



EDITORIAL

The people will not be cowed by state terrorism

Randall Echanis, 72, veteran revolutionary and people's servant, champion of the toiling masses and advocate of just peace, was mercilessly tortured and killed. Fascist executioners raided his home in Quezon City on the wee hours of August 10. He was bound, hit on the head and repeatedly stabbed.

What else other than the Duterte monster's fascist animals could carry out such a dastardly crime? Who else would celebrate Echanis' murder other the exploiters and oppressors which he condemned and fought against alongside with the toiling masses his entire life? What other aim does this crime hope to achieve other than drive a stake of terror on the people's hearts? What else will it arouse but rage, indignation and greater courage and people's resistance?

The brutal murder of Echanis is part of the intensifying and ruthless

state terrorist attacks under the Duterte regime. It targets known personalities and patriotic and democratic forces active in the open mass movement and who are the most vigorous in exposing and fighting the anti-people Duterte regime and advancing the democratic mass struggles.

One week after Echanis' murder, the fascist animals were again unleashed. Zara Alvarez, 39, human rights defender and community health worker, was gunned down in Bacolod City. Like Echanis, Alvarez is among 600 activists which the Department of Justice

accused of being "terrorists" in the proscription case against the CPP and NPA. In May, Carlito Badion, 52, was also abducted, tortured and killed. A few days earlier, Jory Porquia, 58, a prominent activist and city coordinator of Bayan Muna, was killed in Iloilo City.

The relentless fascist rampage against known activists in the cities are carried out by the state armed agents under the orders of Duterte and his National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). Even without legal bases, the evil fascists have long implicated activists with the armed revolutionary movement. They target even artists, the critical mass media, church workers and ordinary people critical of Duterte. The targets of these killings, arrests, abductions and incarceration have

long been red-tagged by the AFP and PNP in their tarpaulin and endless media prattle, to justify the filing of trumped-up charges or outright murder of mass leaders and activists.

If the fascist rampage in the cities are relentless, AFP repression is even more virulent and savage in the countryside, away from media attention and where information flows ever so slow. Under Duterte's rule, not less than 264 peasants have been killed by the regime's soldiers, police, paramilitary and armed agents.

They respect no rights or guideline other than martial law. Wherever peasants stand up and defend their rights or fight for land, the fascists are there to silence and crush them. The masses face state terrorism every single day.

Whoever learns to speak for their interests are accused of supporting the armed movement. They impose military restrictions on communities including curfews, checkpoints, food blockades, prohibiting

work in the fields and other measures purportedly against the NPA, but in fact, are onerous restrictions against the people. Civilian residents are forcibly used by the AFP in their bloody and oppressive war. They are paraded as "surrendered," conscripted into the CAFGU, made to guide military operations, hauled to pro-military rallies and others.

In waging war, the AFP abides by no rules. Incited by Duterte, soldiers have brutally killed revolutionary leaders and forces even if they are no longer in a position to fight. Southern Tagalog Party leader Ka Mario Caraig was gunned down last August 8 while asleep. He was then convalescing from battle wounds. Last March, Ka Julius Giron, 71, a Party leader and peace consultant, was mercilessly killed in their residence in Baguio City, together with his doctor and buddy.

Contrary to international humanitarian law, the AFP has been dropping 500-pound bombs and indiscriminately firing artillery in

suspected NPA camps endangering the lives and livelihood of the peasant masses and minority people in nearby communities.

All these—from political killings in the cities to militarization in the countryside—form part of the image of state terrorism under Duterte. In the face of the pandemic, Duterte prioritizes state terrorism. He uses the worst forms of fascism to terrorize the people, silence their protests and suppress their struggles.

Intoxicated with power, Duterte aspires for more in order to continue aggrandizing wealth from pocketing public funds, cuts in government contracts, bribe money from drug syndicates and others. He and his minions gravely fear of losing power and having to face innumerable crimes and rights violations, have their hidden wealth exposed and be made culpable for all their transgressions against the people. Duterte persists in his power perpetuation schemes by charter change, rigging the 2022 elections in favor of those who he will choose, or outright imposition of dictatorial rule.

