bomb exploded inside the house of the Maslas and resulted to his death. However, even the AFP, through Brig. Gen. Alfredo Rosario, commander of the 603rd IBde, admitted that the Masla residence was hit when the AFP bombed the place at 3 a.m. The AFP reasoned out that they were pursuing a group of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) that, according to their intelligence report, was there.

The AFP accused Misba's husband, Ali Masla, 62, of being a member of the BIFF. Ali and his grandson Edwid Masla were wounded during the bombing. The BIFF belied the accusation of their presence in the area during that time. BIFF spokesperson Abu Misri Mama condemned the killing. The AFP's pronouncement of protecting the civilians is a big lie because they are the ones who bombed the residence of the elderly couple, he said.

Last August 6, Brandon Lee, a member of the Ifugao Peasant Movement (IPM) and a writer of Northern Dispatch was shot in Lagawe, Ifugao. As of present, Lee re-

mains unconscious. IPM actively opposes the construction of the Chico River dam which will reclaim their ancestral lands.

## Repression against activists and peasants

The widespread intimidation of the regime against activists and peasants continues unabated. In Quezon, a unit of the 2nd IB conducted an intelligence operation in Barangay 1, Lucena City last July 30 under the the guise of a survey for the 4Ps program and searching for a place to rent.

Troops of the 95th IB twice called for a meeting in Barangay Sta. Isabel Sur, Isabela last August 3 wherein they accused members of Dagami, a local peasant organization, of being supporters of the NPA. The residents voluntarily left the first meeting and asserted their democratic right. They also opposed the AFP's offer to parade the residents as NPA surrenderees in exchange for money.

In Cebu, police forces attempted to intimidate members of the local chapter of Kabataan Partylist last July 27. In Bukidnon, the 1st Special Forces Battalion threatened and forced Kristin Lim, a former station managing director of Radyo Lumad, to surrender in Dumilag, Manolo Fortich last August 3.

Meanwhile, two members of KASAMA-TK were arrested by the 76th IB last July 27 in Sablayan-Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro. The victims were identified as Nadeline Fabon and Reynaldo Malaborbor. They were assisting peasants who were severely affected by drought in the community. AB

## Victorious strike in Monde

NINE HOURS AFTER mounting their strike on August 6, contractual workers of the Monde Nissin Labor Association (MNLA-LIGA) was able to compel the management of Monde Nissin Corp. to negotiate with them regarding their demand for regularization. The strike was conducted as a reaction to the termination of contract of nine workers last week. In sum, 111 workers have been dismissed by the company since July 2018.

During the negotiation, the management agreed to reinstate the terminated workers. Another round of negotiation was also scheduled. The workers, majority of whom have worked in the company as contractuales for 13 years, considered this as a big victory.

Monde Nissin is a food manufacturing company and is known for its biscuits (SkyFlakes and Fita) and noodles (Lucky Me!). Since 2000, the company has been consistently included in the top 50 corporations in the Philippines. It is owned by bourgeois compardor Betty Ang who reported a P14.17-billion net worth in 2018.

On the same day, Super 8 workers also mounted their strike in Pasig City after its termination of 200 contractual workers.

STUDENTS OF THE Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) in Sta. Mesa, Manila successfully junked the dress code policy after a seven-hour protest. They said that protests will continue to oppose plans to implement repressive policies such as the mandatory random drug-testing and harassment against organizations, student councils and publications. AB

# National Land Use Act, a neoliberal scheme

For the third time, Rodrigo Duterte has again identified the National Land Use Act (NLUA) as a priority bill of his regime in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 22.

Duterte insisted that this measure has to be immediately passed by Congress before the end of 2019 to purportedly lay down a national and comprehensive land use plan that will "meet the demands of foreign investors."

The NLUA primarily aims to hasten the process of massive conversion of agricultural and ancestral lands into residential, commercial and industrial uses to immediately facilitate wholesale of these to foreign investors and their bourgeois comprador counterparts. This will be used to evict farmers and indigenous peoples from lands that are targeted for the construction of giant infrastructures under the "Build, Build, Build" program. The regime has initially implemented this through the issuance of several administrative orders by the Department of Agrarian Reform last February.

