

Frustrate the US-Duterte regime's war of suppression! Further strengthen the NPA and all-sidedly carry forward the people's war!



Central Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) firmly salutes all Red fighters and commanders of the New People's Army (NPA) on the occasion of the NPA's 51st founding anniversary.

The Party and the Filipino people recall and celebrate all the brilliant achievements of the NPA accumulated over more than five decades of waging revolutionary armed struggle. We extol all the heroes and martyrs of the NPA who gave all their lives to the people's cause, as well as its veteran fighters who continue to serve the people's revolutionary cause. Today, we pay the highest tribute to Comrade Julius Soriano Giron, our beloved Ka Nars, member of the Political Bureau and Executive Committee, who selflessly served the Party and the Filipino people for

decades. Ka Nars played a leading role in successfully convening the Party's 2nd Congress. He was murdered in cold-blood by fascist armed agents last March 13 in Baguio City together with his two companions.

The NPA has waged revolutionary armed resistance against the counterrevolutionary state and its armed agents that are in the service of the oppressors and exploiters--the despotic big landlords, the big bourgeois comprador, the bureaucrat capitalists, the destructive mining companies and other plunderous enterprises.. The NPA has

proved itself, without doubt, the genuine army of the people. Recruited primarily from the broad masses of workers, peasants and national minorities, its fighters are united by the common aim of putting an end to the oppressive and exploitative conditions of the toiling masses.

For 51 years, the people's army has served the Filipino people well. Its fighters are well known for being courageous and self-sacrificing. They are ever-ready to learn from the people their needs and demands and perform the most difficult and dangerous tasks in serving the people. They are also recognized by the masses as their defenders, co-operators, teachers, doctors, as well singers and artists, always at-

tending to the people's well-being and needs. People always approach the NPA to seek advice or assistance whenever they demand redress from an injustice done, or seek intercession to iron out small conflicts among the people.

The peasant masses have a champion of genuine land reform in the NPA. Guided and inspired by the NPA and the Party, the broad peasant masses and their democratic organizations wage struggles to reduce land rent, raise wages, lower interest rates, seek fair farmgate prices, and other agrarian reforms. On the basis of mass organizations of peasants, women, youth, children, cultural workers and others, organs of political power are established under the leadership of the Party and defended by the NPA. Where local democratic power is established, land is freely distributed to the tillers of the land.

With the NPA, genuine people's democracy thrives. This enables the realization of a just peace, improvements in the people's standard of living, protection of the environment, and the prospect of a bright future where there are no oppressors and exploiters and where national dignity and freedom reign.

With the NPA on their side, the Filipino masses have been able to achieve great feats in the last 51

years — from the struggle against the Chico River Dam project and other despoilers of the environment, to the struggle against US military bases; from the heroic resistance against the US-Marcos dictatorship, to the overthrow of the Estrada regime and the ongoing struggle against the tyrannical and terrorist US-Duterte regime.

We mark today the 51st anniversary of the New People's Army as the Filipino people and peoples across the world confront the Covid-19 pandemic. It is thus, appropriate, that the NPA celebrate this day by reaffirming its pledge to serve the people and mobilize its forces, together with the revolutionary mass organizations, in a public health campaign to prevent the spread of the disease and help treat those infected.

The Party has also directed its members in the cities to carry out similar mass campaigns, while raising demands for mass testing and other public health measures. Beyond the field of public health, the Filipino people must also take action in the arena of political struggle. It is as important to resist the militarist restrictions imposed by the Duterte regime, and raise their call for the ouster of Duterte to make him answer for his criminal sabotage of the public health care system.

In fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, the Filipino people must draw lessons and inspiration from the victories and achievements they have accumulated through collective action. Despite the gross incompetence of the Duterte government, the Filipino people can surely surmount the Covid-19 pandemic by acting as one, as they have accumulated numerous victories in their revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation.

The need for the Filipino people to wage the national democratic revolution has become even more urgent as they suffer from worsening forms of oppression and exploitation. Under the Duterte fascist regime, the crisis of the ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system has grievously worsened.

The worsening domestic crisis is tightly bound with the prolonged crisis of the global capitalist order. Across the world, there is a rising tide of mass resistance against extremely exploitative economic policies, corruption and authoritarianism. Conditions are ever favorable for proletarian revolutionaries to expand and consolidate their ranks, strengthen communist parties, raise the social and political consciousness of the working class and other oppressed classes, in order to lead their revolutionary struggles now and in the future.

1. Sharpening contradictions amid worsening global economic crisis and pandemic

THE WORLD IS now being afflicted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The failure to cope with this pandemic has exposed the deterioration of the public health system in both industrial and non-industrial countries due to privatization and austerity measures under the neoliberal policy regime. The emergence of the Covid-19 and other zoonotic pathogens also exposes the impact of unbridled destruction of forests by large-scale capitalist agriculture and livestock farming.

The repressive measures adopted to control the spread of the Covid-19 are causing greater hardships on the toiling people. The lockdowns imposed around the

world have confined two billion people in their homes, and suspended the operations of factories, malls, transportation and various enterprises. This has resulted in



Special Issue | March 29, 2020

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

temporary mass unemployment (which can become permanent) as a result of the disruption of local production and international trade and supply chains.