Worsening state terrorism is a manifestation of the US-Duterte regime's desperation to cling to power in the face of rising and broadening calls for his resignation or ouster.

The people's determination to fight intensifies as they face the regime's bungling of the pandemic response, worsening corruption and stealing public funds, fleecing and oppressing the people.

However, instead of being crushed, the people's hearts are filled with rage, and with the determination and courage to fight. Instead of being silenced, the people see ever more clearly the need to speak out, protest and rise. Instead of turning their backs, the people are ever ready to make the necessary sacrifice in order to fight and defeat fascist terrorism and attain their aspiration for freedom. AB

 <p style="text-align: center;">Vol. LI No. 16 August 21, 2020</p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Ang <i>Ang Bayan</i> is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 5px;">  instagram.com/prwcnewsroom </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 5px;">  @prwc_info </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 5px;">  cppinformationbureau@gmail.com </div> </div>	<h2 style="text-align: center; text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Editorial: The people will not be cowed by state terrorism</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Ka Randy, hero of the toiling masses</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Police arrest Anakpawis paralegal</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">NPA offensives in Negros, Bukidnon, Masbate</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Ka Jethro, Party leader in Southern Tagalog</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Health worker killed in Negros</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">10 soldiers killed in Negros NPA ambush</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">The struggle to survive</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pandemic borrowing binge</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">News briefs</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">US arms sales unaffected by pandemic</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Military evicts 2000 Lumads, farmers</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">12th IB, rabid dogs</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">NDFP appoints Julieta de Lima</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Vaccines for superprofits</td> <td style="text-align: right; padding: 5px;">10</td> </tr> </table>	Editorial: The people will not be cowed by state terrorism	1	Ka Randy, hero of the toiling masses	3	Police arrest Anakpawis paralegal	3	NPA offensives in Negros, Bukidnon, Masbate	3	Ka Jethro, Party leader in Southern Tagalog	4	Health worker killed in Negros	4	10 soldiers killed in Negros NPA ambush	4	The struggle to survive	5	Pandemic borrowing binge	6	News briefs	7	US arms sales unaffected by pandemic	8	Military evicts 2000 Lumads, farmers	9	12th IB, rabid dogs	9	NDFP appoints Julieta de Lima	9	Vaccines for superprofits	10
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<p><i>Ang Bayan</i> is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines</p>																															

Ka Randall Echanis, hero of the toiling masses

The revolutionary movement and people paid their highest honors to National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) consultant and Anakpawis Partylist chairperson Randall Echanis (Ka Randy) last August 17. A caravan was held by his relatives, comrades and supporters from Quezon City to Marikina City where his remains were buried.

Ka Randy was brutally killed along with his neighbor last August 10 in Novaliches, Quezon City. Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas chairperson Danilo Ramos described the killing of Echanis and other NDFP consultants, as the "worst blow against peace in the Philippines."

Ka Randy played a key role in preparing the draft and final version of the Comprehensive Agreement on Socioeconomic Reforms (CASER) between the NDFP and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. As member of the Reciprocal Working Committee for Social and Economic Reforms of the NDFP, he spearheaded the drafting of the provisions for the Agrarian Reform and Rural Development section of CASER. "He used his vast knowledge to push for the free distribution of land to peasants as part of genuine land reform and national industrial-

ization," stated the NDFP.

The Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid described him as an "extraordinary revolutionary who, from his youth until his last breath, struggled for freedom and democracy." In his youth, he was known as Ka Makar in the countryside.

The Communist Party of the Philippines paid tribute to him for

devoting his life to serving the peasant masses and advancing peace that based is based on justice. The Party described him as an "ageless revolutionary fighter."

Ka Randy was described by his comrades as a cheerful, calm, and humble leader who is well-loved by farmers. He was fondly called "Tatang" by younger activists.

"Ka Randy did not die in vain. He died as a well-loved hero and martyr of the peasant and people's movement. His lifelong struggle for land, justice, and peace is worth emulating," said his wife Erlinda on the burial day. AB

Police arrest Anakpawis paralegal

THE POLICE ARRESTED Anakpawis Partylist paralegal Paolo Colabres for seeking the release of the remains of Randall Echanis at a funeral parlor in Barangay Paang Bundok, La Loma, Quezon City on August 11. Colabres was charged with obstruction of justice and was detained for a week in Camp Karingal. A day prior to the arrest, the police forcibly took the remains of Echanis from his wake in Quezon Avenue.