The NLUA will establish the National Land Use Commission (NLUC) which will administer the reclassification and conversion of land resources across the country and drafting of a national plan every ten years based on the demands of capitalists. The agency will classify only which lands can be cultivated and on the other hand be used for infrastructures and settlements. The NLUC will also prohibit farming in public lands that will be classified as forestlands, even those already being cultivated by small farmers. This will systematize schemes such as the National Greening Program which are being used to evict small kaingineros from their farms that are converted into vast planta-



ons of commercial timber.

The NLUA has been languishing in Congress for more than two decades already. It was first pushed for by the Corazon Aquino regime along with other neoliberal reforms dictated by the World Bank. In the past, this push was undertaken as a conditionality in exchange for billions of loans. The bill has been successively forwarded and even identified as a key legislative measure by succeeding regimes; however, it is yet to be enacted.

These past few years, the American Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the USAID, used the The Arangkada Philippines Project to aggressively compel the Aquino and Duterte regimes to continue lobbying for the passage of the bill in Congress. The Duterte regime manifested utter subservience when it had its Congress pass on third reading the said bill just before it ended its session on June 3.

The bill has already been referred to the Senate and is set to be discussed in the coming months under its committee on environment and natural resources which is chaired by Sen. Cynthia Villar.

Despite being an ally of Duterte, she is strongly opposing the enactment of the NLUA as this will remove from local governments the authority to reclassify land resources within their territories and implement a local land use plan. When the NLUA is enacted, the said powers will be granted to the NLUC which is directly under the national government.

The Villars have obviously benefitted from the current land use policy especially that it enables them to easily bribe local government officials to have their real estate businesses passed. (*Read related article on page 7.*)

Amid the threat of once again being stalled, the regime implemented the Joint Department of Agrarian Reform-Department of Justice Order 75 on May 31 which will institutionalize Duterte's land use program even if the NLUA has not yet been ratified.

Conservative government estimates published last January indicate that the total agricultural land area in the country already shrank by 25% from 9.7 million hectares in 1980 to 7.3 million in 2012, primarily due to massive use conversion and widespread landgrabbing across the country.

AB

# Pro-peasant bills

The Duterte regime is relentlessly pushing for the liberalization of the agricultural sector, including agricultural lands, to allow foreign ownership and plunder. Despite this, progressive congress representatives continue to lobby for reforms that will benefit peasants.

These reforms are linked to the longstanding struggles waged by peasant organizations. These are also part of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) which was drafted in 2016 during peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

Agrarian reforms become increasingly significant amid all-out attacks against the sector—from the liberalization of rice to the relentless killings of peasants struggling for their right to land.

Progressive parties under the Makabayan bloc refiled the Genuine Agrarian Reform bill (GARB) at the House of Representatives. This bill lays down a comprehensive framework for genuine land reform. It aims to dismantle land monopolies and implement a free, fair and just land distri-

bution policy within five years. It will cover all private agricultural lands, agribusiness plantations, those that have been tilled by farmers but were taken away by the government, landlords or foreign institutions, and other public agricultural lands.

GARB also includes comprehensive support for peasants including the provision of sufficient subsidies for their production. This will also encourage farmers to organize or join cooperatives to enhance their production. This will provide a mechanism against grabbing of farmer beneficiaries' lands.

At present, farmers asserting their right to land, including those awarded with Certificate of Land Ownership, are gravely repressed. Many lose their lands for failing to pay high amortization dues. In relation to this, a bill was filed to write off these dues to and award these lands to them.



The Makabayan bloc also filed the Rice Industry Development Bill. It declared that rice farmers who are tilling farmlands shall not be subjected to land rent that is more than 10% of the average net harvest per hectare in the last three consecutive years.

Meanwhile, other representatives filed bills to ensure full insurance for beneficiaries of the bogus Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program and to construct a communal irrigation, half of which will be paid by farmer beneficiaries in a certain span of time.

They also pushed for the construction of warehouses and the

*"Bills..." continued on page 8*

## Bureaucrat-capitalist plunder of the Villar family

Couple Manny and Cynthia Villar are the owners of Vista Land & Lifescapes which are notorious for landgrabbing and converting thousands of hectares of farmlands into subdivisions (Camella Homes, Lumina Homes) and huge malls (Starmalls and Vista Malls). They are the head of the Villar dynasty in Las Piñas and both became members of the House of Representatives. Manny Villar served as senator from 2001 to 2013, and was succeeded by his wife who up to now is a member of the Senate.