The Covid-19 pandemic is causing the world economy to further slow down. Even prior to the outbreak, however, the global capitalist system was already going through several years of economic stagnation after around one decade of protracted depression in the period following the financial crisis of 2008. Analysts have been anticipating a far worse financial crisis as a result of mounting debts and continuing decline in production.

Total global debt by the first quarter of 2020 is expected to climb to a record \$257 trillion, 322% of the world's GDP. Global government debt is at \$70 trillion. The total debt of the US and Europe is 383% of their GDP, while that of China is almost 310%. Global debt has surged a result of low interest rates and loose financial conditions set by state finance managers in an attempt to spur production. The world economy, however, grew by only \$28 trillion since the 2008 financial crisis, while global debt increased by \$84 trillion during the same period.

Last year, the world gross domestic product grew at a slower rate of 2.9% from 3.6% the previous year. The US economy grew by a mere 2.3%; the UK and French economy, by 1.3%; Japan, by 1%; and the German economy, by a mere 0.6%. Distinctly, China's economy grew by 6.1% last year which, however, was its slowest since 1990. Bourgeois economists anticipate zero-growth or contraction of the world economy this year as the impact of the Covid-19 further deepens the crisis.

Slow economic growth of the past several years, despite low interest rates and increase in the debt stock, is a result of the persistence of the underlying problem of capitalist overproduction. There

is an oversupply in almost all key commodities mainly oil, natural gas, steel, automobiles, memory chips, smartphones, televisions, textile, garments, corn, soybean, wheat, rice and so on.

Production cannot further expand without adding to the glut of commodities, pulling down prices and capitalist rates of profit, and resulting in bankruptcies and closures. Saudi Arabia's refusal to cut oil production earlier this year pulled down its prices to \$30 per barrel, forcing US shale oil companies to stop production. In Germany, production of machinery and cars have been cut as a result of lower demand, resulting in a 5.3% drop in industrial output last year. In China, small steel manufacturers have been ordered closed since 2016 in order to curb the oversupply which has pulled down the profits of its biggest steel manufacturers.

There have been persistent fears among big banks that a meltdown similar to the 2008 crash of the financial system would happen within the year or in the near future. This is likely to come as a result of the inability of corporate borrowers (such as oil companies, car and aircraft manufacturers) to service their debts in the face of further economic slowdown. A chain of defaults similar to that of 2008 is likely to start off the crash. The Covid-19 pandemic is now accelerating the process leading to a financial meltdown in the face of production shutdowns, canceled orders, travel restrictions and so on.

The global economic stagnation has resulted in the massive destruction of productive forces. Last year, US companies announced plans to lay off at least 595,500 workers, 10% more than the previous year. Banks worldwide laid off close to 78,000 workers, 82% of which in Europe. More than 100,000 workers were also laid off last year by German manufacturing

companies including Siemens, Daimler, Audi and Airbus. There are estimates that as many as 25 million workers would lose their jobs this year as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Workers and toiling people in the capitalist centers are suffering gravely from the effects of the prolonged crisis of the capitalist system. They are oppressed by low wages, unemployment, indebtedness, homelessness, drug abuse, lack of public health care and other social services, and rising cost of living. Migrant workers and refugees suffer even worse oppressive conditions.

Wealth and capital continue to be accumulated and concentrated in the hands of a few monopoly capitalists, as corporate bankruptcies, mergers and acquisitions continue to rise. In 2018, around 2,200 billionaires owned as much as the 3.8 billion people. Inequality further worsened last year with a fewer billionaires (2,153) owning as much as 4.6 billion people or 60% of the world's population. The world's richest 1% now own 44% of the world's wealth, while the bottom 56.6% hold less than 2%.

The prolonged state of economic stagnation is resulting in heightening inter-imperialist conflicts in the economic and military fields. Monopoly capitalists and their national states are seeking to expand their global spheres of investment, influence and control.

The United States, once the unipolar imperialist power, is challenging and destabilizing the multipolar world. Under the Trump government, it has taken unilateral measures in the economic and geopolitical fields. The US is becoming increasingly aggressive in fending off the challenges of China and Russia to its economic and military dominance.

The US and China have been engaged in a trade war since the end of 2018, imposing tariffs and counter-tariffs on each other's ex-

port products. The US government has also threatened to impose tariffs on commodities imported from Europe, denouncing the German car industry, in particular, as a threat to its national security.

Rising economic conflicts are also heightening military conflicts among the major imperialist powers. While they have so far avoided direct confrontation, the imperialist powers have waged wars of aggression and proxy wars to expand or secure their spheres of influence. They have mounted such wars in the Middle East (Iraq, Syria, Iran), Central Asia (Afghanistan) and Eastern Europe (Ukraine, the Balkans). The US has maintained strategic military presence around the world through its 800 military bases, especially in the Middle East and Europe to counter Russian influence.

There are rising conflicts in international waters as the US strengthens military power projection in what it calls the "Indo-Pacific" area with the aim of encircling China. China, on the other hand, builds its presence in the South China Sea, as well as in Eastern Africa, to protect its strategic economic interests. The assassination of the top military officer of Iran by a US drone attack earlier this year indicates the extent to which the US imperialists are willing to escalate international military conflicts.