To cover up the political motive in the killing, the police is making it appear that the crime is simply a case of robbery and homicide.

NPA attacks butcher battalions in Negros, Bukidnon, Masbate

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA) mounted successive military offensives in response to the continuing reign of fascist terror of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) battalions in Negros, Bukidnon and Masbate.

The NPA-Central Negros harassed the 62nd IB in Barangay Quintin Remo, Moises Padilla, Negros Occidental on August 14. Two soldiers were wounded. The following day, the NPA fired at a detachment of the CAFGU and 62nd IB in Barangay T-Hill, Guihulngan, Negros Oriental.

The NPA also conducted six harassment and snipe operations in Bukidnon from June 22 until the second week of July. Three soldiers

of the 88th IB at 8th IB were killed in the said operations. The offensives were mounted in Barangay Canangaan in Cabanglasan; barangays Can-ayan and Managok, Malaybalay City; and at Kipolot, Barangay Palacapao, and Barangay San Roque, Quezon.

The NPA-Bukidnon also mounted two punitive operations against the plunderous operations of a quarrying company and a despot landlord in Valencia City. The

NPA paralyzed a loader, dump-truck, breeder and backhoe in Barangay Sinabwagan and a tractor and harvester in Barangay Sinayan.

In Capiz, a soldier of the 12th IB was killed and two others were wounded in an ambush by the NPA-Panay in Barangay Roosevelt, Tapaz on August 9.

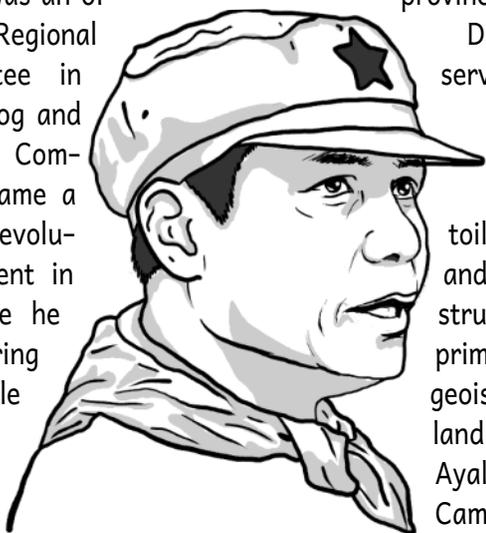
In Masbate, around 50 soldiers aboard four military vehicles were blasted by the NPA along the boundary of Barangay Malinta and Usab, Masbate City. Four soldiers were reportedly killed, including two officials.

Ka Jethro, Party leader in Southern Tagalog

Mario Caraig (Ka Jethro), a Batangueño who became a leader of the armed movement in Southern Tagalog, was summarily executed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines on August 8. He was asleep and unable to give battle when killed by 1st IB troopers at a house in Barangay San Antonio, Kalayaan, Laguna.

He was critically injured earlier on August 4 during an encounter between his unit and the military in the same area. Three Red fighters were also killed during the said encounter. Killing an hors de combat is against the rules of war.

Ka Jethro was an official of the Regional Party Committee in Southern Tagalog and its Executive Committee. He became a leader of the revolutionary movement in Batangas where he organized during the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. He



spent nearly 27 out of his 36 years of service in building the revolutionary movement in the province. From being the secretary and political officer of a mass work unit in Batangas, he became the secretary of the Party committee in the province in 2017.

During his lifelong service, he led several successful mass struggles, including campaigns of the toiling masses for land and livelihood. These struggles were directed primarily against bourgeois compradors and landlords such as the Sy, Ayala, Roxas, Ang and Campos families. The

campaigns include the successful raid against Henry Sy's armed goons and properties in Nasugbu in January 2017.

Soldiers also harassed and hassled the relatives of Ka Jethro, as well as those of Red fighters Rey Macinas and Alex Perdeguera who were also slain, in retrieving the cadavers. It took them several days before the bodies were turned over to them. Soldiers are yet to disclose where they buried Dioscoro Cello. These acts are blatant violations of war protocols.