In 2008, Cynthia Villar was accused of grabbing peasant lands in Norzagaray, Bulacan. Manny Villar was also accused of plunder in 2010 after proposing to realign the C-5 Extension Project to benefit his businesses. It was also exposed that irrigated farmlands were converted by the Villars into subdivisions in Pavia, Iloilo City (2010) and Plaridel Bulacan (2014).

The Villar family is a known

supporter of Duterte. Manny Villar's political party, Nacionalista, is also allied with Duterte's PDP-Laban.

Under Duterte, Manny Villar's wealth drastically rose from US\$1.5 billion (P75.4 billion) in March 2017 to US\$5.5 billion (Php288.3 billion) this March 2019. From being the 12th, he is now the richest individual in the country. Meanwhile, Cynthia Villar reported a net worth

of P3.7 billion and was considered the richest senator, while their son, Mark Villar, secretary of the the Department of Public Work and Highways, reported P1.4 billion and is considered as Duterte's richest cabinet official.

The Villar family has obviously benefitted from the regime's infrastructure program. Their company was the last to pass an application for the construction of a casino before Duterte imposed has issued a moratorium on new casinos on January 2018. Aside from the 1,000-hectare casino and resort which is being constructed in Dasmariñas, Cavite, the Villars are also planning to push for a similar infrastructure project in Las Piñas.

AB

# United People's SONA against the national traitor

Rodrigo Duterte's fourth State of the Nation Address (SONA) was met with protests in various urban centers across the country. These were participated in by more than 50,000 individuals who condemned Duterte's utter treachery. They also called for his ouster for surrendering to China the rights of Filipinos to the West Philippine Sea. They criticized his fascism and for implementing anti-people policies which further impoverished the Filipino people.

In the national capital, organizers reported that more than 40,000 marched along the Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City to tell Duterte, the national traitor, that the "Philippines is ours!" They demanded the eviction of China from Philippine territorial waters. The protest was led by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and was participated in by activists from various organizations carrying their respective sectoral calls.

**Luzon.** More than 600 farmers, fisherfolks, and indigenous peoples protested at the Aurora Park in Laoag City to criticize continuing military harassment against their ranks, surge in the prices of commodities due to the implementation of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN), and the absence of sectoral subsidies. In Baguio City, more than 200 participated in a forum on Duterte's SONA which was organized by the Tongtongan Ti Umi-li-Cordillera Peoples Alliance at the Cathedral of the Resurrection, Magaysay Avenue.

More than 500 protested at the Peñaranda Park, Legazpi City to condemn widespread extrajudicial killings in the region. Activists also protested in Naga, Sorsogon and Masbate to call for Duterte's ouster and criticize his subservience to China.

**Visayas.** In Panay island, protest actions were mounted in four urban centers and were participated in by more than 4,000 activists. More than 3,000 protested at the public park of Bacolod City carrying calls to end the perpetration of arbitrary killings and massacres against the people of Negros. Around 400 activists protested in Bohol to condemn the continuing harassment and killing of farmers and other human rights violations. Bayan-Central Visayas also spearheaded a march of 300 activists from Fuente Osmeña Circle to Colon Street in Cebu City.

**Mindanao.** Activists and Lumads protested in Cagayan de Oro and Davao City carrying calls to end Mindanao martial law. They also criticized the regime's closure of Lumad schools. Meanwhile, Marawi residents conducted their version of the SONA which they dubbed the "State of Marawi Bakwit (Sombak) at the Mindanao State University.

**Overseas.** The Malaya Movement led the protest of more than 100 individuals in front of the Philippine Consulate General in New York City. Similar protest actions were mounted by Filipino migrants in the urban centers of Australia, Canada, France, Hongkong, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and United Kingdom. AB

"Bills...", from page 7

provision of milling facilities for every rice-producing municipality and city. This will also support all transportation requirements. The loan will be payed at a set amount for 25 years.

In the Senate, Sen. Ralph Recto refiled a bill mandating the placement of a "timbangang ng bayan" (weighing scale) in all markets to deter the proliferation of defective weights. He also pushed for the construction of farm-to-market roads across the country.

## Victories against Kentex and OceanaGold

AFTER MORE THAN four years of struggle, Kentex workers achieved a victory last July 26. The Supreme Court ordered the Kentex Manufacturing Corp. to pay 57 workers who survived the fire that razed the slipper factory on May 13, 2015 which claimed the lives of 72 other workers.