Military spending is on the rise. The global defense budget increased by 4.2% in 2019, the highest annual increase in a decade. There is a brewing arms race as the US seek to retain its position as the number one military power. After withdrawing last year from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the US has stepped up efforts to build its nuclear arsenal, testing an intercontinental ballistic missile last year. In response, Russia and China are also stepping up efforts to develop its own nuclear weapons as well as new generation hypersonic weapons.

Prolonged stagnation and economic protectionism is causing the rise of nationalism and fascism in the US, Russia, China and Europe, as well as in Brazil, India and other countries. Fascist demagogues take advantage of working class discontent over their dire economic conditions. They employ populist rhetoric to promise workers protection and prosperity, and draw their attention away from the capitalist roots of the crisis. They whip up bigotry against immigrants, refugees, religious and other minority groups, women, victims of drug abuse and others. They openly advocate dictatorships and military rule.

Even as there are rising conflicts among the imperialist powers, they are united in terms of imposing neoliberal policies on underdeveloped countries such as the Philippines. These policies seek to further open mineral and other natural resources to foreign capitalist plunder and tighten the integration of these countries into the international assembly line of big multinational corporations. These perpetuate the non-industrial and backward agricultural economy of these countries, as well as their dependence on imports and foreign borrowings.

There are some underdeveloped countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea which assert national sovereignty and the socialist cause. They have stood up against US imperialism and have taken advantage of the contradictions between the imperialist powers to defend themselves against military aggression and economic sanctions and continue to develop their economies.

The continuing crisis of the international capitalist system is generating mass resistance both in the industrial centers and in the underdeveloped countries. In the US, around 500,000 went on strike last year, one of the highest in the past four decades. Notable among

these is the strike of 49,000 factory workers of General Motors who mounted a six-week strike, one of the longest in past decades. French rail and air transport workers, truck drivers, as well as teachers and public sector workers have been on strike since December last year to resist pension reforms that among others will raise the retirement age of many jobs. Major strikes were also launched by workers in Germany, the UK and other countries, including the Europe-wide strike of Amazon workers demanding pay hikes and better working conditions.

Strikes and massive protest actions have also been mounted in the underdeveloped countries. Early last year, around 200 million workers and farm workers in India mounted a national strike to oppose privatization, and demand wage increases and permanent jobs. Major strikes and mass actions have also been mounted by workers in Brazil, South Africa, Russia and other countries over such issues as wage increases, repression and others. A wave of mass protests by millions of people have swept Hong Kong, countries in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, demonstrating mass disenchantment over austerity measures, depressed wages, rising prices, worsening socio-economic conditions, repression and bureaucratic corruption.

Conditions around the world favor the consolidation and strengthening of communist parties ideologically, politically and organizationally. Proletarian revolutionaries are striking deep roots among the working class and oppressed masses, building mass organizations and leading democratic mass struggles. In India, as in the Philippines, the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist communist party is at the helm of the people's war, waging armed struggle through the people's army, carrying out land reform and building red political power in the countryside.

2. Duterte's brutal war of suppression aims to preserve the crisis-stricken semicolonial and semifeudal system

THE DUTERTE REGIME is waging a bloody war of suppression under its National Task Force-ELCAC. With its declared aim of "ending the local communist armed conflict," the regime has carried out relentless attacks against the people and their democratic mass organizations. The aim is to preserve the ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system and perpetuate the exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses and the plunder of the country's wealth by foreign big capitalists and the local big bourgeois compradors.

Like those of the previous regimes, Duterte's economic policies have not altered the non-industrial and backward agricultural base of the economy. He has further liberalized trade and investment policies to favor foreign big capitalists to the detriment of local production. The Philippines remains dependent on imports, foreign debt and investments. It suffers from chronic trade deficit. The Filipino people continue to suffer from high rates of unemployment, insecure work, low wages, rising prices of food and basic commodities, poverty and homelessness.

The country remains without an independent steel industry, has no machine-building industry nor the capacity to produce computers, machine tools, vehicles, medicines and other major manufactures. Local manufacturing remains dependent on imported machines and raw material inputs. Industrial activity is largely limited in so-called economic zones which are detached from the rest of the domestic economy, engaged in semiprocessing and assembly, and are mere appendages of the international assembly line of multinational companies. On the other hand, agricultural production remains largely backward, non-mechanized, non-irrigated, and with low output. Large-scale agricultural production is carried out only in foreign-owned plantations devoted to crops for exports.

The Duterte regime has made no effort to build an industrial base or create the conditions for agricultural modernization. It continues to

implement neoliberal economic policies which have caused the destruction of local productive forces. The regime implemented last year the liberalization of rice importation which threatens to wipe out local rice production and dislocate 350,000 rice farmers. Sugar is being smuggled in and is targeted for import liberalization. Widespread conversion of agricultural land to real estate, tourism, mining and energy projects continue unabated and is causing the displacement of millions of peasants and farm workers.

The country's export-oriented economy continues to totter in the face of global economic slowdown. Philippine GDP growth last year slowed to 5.9%, the lowest in eight years. This is marked by an 8.6% drop in factory output volume of local manufacturing, and a slow 0.7% agricultural growth. Overseas remittances and BPO operations, which have kept the economy afloat over the past years, have slowed down. The Duterte government's budget deficit ballooned to ₱660.2 billion last year, 18.27% higher than the previous year.