The military is also yet to surface the family who took care of Ka Jethro. Witnesses say that they last saw Virgilio Asedillo, his daughter Chloe, 19, and the latter's wife, Marknel, brought to a police precinct in Laguna.

In Ilocos Sur, Red fighter Pamela Ocliaso Peralta (Ka Maymay) was also summarily executed by the 7th ID in Barangay Suagayan, Santa Lucia on August 8. AB

State forces kill health worker in Bacolod

STATE ELEMENTS GUNNED down health worker Zara Alvarez, 39, at Eoreco Subdivision, Barangay Mandalagan, Bacolod City on August 17.

Alvarez was an active member of the Negros Island Integrated Health Program, an organization which provides free medical services and trainings in poor communities across the island. She was a well-known human rights advocate not only in Negros but also in the international community. She spent more than two decades of her life serving the peasants and farm workers in the island. She also became part of a progressive program of the Catholic church.

The killing was also condemned by the Office of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Amnesty International and Samiduon.

Earlier, the regime failed in its attempt to declare Alvarez along with other activists as terrorists. However, state forces continued to maliciously link her to the armed movement. From 2012 to 2014, she became a political detainee under the Aquino III regime after being slapped with trumped up charges of murder and robbery. Alvarez is the 13th human rights defender killed under the Duterte regime.

NPA ambush kills 10 soldiers in Negros

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Central Negros ambushed operating troops of the 62nd IB at Sitio Tabago, Barangay Sandayao, Guihulngan on August 14. The soldiers did not notice that Red fighters were aware of their presence. They were blasted upon entering the NPA camp. Ten soldiers were killed and 2 others were wounded.

Meanwhile, the NPA unit belied the claim of the military that an "encounter" took place at Sitio Maluy-a in the same barangay wherein a Red fighter was purportedly killed. The NPA said that the military actually killed farmer Requem Remasog. They also arrested three minors.

The struggle to survive

The worst drop in local production in the first half of 2020 is a result of Rodrigo Duterte's prolonged and destructive lockdown. Its impact was felt in Visayas and Mindanao where lockdowns were imposed simultaneous with Luzon and Metro Manila in March. Local governments abruptly and without prior plans stopped production activities, transportation and commerce and other livelihoods of the toiling masses.

Gleaned from *Ang Bayan's* interviews, workers and semiworkers in the Visayas and Mindanao earn P250

up to P500 a day. A large chunk of their earnings is spent on food and electricity and water bills. They do not earn enough to send their children to school. They have no savings in case of sickness. They are buried in debt. Those who have not received aid had to rely on intermittent and meager remittances from their relatives abroad.

When the lockdowns were imposed, most of them have not received any compensation from their employers. Only those who were already registered in the 4Ps program were aided. In their desperation to earn, they went back to work without the assurance that they would be safe. They are forced to accept low wages and work under worse inhumane conditions. To earn half of what they earned before, they push their bodies to the limit, putting their own health and that of their families in danger.

Slashed earnings

Victor, 47 years old, married and with children, works in a sugar milling plant. He earns P10,000 a month for working 8 hours a day, six days a week. Even prior to the pandemic, he was not earning enough to cover his kids' schooling. Under the lockdown, he lost opportunities to increase his income when the company cut down production and

slashed the hazard pay of workers.

Jerome and Bitao's primary source of income is fishing.

Before the pandemic, Bitao earned P300 in the Visayas. Jerome, who hails from Mindanao, sometimes worked in big commercial fish farms and supplemented his income by gathering clams, crabs and other seafood in mangrove forests. He earned P400 to P600 a day. To earn the said amount, he would start out at 5 a.m. to scour for seafood in the mangrove forests. He would return to his house at 3 p.m. to eat.

Bitao and his wife, both 4Ps beneficiaries, received P11,900 in the last six months (or an average of P1,600 a month.) Even with his earnings, this was insufficient to make ends meet for his family. He does not have enough money to pay for his children's online, modular or blended learning so he did not enroll both his two children in high school children and another two in elementary.

Desperate measures

Anel, Genero and Berns went back to construction work when restrictions were lifted in May.