The order reversed the Court of Appeals verdict which absolved Kentex from the said obligation to its workers. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)-National Capital Region was the first to order the company in 2015 to pay the workers the said amount after discovering that they only received a measly P202.50-daily wage.

Meanwhile, environmental groups called the decision issued by the Regional Trial Court of Nueva Vizcaya on July 27 "a victory for the people." The court denied the petition for injunction filed by OceanaGold against the residents' barricade which paralyzed its operations. (*For more details, read Ang Bayan, July 21, 2019.*)

The issue was issued on the eve of a national solidarity mission organized by environmental activists led by the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment that sought to probe the continuing operation of the company even if its contract has already expired on June 20. AB



# Dwindling resources in the SCS

Filipino fisherfolk lose a lot due to massive Chinese poaching of fishes in Philippine territorial waters. In the past six decades, fish stocks in the South China Sea steadily dwindled due to overfishing.

A 2015 study revealed that fish stocks in certain parts of the SCS declined by as much as 90%. High-value fishes, like tuna and grouper, are becoming scarcer. Fishermen are compelled to sail farther and longer to catch fish. As a result, the catch of Filipino fishermen continues to decline. From 2005 to 2014, this declined by 13.5%, and further slipped by 4.3% in 2015-2016.

Filipino fishermen suffer at a disadvantage with their relatively smaller vessels, high costs of transportation (which spiralled due to the TRAIN law) and lack of government support. This is in contrast to the Chinese government's high fuel, wage and vessel subsidy for their fishermen which enable them to fish farther and longer. China has the largest distant water fishing fleet (2,500 vessels) which engages in far-ranging and long fishing operations. The Filipino fishers are further disadvantaged by the lack of security even within the country's exclusive economic zone and traditional fishing grounds.

## Sale of resources

The Center for Environmental Concerns and Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment estimate that Duterte has sold at least P773-billion worth of Philippine sovereign mineral, water, wildlife, and marine resources to foreigners in the past three years.

China destroyed reefs worth P99 billion in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) due to constant patrols of Chinese paramilitary vessels. In addition, around P150-billion worth of endangered flora and fauna have been poached and smuggled out of the country.

Moreover, P23-billion worth of land and waters were promised as sovereign guarantee by Duterte should the country default on its onerous loans with China for the Kaliwa Dam and Chico River Pump Irrigation projects. In general, the country's biggest loss is due to the massive operations of multinational mining companies which exported more than P501.4-billion worth of mineral resources in the same period. AB

# Bogus agrarian reform in Boracay

Contrary to President Rodrigo Duterte's claim in his fourth State of the Nation Address, it is not true that land reform has been implemented in the Boracay Island, Aklan.

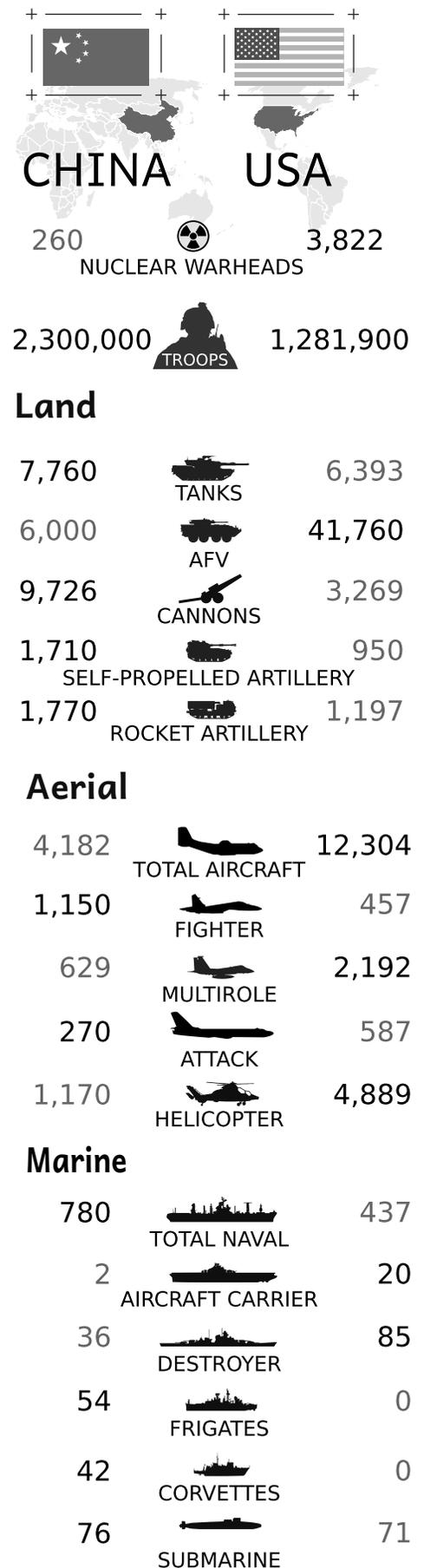
In reality, 18-hectares of land subjected to agrarian reform have not yet been distributed to beneficiaries. According to Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)-Western Visayas Director Stephen Leonidas, these are yet to be distributed to indigenous settlers who are not part of the Ati tribe in Boracay.