Duterte is wasting billions of pesos to feed the corruption of the military and big bureaucrats, to favor graft-laden contracts with business cronies and to finance debt servicing. Billions are spent on corruption-ridden infrastructure projects under the Build, Build, Build program including the unnecessary expansion of provincial roads and bridges, seaports and airports, as well as dam projects that will dis-

place thousands and destroy low-land agricultural production. To finance its spending, the Duterte government has accelerated borrowing to ₱43 billion a month, more than twice as fast as the previous regimes, bringing the country's total outstanding debt to ₱7.7 trillion. The country's total foreign debt has shot up to \$83.6 billion from \$78.96 billion last year, more than half of which is government debt which now stands at \$42.8 billion, 7.8% higher than the previous year.

Around 10.6 million Filipino workers (nearly 24% of the total labor force of 45 million) are unemployed or underemployed. Official unemployment figures are understated and unreliable. In addition, there are around 12 million overseas Filipino workers who have gone abroad for employment because of lack of domestic job opportunities. Under Duterte, export of cheap labor remains a key employment strategy of the Philippine government. Annual job creation under the Duterte regime has dropped to decades low, failing to keep up with the growth of the labor force. The grave state of joblessness is obscured by Duterte's economic managers who claim a grossly incredible 5.1% unemployment rate by changing the definition of unemployment and removing millions from the total labor force count through statistical fiat.

The Duterte regime masks the real state of poverty in the country by setting a ridiculously low threshold of ₱75 per person a day, and claiming that 5.9 million Filipinos were lifted out of poverty since 2015. In reality, the daily cost of living in the Philippines is now around ₱205 per person to cover for food, transportation, housing, medicines and other necessities. At least two thirds of Filipinos survive

on less. At least 12.4 million Filipino families survive on ₱132 per person a day. The current minimum wage of ₱537/day set for the National Capital Region is just half of the ₱1,025 family living wage for a family of five. Millions of Filipinos suffer from homelessness and are forced to live in urban slums, sidewalks and under bridges. They lack access to clean water and electricity, sanitation, as well as public health facilities, schools and other social services.

The Filipino people are facing more economic hardships in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic because of the restrictive and oppressive measures adopted by the Duterte regime. The military lockdown in Luzon and other parts of the country has denied people of their right to travel, to work, make a living or seek employment. The measures add to the people's outrage over Duterte's refusal to close the country's borders with China, when he allowed thousands of tourists from Wuhan, Covid-19's ground zero, to enter the country in January.

The people are also indignant over the health budget cuts ordered by Duterte to favor increases in military spending. Left with insufficient funds, the public health system is being stretched beyond its limits, with public hospitals lacking in supplies to handle the testing and treatment of patients, and to protect health workers from being infected with the virus. According to latest bulletins, more than 800 have been infected by the virus, with more than 50 deaths, including at least 10 doctors.

The militarist measures adopted by Duterte is underscored by the appointment of former military generals to lead his Covid-19 task force. The regime addresses the Covid-19 pandemic as a matter of "peace and order" and security, more than a public health issue. Indeed, as the weeks pass, and the Covid-19 pandemic continues to

spread in the country, millions are becoming increasingly hungry and restive. They are bound to explode in protests, especially in the face of the regime's failure to address the daily socio-economic needs of the people, and protection of health workers, while its officials enjoy economic and medical entitlements.

The Covid-19 pandemic will have a severe impact on the local economy and drag it deeper into crisis. Duterte's economic planning officials are already anticipating a contraction of the economy, with hundreds of billions of pesos of losses in production, transportation and tourism; as well as in overseas remittances. The number of job losses are set to shoot up.

The Duterte ruling clique is taking advantage of the Covid-19 crisis to further advance its scheme to impose authoritarian rule. The emergency powers granted to Duterte gave him billions of pesos to squander, and the power to take over private companies in the guise of public health response. These extend Duterte's previous maneuvers to undermine the Lopezes, Ayalas and Pangilins and other "oligarchs" in favor of the "Dutertegarchs."

With the military lockdown, Duterte is putting the entire country under tighter military and police control, further strengthening his undeclared martial law regime and boosting his scheme of fascist dictatorship. On the other hand, these measures are also deepening the crisis of the ruling political system and further isolating his regime from the people.

The ruling Duterte clique further consolidated its power last year by placing key Duterte minions in the Senate and House of Representatives through manipulation of the electronic counting system. The Philippine congress is now a Duterte rubber stamp and willing accomplice of the Duterte authoritarian regime. The elite opposition forces have been effectively disenfran-

chised.

The Duterte regime is increasingly isolated internationally over its record of mass killings and human rights abuses. Last year, the US congress issued a resolution prohibiting entry of Duterte officials to the US, particularly those regarded as responsible for the unjust detention of Sen. Leila de Lima. Travel papers to the US of Duterte bootlicker Sen. Bato dela Rosa was canceled afterwards.

In a fit of pique, Duterte sent the US a notice terminating the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in February, styling it as an act of patriotism. By itself, the VFA termination, however, does not comprise a change in the unequal military relations between the US and the Philippines. The 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty and the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) remain in place. Both agreements give the US extraterritorial rights in the country, used by the US to establish its dominance in the Philippines and cover to conduct military interventionism. In fact, the Duterte regime is secretly pleading the US for minor amendments in the VFA or negotiate a new agreement with assurances of political support and increased military aid.