Anel, previously jobless, was employed by a local company where he worked from Monday to Sat-

urday, eight hours a day, for an income of P2,500 a week. He borrowed money to buy a motorcycle which he can ride to work. He started working without a contract. He was not provided any protective gear, even for dangerous work like welding.

Genero, on the other hand, has been previously employed as a heavy equipment operator. His province reopened construction activities in May in favor of a multinational pineapple plantation in the area. He went back to work without taking precautionary health measures and without the assurance that his company will pay for his medical bills if he contracts Covid-19. Whenever he gets a cough or fever, he would take paracetamol or an antibiotic and just prays that he will get well.

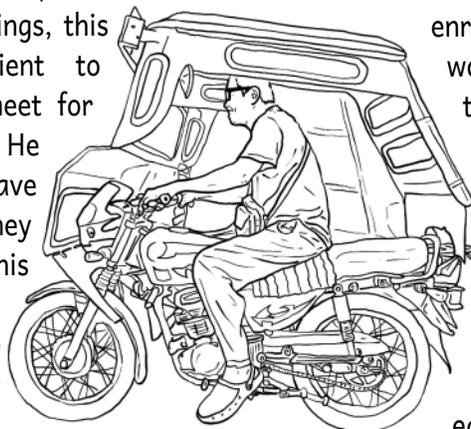
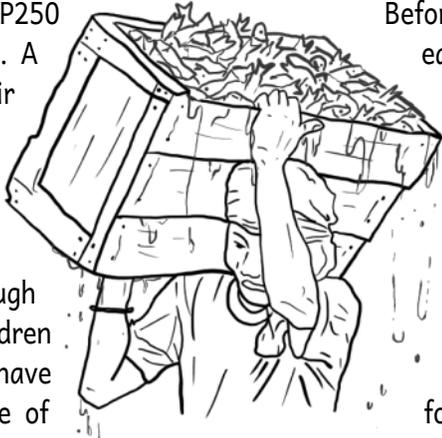
Among the three, Berns is the most indigent as his company closed down when the lockdown was imposed. He is jobless up to now. He received a small amount of aid as a 4Ps beneficiary. To supplement this, he sold fish to feed his family. He and his wife decided not to enroll their children as it would be difficult for them to act as their teachers.

Overworked

Manuelito is a *motorela* driver in Mindanao. Before the pandemic, he used to earn P500 a day or P12,000 a month. Even this was insufficient for his 8-member family as they would often spend up to P24,000 for their basic needs. To make ends meet, Manuelito would borrow cash and allot P600 a week for payments of previous loans.

He received a financial aid of P1,700 and food aid only once since the start of the lockdown. When

"The struggle..." continued on page 6



"The struggle..." from page 5

motorela drivers were allowed to operate, he borrowed money so that he could install plastic sheets on his vehicle. He earns less than half of what he earned before because *motorelas* are allowed to operate only in half capacity.

Couple Gladys and Jack work as salespersons. Combined, their income reaches up to ₱15,000 a month for working 8 hours a day, six days a week. Both lost their jobs during the lockdown. They had to ask for help from their relatives as they could no longer pay for their food expenses. This continued even after receiving a limited financial and food aid from their employer. When the economy reopened, they worried about transportation and safety going to work. Gladys's company provided her with a face shield for work but she had to leave it at the store. She had to buy her own face masks and face shield for travelling. Her company implements a no work, no pay/hazard pay policy.

Luz, 50, has worked as a laundry woman for decades. She earns an average of ₱6,000 a month for almost an entire day of handwashing clothes. Combined with the salary of his husband, a poultry farm caretaker, their family earns up to ₱8,400 a month. This is insufficient even to sustain their basic food needs. **AB**

Pandemic borrowing binge

The Duterte regime announced on August 6 its plan to borrow an additional ₱3 trillion next year. The regime will use the money to finance the country's ballooning chronic budget deficit. As in previous years, there are insufficient funds to finance its programs and loan payments next year.

The amount set to be borrowed is equivalent to 67% of the planned ₱4.5-trillion national budget for 2021. This means that for every ten pesos that the reactionary government will spend, seven pesos will be funded using debt. The planned budget is 10% higher than the ₱4.1-trillion national budget this year.