On November 2018, only 3.2 hectares of land (not even 1% of the 1,032-hectare island) have

been distributed to 44 families that are members of the Boracay Ati Tribal Organization.

An anthropological research exposed that the Atis are the original inhabitants of Boracay and they lived there even before the entry of the Visayans and Spanish colonizers in the island. This, however, is contested by minority settlers (non-Atis) who are asserting their right to the land which is to be distributed. AB

**MILITARY STANDOFF:** Across the globe, the US remains as the leading military superpower in terms of troops, bases, war matériel and nuclear arms. It is currently challenged by the rise of China, especially that the South China Sea is exploited and occupied by their respective security forces. Here are some figures on their current military strength:



# Dethroning the king of the road

Major transportation lines were destroyed during World War II. As a temporary solution, several Filipinos invested in refurbishing dilapidated US military jeeps.

Sarao Motors was the first and formerly the biggest jeepney manufacturer in the country. It was founded in 1953 by businessman Leonardo Sarao, a mechanic and former *calesa* (horse-drawn carriage) driver, with a meager capital of P700. With this, his business grew into becoming a company.

Sarao reconfigured the jeepney to accommodate more passengers. Metal sheets decorated in vibrant colors with ornaments were used as its roof. A horse miniature was installed atop the jeepney's hood to symbolize the *calesa* which is considered the first king of the road. The design of the jeepney was based on the color and form of the *calesa*. Since then, it has been dubbed as the new "king of the road."

In the 1960s, the company employed more than 300 workers. Until the 1970s, the assembly plant manufactured up to 10 vehicles a day. In the 1980s, however, its production has slowed down to rising production costs and fewer franchises issued by the government. The decline was also attributed to the global financial crisis which has resulted in the depreciation of peso and tripled the price of secondhand engines from Japan.

In 1995, the Land Transportation Office stopped the issuance of franchises to jeepney



lines as it opened up franchises to Tamaraw FX taxis (manufactured by transnational firm Toyota) and inaugurated the Light Rail Transit. A more stringent registration application process was also implemented by the government at that time. It was then that Leonardo Sarao left management of the company to his son Edgardo.

Amid the continuing decline, Edgardo was compelled to temporarily halt the production of the company and retrench 250 of its workers in October 2000. After a few weeks, the company resumed its production with only 50 employees. At that time, only an average of three jeep units were produced weekly.

In the face of Duterte's scheme to phase out older jeepneys under the guise of "mod-

ernization," Sarao Motors was compelled to enter into a joint venture with Le' Guider International (a company owned by businessman Youssef Ahmad), to manufacture electronic jeepneys (e-jeepneys). Instead of an engine, e-jeepneys are powered by a permanent magnetic motor that is made of neodymium, a rare-earth magnet whose extraction and production is dominated by China. Last year, 80% of its global supply was produced by China.

An e-jeepney unit, on average, costs P1.4 million. This is way more expensive than a traditional jeep which only costs P400,000 per unit. The bogus modernization scheme will certainly leave drivers and operators bankrupt and buried in debt, and will subsequently result in fare hikes. **AB**

## Duterte vetoes SOT

DUTERTE SHOWED his extreme bias for capitalists when he vetoed the Security of Tenure (SOT). He clearly admitted this during his speech in Itbayat, Batanes last July 30 wherein he explicitly said that the "anti-endo" bill lacks safeguards for businessmen. Consequently, progressive lawmakers filed a new version of the bill that is genuinely anti-endo and pro-worker.