Duterte has made no move to cancel more than 300 military exercises and activities to be conducted by US forces in the Philippines this year. If not for the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 Balikatan war exercises would have been conducted in April. It would have involved at least 6,500 American troops, the largest ever since it started. The US also continues to supply the AFP with ₱45 million worth of surplus war matériel under the Foreign Military Financing program of the Department of State. Under the Operation Pacific Eagle-Philippines, the US also continues to carry out military operations in the guise of anti-terrorism.

Since 2017, the Duterte regime

has shed its peace pretensions, when it imposed martial law in Mindanao and ended negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) through Proclamation 360. It further issued Proclamation 374 which declared the CPP, NPA and NDFP Chief Political Consultant Prof. Jose Ma. Sison as terrorists and filed a case to formally proscribe the aforementioned under the Human Security Act.

Hoping to repair his reputation as an international pariah and under pressure from the international and national peace community, Duterte reopened peace channels with the NDFP recently in the hope of establishing his "peace legacy". Keeping its peace doors always open, the NDFP has welcomed the overtures but made clear that the impediments put up by Duterte must be done away with. These include the previous proclamations and executive orders which have served to propel his brutal war against the people.

Since last year Duterte's bloody campaign of suppression has escalated in the name of anti-communism.. This follows the issuance of Executive Order 70 in December 2018 and the setting up of the NTF-ELCAC in May 2019. Duterte's military and police forces and death squads have carried out a wave of killings, including the February 2019 murder of NDFP consultant Randy Malayao, the recent assassination of Party leader Julius Giron (Ka Nars) and his companions, and scores of others in Negros, Samar, Bukidnon, Masbate, Sorsogon and other provinces.

The military and police are carrying out red-tagging, surveillance and intimidation, mass arrests, slapping of trumped-up charges based on planted evidence with impunity. There are now more than 600 political prisoners, most of whom were arrested under Duterte. Worst of the enemy onslaughts are the extrajudicial killings and the

bombing of and artillery shelling on rural communities to grab the land from the peasants and indigenous people and deliver it to mining, logging, plantation and real estate corporations.

Under the so-called "whole-of-nation approach," Duterte has required all government agencies and local government units to cooperate with the NTF and focus their efforts to counterinsurgency. Under the NTF, counterinsurgency has openly become the central task of the entire state machinery. Using public money, the regime has been conducting a heavily-funded campaign of disinformation and manipulation of public opinion using paid surveys, social media trolls, paid columnists and PR specialists.

In line with the aims of the NTF, Duterte is seeking to further reinforce his tyranny and state terrorism by pushing for amendments to the Human Security Act and enactment of an Anti-Terrorist Law which broadens the definition of "terrorism" to cover all forms of dissent and which gives the state the right to arrest anyone without a warrant, detain anyone for 14 days or more without charges or evidence and remove police and military liability for wrongful detention.

Under the NTF-ELCAC, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has mounted all-out military offensives nationwide. Since 2017, it has formed nine new battalions (from its original target of 10-30 more battalions) and deployed these primarily against the NPA. The AFP is assisted by the US military in establishing and training new combat units such as the Light Reaction Regiment, the 1st Brigade Combat Team and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team which are all based in Fort Magsaysay, where the US maintains facilities under the EDCA.

In all, the AFP has 140 maneuver battalions, of which, 35 are deployed in Luzon; 19 in the Visayas; and 83 in Mindanao (19

battalions in Moro areas, and 64 in NPA areas). Thus, close to 85% or 118 battalions are deployed against the NPA. Close to 55% of AFP units deployed against the NPA are in Mindanao, mainly in the eastern regions. Combined AFP and PNP troop deployment is highest in Southern Mindanao, followed by Southern Tagalog, Eastern Visayas, North Central Mindanao, Far South Mindanao and Negros. The aim of the AFP is to concentrate one battalion of troops for every NPA guerrilla front, in the vain hope of crushing the NPA through intelligence, psywar and combat operations.

Despite the additional units, the AFP's forces are spread thinly. At the national level, there are regions where the enemy could not deploy a full battalion against every NPA guerrilla front. On the ground, AFP combat battalions cannot saturate the territory and population of a guerrilla front, where there are widely spread revolutionary mass organizations, militia units and organs of political power which actively carry out mass campaigns and struggles. This leaves large areas open for NPA units to maneuver, recruit, and strengthen themselves. When AFP brigades or divisions mount focused military operations in one or several guerrilla fronts in border areas, it combines several battalions pulled-out temporarily from their assigned areas of operation, giving the NPA units in other areas leeway to conduct political and military work.

Units of the AFP conduct so-called "community support programs" (previously called Peace and Development Operations) under which fascist troops are deployed in the communities. The armed presence of military troops disrupt the people's lives and livelihood. They intimidate the peasant masses, arbitrarily accuse them of being "NPA supporters" to force them to cooperate. The AFP stage fake surrenders, put up checkpoints and

impose population control measures. They conscript people to become paramilitary forces, force civilians to render unpaid labor, and other violations of democratic and civil rights. They carry out artillery shelling and aerial bombings in the vicinity of communities, terrorizing and traumatizing the civilian population, especially children, forcing people to flee their homes and farms.