Even the regime's economic managers admitted that the budget deficit will further balloon in coming years especially as tax revenues are expected to plunge due to continuing lockdowns across the country. They estimated that the budget deficit will reach a record-high of ₱1.82 trillion for the entire 2020.

Based on the regime's estimate, the budget deficit has already reached ₱560.4 billion during the first half of the year. The amount is more than 13 times higher compared to what was recorded during the same period in the past year. The ballooning deficit is primarily a result of tax losses due to widespread lockdowns which put a halt to production and other economic activities across the country. This in addition to huge tax losses due to incentives given by the regime to corporations during the pandemic (*Read related article in Ang Bayan, June 7.*)

With falling tax revenues, the regime trimmed down its initial targeted tax revenue this year by 28% to ₱2.29 trillion. As of July, the regime has been able to collect only 32% of the said amount.



Amid the sore lack of funds, the regime went on a borrowing binge and incurred a debt of ₱1.7 trillion during the first six months of 2020 alone. The amount is more than twice higher compared to debt incurred during the same period last year.

Where do debts come from?

According to the reactionary government, 75% of the targeted borrowing next year will be accumulated in the form of government bonds, while 25% will be sourced from imperialist banks and financial institutions.

In the past six months, the regime incurred an internal debt of approximately ₱1.3-trillion through sale of government bonds, and an external debt of ₱226-billion.

To impress foreign banks, Finance Sec. Carlos Dominguez repeatedly boasted that the Philippines will never stop paying debt even amid the pandemic. During the first half of the year, the regime spent about ₱547.3 billion in debt payments while the people were hungry and jobless. Around 34% of the said amount was spent for interest payments.

To preserve its high credit rating and entice capitalists to buy government bonds, the reactionary government always strives to pay its debt and implement the neoliberal policy recommendations imposed by lenders. These ratings are given by imperialist credit rating agencies led by the so-called Big Three which includes the S&P Global Ratings (S&P), Moody's and Fitch Group which are all based in the US and manned by World Bank technocrats. **AB**

₱9.1 TRILLION
government debt during
the last week of June.

₱82,903
net debt per Filipino.

₱65 billion
loaned from
World Bank

₱130 billion
loaned from Asian
Development Bank

₱37.5 billion
loaned from Asian
Infrastructure
Investment Bank

HB 6864

House bill which will prohibit mass assemblies (protests, caravans, meetings, fora, weddings, baptisms and other) unless "permitted" by the reactionary government. This will institutionalize the fascist order of the Inter-agency Task Force headed by retired generals.

9 months

LENGTH OF CLINICAL TRIALS FOR THE JAPAN VACCINE IN THE PHILIPPINES

This means that earliest that the public would know whether the said vaccine is effective is in May 2021.

Source: Department of Health

7 million

children and youth dropouts this year.

due to lack of funds and capacity for blended learning.

Source: Department of Education

99.5%

OF BUSINESSES IN THE PHILIPPINES ARE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SCALE

almost half of these were closed down because of the lockdown.

P15 BILLION

Amount plundered by PhilHealth executives, according to a resigned official.

During the Senate hearing, it was exposed that the amount lost by the agency to corruption could reach **P154 billion**



74% PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHOUT INTERNET CONNECTION

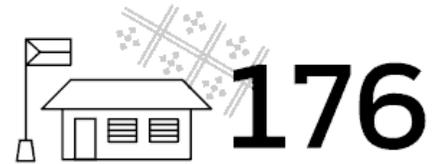
3 out of 5 households do not have internet connection; and 6 out of 10 students do not have gadgets for online and modular learning. 30 million are without electricity

₱ 1.6 TRILLION

funds that the Duterte regime can and must use to combat Covid-19 and stimulate the economy.

Part of this is the ₱80-billion fund which should be used to upgrade the health system and provide health services to the sick; ₱750-billion aid for 21 million families; and ₱730-billion subsidy for businesses (wage subsidy, loans and other forms of aid.)

Source: IBON Foundation August 16, 2020



Number of Lumad schools closed down by Rodrigo Duterte

Source: Save Our Schools, July 2020

1,240 tons ammonium nitrate stored at a port in Beirut, Lebanon exploded on August 4.