At the same time, they carry out psywar operations such as so-called "community integration programs" and "delivery of service" which are riddled with corruption. These programs aim to conceal the fascist fangs of Duterte's fascist troops. Under Duterte's "enhanced comprehensive local integration program," "surrenderees" are promised P60,000, which more often than not is pocketed by brigade and battalion officers of the AFP. To fool the masses, Duterte has gone on a publicity campaign styling himself as land reform advocate in a vain attempt to convince the peasant masses that "you do not need the NPA."

Duterte has conducted his cam-

paigned of suppression against the peasant masses with utter violence. The onslaught has been most vicious in areas where the people have actively resisted the entry of mining, plantations, tourism, energy and other big corporate projects. Full-scale terrorism has been employed to force the masses to surrender their democratic rights and their struggles to defend their land and economic well-being. To enforce the suppression, the AFP has frenziedly constructed military, paramilitary and police detachments in and around rural communities, with more than 700 in Mindanao alone.

The all-out war of suppression is a futile attempt by the Duterte regime and the AFP to pacify the peasant masses' struggle for land and deny mass support for the people's army in order to force NPA units to withdraw and be isolated in rough terrain, and subject them to focused military offensives employing large number of troops with aerial and artillery support. They conduct one offensive after another in the hope of wearing down NPA units. The terrorist methods used

by the AFP in their base denial operations, however, are proving counterproductive as the peasant and minority masses are roused to resist by the regime's fascist cruelty, and to seek the NPA to defend their rights and their lives.

Since 2017, Duterte and his military officers have made declarations of crushing the NPA, first by end of 2018, then by end of 2019, and later before Duterte's term ends in 2022. Almost daily, AFP commanders make false public announcements claiming NPA "surrenderees," typically recycling old firearms in their armory and presenting these as surrendered weapons. A manipulated photograph claiming to be that of "surrenderees" was recently exposed. Duterte has even bragged that the NPA will be defeated "sooner" as the AFP announced having destroyed or weakened 15 NPA guerrilla fronts. All these are empty boasts as the NPA continue to strengthen and wage revolutionary armed struggle alongside the democratic mass struggles of the Filipino people to end the reign of terror of the US-Duterte regime

3. Prospects and tasks for waging people's war

THE ALL-OUT state terrorist attacks of the US-Duterte regime have failed to cow or pacify the Filipino people. They are ever determined to carry forward the national democratic revolution. The worsening forms of oppression and exploitation engendered by the continuing crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system rouse them to wage armed revolution and all forms of mass resistance. Conditions are ever favorable for waging and advancing people's war.

Mass organizations, alliances, unions, institutions, councils and other formations are asserting their legal and democratic rights. They are vigorously opposing the regime's red-tagging and efforts to make them illegal. They are bravely standing up to Duterte and his military officers, despite being subjected to surveillance, threats of arrest or murder. Student groups have resisted the regime's efforts to clamp down on campus activism.

They are actively exposing the fascist abuses perpetrated by Duterte's military and police forces. They have mounted protest actions against killings and mass arrests. They denounce the fake "surrenders" of civilians, the closure of Lumad community schools, artillery and aerial shelling near communities, and other abuses perpetrated in the course of Duterte's "counter-insurgency" campaign. They have firmly denounced threats against

the media. They have exposed Duterte's "war on drugs" as a fake and denounced the mass killings against the poor. They have filed cases before the International Criminal Court to have Duterte stand trial for his crimes against humanity.

The democratic forces are exposing bureaucratic and military corruption. They denounce the appropriation of a bigger slice of public funds to fatten the military and police, while the allocation for education and health services, as well as agricultural support, remained low or were cut. They have denounced the regime's relentless foreign borrowing. They have exposed the false picture of economic development. They denounce the

tax burdens imposed by Duterte and the liberalization of rice importation. They have denounced Duterte's puppetry to the US and subservience to China.

Workers have mounted strikes and other forms of collective action demanding wage increases, better working conditions and job regularization. The peasants masses have carried out mass actions demanding lower rent, higher wages for farm workers, lower interests, fair prices for their produce and other reforms. They oppose widespread land-use conversion. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, they have called out the regime's inutility in addressing the people's needs in the event of natural calamities such as the eruption of the Taal Volcano and earthquakes in Mindanao.

A wide range of patriotic and democratic forces, including the conservative political opposition, as well as disgruntled military and police officers, are arrayed against Duterte. They are bound to unite more firmly in a broad united front as the ruling regime is confronted by a worsening political crisis. The worsening socioeconomic conditions are pushing the broad masses of the people to rise up in large numbers in mass protest and demand an end to Duterte's brutal, puppet, corrupt and oppressive regime.

Fascism under Duterte is generating armed resistance. The necessity of taking up arms to defend the people rights is made manifestly clear by the abuses and bloody suppression carried out across the country by Duterte's armed agents. In putting down the people's resistance with armed force, he is actually inciting the people to fight back. Like Marcos before, Duterte has become the Number 1 recruiter of the New People's Army.

Over the past several years, the New People's Army has successfully withstood the all-out offensives of the Duterte regime. All units of the NPA remain solidly united under the Party's leadership and under its

own command structures from the national level down to all fronts. Despite the unremitting offensives of the enemy, the morale and discipline of its Red fighters remain high and their determination to fight is greater than ever.

The NPA is persevering along the path of revolutionary armed struggle. Units of the NPA have successfully frustrated enemy combat operations. Its units adeptly employ guerrilla tactics of shifting, concentration and dispersal to confront the focused military offensives of the enemy. They continually adapt their tactics and methods of operation to render ineffective the enemy's use of surveillance drones, artillery shelling and aerial bombardment using helicopters and fighter jets. With mastery of terrain, NPA units have been able to choose their battles well by counter-encircling and attacking detached enemy units.

The NPA continues to operate in more than 110 guerrilla fronts in 73 of 81 provinces across the country. It has several thousand guerrilla fighters. They are armed with high-powered weapons and small firearms seized from the enemy, security forces and other sources. The NPA employs grenades and command-detonated explosives. They also use indigenous methods of warfare such as booby traps and punji sticks.

Units of the NPA operate under 14 regional operations command, which in turn are under the National Operations Command. The entire NPA is under the leadership of the Party through the Central Committee's Military Commission which directs the NOC, through the regional committees that direct their respective ROCs, and through the Party branches and branch groups that direct the day-to-day operations of NPA companies and platoons and squads.

The Party leads the NPA both at the strategic and tactical levels. The Party has set forth the line of

encircling the cities from the countryside by waging a protracted people's war. This is the basic strategy for building the NPA as the principal weapon to accomplish the central revolutionary task of smashing the counterrevolutionary state power and establishing the people's democratic government. At different levels, the concerned leading committees of the Party come up with tactical programs that take into consideration the balance of forces, lay out the methods of surmounting and defeating the enemy's plans and ensure the steady advance of the revolutionary war.

The NPA force structure has the platoon as the basic unit, which operates under the command of the company. The NPA builds company-sized regional and subregional vertical forces; as well as company-sized guerrilla fronts with 6-9 platoons, one-third of which are concentrated and two-thirds spread to cover the breadth of the front territory.

The NPA builds and coordinates peoples militia units composed of part-time fighters. They help secure Party cadres and activists, enforce policies to maintain local peace and security, monitor enemy movements, provide the NPA area command with regular security reports, help in the mobilization of supplies for the NPA, deploy personnel for tours-of-duty in NPA units, train and recruit new full-time Red fighters and join NPA units in carrying out tactical offensives and mass work.

Units of the NPA use guerrilla methods of maneuver to keep the enemy blind and deaf. They employ thick forests and deep mass support to cover their movements. Red fighters typically travel on foot through mountain passes and river crossings to move from one village to another, or from one front or province to the next.

The NPA builds guerrilla fronts where they organize the masses and strengthen their armed units. They

build the revolutionary mass organizations of peasants, youth, women, children and cultural workers, as well as other types of organizations representing the interests of the oppressed masses. Local Party branches are built comprising the most advanced elements among these organizations. On the foundation of the mass organizations, revolutionary village committees serving as basic organs of the people's democratic government are established. Its officers are either elected or appointed under the guidance of local Party committees. The NPA and its militia units serve as armed forces of this organs of political power.

Guerrilla base areas are established where they enjoy the deep and wide support of the masses and where the enemy's armed forces and influence are weak or have been weakened by the people's armed and political struggles. The NPA builds more and more guerrilla base areas in the countryside in the process of strengthening itself and weakening the enemy part by part.

Based on the reports of the National Operations Command, the NPA mounted last year at least 710 military actions of varying scale. These range from harassment, disarming, demolition, sapper and partisan operations to punitive actions, raids on enemy detachments and ambushes. Most of these actions are not reported in the bourgeois media. At least 651 enemy troops were killed, while more than 465 were wounded in action, the equivalent of around 30 platoons or two battalions of enemy troops.

The NPA remains the genuine army of the people. Its units are deeply rooted among the peasant and minority masses. They arouse, organize and mobilize the people to fight feudal and other forms of exploitation. They enjoy the boundless support of the people and continually draw strength from them. The more the masses have achieved in their struggles for land and other

agrarian reforms with the help of the NPA, the more they are determined to wage, participate or support armed resistance against the despots and fascists.

Across the country, units of the NPA have helped rescue and secure the lives of local peasant leaders and activists, student and workers activists from the cities, and Party cadres who were targeted for liquidation by the military and police. Many of them have decided to become armed regular fighters of the NPA.

The "surrender" drive and "community support" operations conducted by the AFP since 2017 aims to terrorize the people and weaken their support for the NPA. The initial intimidating effect, however, does not last long. In many cases, the peasant masses just feign cooperation to induce the fascists to relent, then report to the local NPA units about the abuses perpetrated by the military and the corruption of officers in their communities.

The NPA has subjected abusive military units, paramilitary groups and notorious enemy agents to punitive action, including those responsible for the Sagay Massacre in Negros. By doing so, the NPA helps further raise the courage and determination of the masses to fight back against the Duterte regime's fascist abuses.

The NPA continues to carry out the policy of the people's democratic government to protect the environment and stop foreign plunder of the country's patrimony. It has carried out sanctions against mining and other operations which poison the environment and destroy the people's sources of water, food and livelihood.