More than 170 were killed and 6,000 were wounded. 8,000 buildings were damaged. Protests sparked against government negligence forcing many of its officials to resign.

US arms sales stand unaffected by pandemic

The pandemic has not affected the sale of arms and military equipment by the US. From January to July, it approved 43 contracts amounting to 70% of its total arms sales in 2019. Fifteen of these were approved in July, including a contract for the sale of various military vessels, machine guns, bombs and ammunition to the Philippines. From March 30 to May 28, it approved arms sale contracts amounting to approximately \$7.5 billion.

Last year, the US earned a revenue of nearly \$70 billion through the sale of war planes and other military equipment to 28 countries. These countries include Saudi Arabia which is notorious for its brutal crimes against humanity, particularly in its attacks against Yemen. The highest arms sales by the US in Asia were recorded in India, Taiwan, and other countries challenging China's claim to territories in the South Chi-

na Sea.

To manufacture more weapons and broaden its market, Pres. Donald Trump successively withdrew from various treaties which ban the use of highly destructive weapons and war equipment. He first withdrew from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty which contributed significantly to destroying nuclear weapons across the globe. Simultaneously, Trump announced his plan to

allocate \$46 billion to boost the nuclear arsenal of the US in 2021. Trump also earlier withdrew from the Open Skies Treaty, Outer Skies Treaty, New START Treaty and Missile Technology Control Regime—treaties which regulate the manufacturing and stockpiling and test trials of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Last January, Trump also cancelled a policy which prohibits the manufacturing, stockpiling, and use of anti-personnel (victim-activated) landmines outside the South Korea peninsula. This is a violation to the Mine Ban Treaty which was signed by 164 countries in Ottawa, Canada in 1997. AB

Military evicts 2,000 Lumads, farmers

THE 88TH AND 8th IB forcibly evicted 2,000 Lumads and farmers from 15 communities in Cabanglasan, Bukidnon last June 21. The butchers labelled the communities as a "no man's land" after a dialogue between the datu, military and local government. (*Read related article in Ang Bayan, June 21*).

After two days, the military dropped 15 bombs in the area using helicopters. The area was also shelled 11 times and was strafed using .50 caliber machine guns. The residents' cornfields were destroyed and their farm animals were killed. The soldiers butchered and ate the remaining farm animals.

Residents were then coerced to surrender as members of the people's army. They were also forced to undergo a 9-day military training as paramilitaries who will be used as the military's cannon fodder in combatting Red fighters.

Last July 31, soldiers also evicted residents from Sitios of Mindao, Miaray and Kalakapan. Nearby farmlands were also shelled fifteen times.

12th IB troops are rabid dogs

LIKE RABID DOGS, troops of the 12th IB sowed terror in Janiuay, Iloilo from August 5 until the second week of the month.

New People's Army (NPA)-Panay spokesperson Jurie Guerrero disclosed that seven farmers were mauled by the soldiers in Barangay Atimonan, Janiuay. Two civilians were also detained and coerced to serve as guides in combat operations. Soldiers also confiscated the handmade guns used by farmers in self-defense. Soldiers threatened, interrogated and accused the residents as members of the NPA. Their farms were also destroyed.

To justify the atrocity, the 12th IB peddled fake news about an encounter in the same area on August 8.

Julie de Lima, interim NDFP peace panel chairperson

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC Front of the Philippines (NDFP) appointed Julieta de Lima last August 19 as temporary chairperson of its peace panel following the recent death of former chief negotiator Fidel Agcaoili.

NDFP chief political consultant Jose Maria Sison said that de Lima is the most senior among the members of the NDFP peace panel.

Sison said that there is no rush to appoint replacements for Agcaoili, as well as for Randall Echanis who was murdered last week. He added that "the NDFP has enough time to complete the working committees before peace negotiations will probably resume after Duterte is gone."

Agcaoili formerly headed the the NDFP section of the Joint Secretariat and Joint Monitoring Committee under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

Vaccines for superprofits

Second article for the three-part series on Covid-19 vaccines and the pharmaceutical industry. Read first part, "Covid 19 vaccine, greedy Big Pharma," in Ang Bayan, August 7, 2020.

Beyond ordinary profits, Big Pharma rake in superprofits by setting prices way past their cost of production. This is particularly repugnant when companies engage in price-gouging in the case of life-saving medicines and vaccines.

Pfizer in March announced that it would price its 2-dose Covid-19 vaccine at no less than \$40 in the US. Moderna will price its vaccine at \$37 per dose. The company is set to earn up to \$20 billion in US sales alone.

These companies earn high through lowering production costs, including using public funds for research. Capitalist profits therefore originate from the people's money.

In March, the US government allocated \$10 billion for pharmaceutical companies without setting conditions on how and speed of which vaccines should be manufactured, and how much should they cost. Among the recipients are Moderna, which received \$483 million in April and Johnson & Johnson which gained half a billion dollars to develop Covid-19 medicines and vaccines. In June, the Trump regime gave Big Pharma more funds in the form of tax breaks, technical support and other incentives under the program Operation Warp Speed. A former official from GlaxoSmithKline and Moderna headed the program.

It was never an requisite for Big Pharma to set reasonable prices in exchange for American taxes. This is insurance for drug companies since these refuse to manufacture a drug that is not highly profitable. In US, AstraZeneca plans to sell its vaccine at \$3-\$4 only to The Netherlands, Germany, France and Italy. Oxford, its developer, also used public funds for research.

Even now, big companies are already taking advantage of the

pandemic. In March, Doctors without Borders called on these companies to stop using the pandemic and sell their products at affordable prices.

The group castigated Gilead Sciences which attempted to monopolize the production and pricing of remdesivir, one of the drugs found effective in critical Covid-19 patients. The drug failed its purpose against hepatitis and colds, but was successfully developed by scientists from the University of Alabama against Covid-19. Public funds were used in the urgent research. Since Gilead Sciences held a patent, the drug could not be manufactured without paying the company for rights.

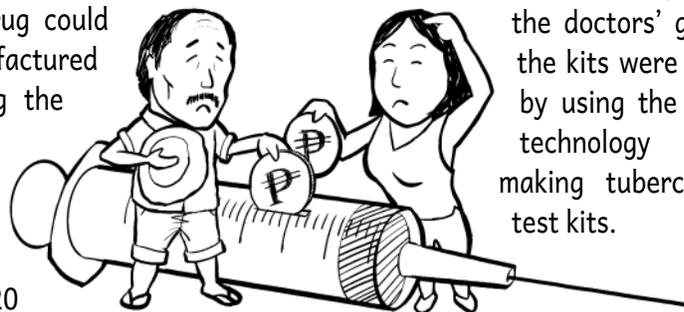
Gilead now sells the drug at \$3,120

per regimen or \$520 per dosage for critical Covid-19 patients. It allowed poorer countries to manufacture a generic version of the drug. Even so, prices still reach up to \$600 per regimen or \$100 per dose. Gilead's profits is set to increase by 22% during the pandemic.

The doctor's group also called out Cepeid, a company which manufactures testing kits, for overpricing its rapid test kit (Xpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2) at \$19.80/test. Producing these kits actually costs only \$3 each, including manufacturing costs. Like Gilead, the kits were developed using US public grant of \$3.7 dollars.

The tests are used in GeneXpert machines which process nose and throat swabs. The result is typically produced in 45 minutes. The Philippines is one of the 145 countries who have bought these kits. The country currently has 28 GeneXpert laboratories.

According to the doctors' group, the kits were made by using the same technology in making tuberculosis test kits. AB



22 Party members complete basic course in Samar

DESPITE CONTINUING MILITARY operations in the Samar Island, 22 members of local Party branches and section committee were able to complete the Basic Party Course (BPC) last June.

The front committee led preparations for the educational course. Considering heightened military operations in the area, organizers decided to conduct a staggered-type BPC. Two to three sessions were held weekly. There were two principal instructors and four teachers.

Sessions were held from 6 to 9 p.m. to ensure the availability and attendance of students. Ka Gary, one of the instructors and member of the front committee, said that the educational discussion was part of the consolidation activities in the section which aims to help students in leading their villages. The activity also helped resolve internal as well as interbarrio conflicts.