In the recent earthquakes, typhoons, volcano eruptions and other natural disasters, NPA units and revolutionary forces have been mobilized with the task of assisting the people in rebuilding their homes and farms, distributing emergency

aid and coordinating and facilitating the entry of resources for the people.

As a way of responding to the call of the United Nations Secretary General for a global ceasefire in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Party's Central Committee unilaterally declared a ceasefire, which covers the period March 26 to April 15. The Party has directed the NPA, especially its medical units, to carry out a public health campaign in coordination with village health committees to help prevent the spread of the disease, give special attention to the elderly and pregnant women, help care those who have been infected and promote personal hygiene and community sanitation.

While all NPA units must cease and desist from mounting offensive actions, they must remain alert and ready to act in self-defense against offensives or maneuvers carried out by the AFP, despite the earlier ceasefire declaration of the AFP. All hostile acts of the AFP must be reported to the public, and to the higher commands of the NPA and leading committees of the Party.

As director general of the people's army, it is the task of the Party to lead the NPA and ensure that it continues to grow in strength and perform its tasks to advance the people's war in an all-sided manner in order to carry it forward to higher levels. Under the current Five Year Program of the Central Committee, the Party aims to bring the people's war to the advanced substage of the strategic defensive. It is the Party's responsibility to resolve the key questions to accomplish this task.

The Five Year Program aims to resolve the problem of military conservatism by striking the correct balance between military work and mass work. It sets the line for building and forming company-sized guerrilla fronts and concentrating one third of its force to serve as vertical force, and spreading two

thirds horizontally to conduct extensive mass work. The Program also seeks to strengthen the NPA in Luzon and Visayas in order to march in step with the stronger units in Mindanao.

The Party shoulders political, educational/ideological and organizational tasks for leading and strengthening the NPA. It provides the NPA with political guidance on the urgent and long-term political issues confronting the Filipino people and sets forth the line and program of action. The Party provides the NPA with politico-military training at various levels in order to strengthen the capacity of NPA commanders and officers to lead the people's war at their respective scope. It conducts Marxist-Leninist-Maoist education programs to train its Red commanders and fighters in scientific methods of analysis and planning. Organizationally, the Party must continue to strengthen its branches and committees to serve as core and leader of every command and unit of the NPA and help strengthen the unity and discipline of their forces.

In the coming year, the Party directs the NPA to further strengthen itself in order to frustrate the enemy's strategic plan of crushing the armed revolution, and to advance the people's war in an all-sided manner. Units of the NPA must conduct political and military training of its commanders and fighters with the specific aim of raising their capability in combining the task of political mobilization of the masses and waging extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare.

The Party directs all its branches to make plans to help strengthen the NPA by recommending its members and activists who are physically and mentally fit, and who are at least 18 years old, to

join the NPA. There must be an active campaign of recruitment of young intellectuals and workers to join the NPA.

In the coming years, NPA units and leading committees of the Party, especially at the guerrilla front and subregional levels, must aim to mobilize a greater number of people in more villages and towns in their respective areas of operation. They must identify the key socio-economic issues and problems of the people in their areas by conducting and continually updating social investigation and research.

Land reform struggles must be carried out more extensively. This has become ever more urgent in the face of widespread land-use conversion. By addressing the principal democratic demand of the peasant masses for free land distribution and other agrarian reforms, the NPA can build the deepest and most extensive support for the armed struggle. Past experiences in waging agrarian revolution must be summed up in order to raise and further expand the coverage of agrarian struggles.

In conducting political mobilization, the NPA and all revolutionary forces must carry out widespread and sustained propaganda among the people, to raise the people's revolutionary consciousness and their determination to resist. We must ensure the printing and distribution of *Ang Bayan*, other national and local newspapers and statements of the Party, the NPA and the NDFP, and carry out other forms of propaganda among the masses including regular film showing, cultural activities and so forth.

Political mobilization must be combined with armed struggle. Leading commands of the NPA must study the strengths, weaknesses and particularities of the enemy

units in their areas of operation, in order to carry out a comprehensive plan to progressively and systematically weaken the enemy battalion or company part by part, hitting at its vulnerable, detached and isolated units, its communication network and supply lines.

In the coming year, the Party directs the NPA to further intensify the tactical offensives by combining active defense (counterencirclement and counteroffensives) to frustrate large-scale military and police combat operations, with raids against soft-targets such as military and paramilitary detachments and security forces, and the more numerous and extensive harassments, interdictions, arrests, partisan, demolition and sapper operations and other armed actions.

These must be combined with systematic and extensive proselytization through active propaganda exposing and denouncing the counterrevolutionary war, military corruption and the Duterte regime's fascist schemes combined with other tactics to undermine the enemy.

Under the correct leadership of the Party, the New People's Army will surely accomplish ever greater feats of heroism and sacrifice and achieve more victories in the course of waging armed resistance. As the crisis of the ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system aggravates the conditions of the Filipino people, they are becoming ever determined to wage people's war not only to end the rotten US-Duterte fascist regime, but more importantly, to achieve national and social liberation, establish the people's democratic state and build a socialist future.

The Filipino people look forward to celebrating more victories of the NPA in the coming years.

Carry forward the people's war!

Frustrate the war of suppression and fascist scheme of the US-Duterte regime!

Long live the New People's Army!

Long live the Communist Party of the Philippines!

Long live the proletariat and the Filipino people!

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