



EDITORIAL

# Advance all-out the movement to end tyranny

**T**he May 9 election is just a month away. As it approaches, the mass movement against Rodrigo Duterte’s tyranny and against attempts of the Marcoses to return to power continues to gain strength. This movement has merged with the main flow of the election campaign of the leading political opposition candidate, and is reaching and rousing hundreds of thousands of people in street demonstrations across the country.

On the other hand, Duterte and his cohorts and minions are clinging more tightly to power. They are using worse tactics to perpetuate themselves in power. They have intensified repression and political attacks against progressive parties representing the broadest anti-tyranny organized force. Duterte’s attacks also target the leading political opposition.

Having appointed all its officers, Duterte now has full control of the Commission on Elections. Thus, he has all the power to install his candidate in Malacañang by manipulating the election results. However, in the face of the growing anti-tyranny movement, Duterte is keenly aware that brazen stealing of the elections can ignite a 1986-like massive uprising which he mortally

fears.

To make the results credible, funds are now flowing to create a false picture on media, social media and surveys of broad support for the Marcos-Duterte tandem. To derail the growing mass movement, the political opposition is relentlessly red-tagged to terrorize their ranks, or sow intrigue and break the broad unity of the progressive and conservatives against Duterte’s tyranny.

As Marcos did before declaring martial law in 1972, Duterte is now creating a scenario of “communist disruption” in the elections which he can possibly use to impose military

rule before or after the elections to perpetuate himself in power or install his chosen one in some form of “political transition.”

But whatever scheme Duterte has to perpetuate himself in power or install a someone to seat in his stead will surely be resisted by the Filipino people who are determined to end his tyrannical reign. The further strengthening of the democratic mass movement and the giant street demonstrations will serve as one of the key factors that will shape the outcome of the political struggles in the coming weeks.



Duterte’s insistent cling to power in the face of the rising anti-tyranny mass movement and alliance of the political opposition intensifies the contradictions between the rival factions of the ruling classes. The US and its political agents are trying to iron out an accommodation by pairing up Duterte’s candidates with the opposition. In the face of deepening crisis of the ruling system, these attempts will likely fail to gain the support of the major rival factions.

Putting an end to the tyrannical rule and attaining justice will not end with the Duterte’s ouster or leaving the throne. He must be made to account and punished for his innumerable crimes, and made to pay for plundering the people’s coffers. All political detainees must be released and the policy of filing trumped up charges, armed suppression, intimidation and repression against patriotic and democratic forces must be put to an end. The entire state must be cleansed of military officers appointed by Duterte to gain the AFP and PNP’s loyalty, and of the fascist influence on all state policies.

To effectively push through with these, the national democratic forces must thoroughly strengthen

the people’s organized ranks and their capability to mobilize large numbers in the streets. They must completely shatter all fears and do everything to raise the political consciousness and militancy of millions of people in the cities and countryside.




They must sharply and firmly link the anti-fascist political struggles against Duterte’s tyranny with the people’s economic struggles against rising prices of fuel, food and other commodities, as well as against the neoliberal policies that will further tighten foreign control of the country’s economy. Workers must be mobilized to fight for wage increases and to defend their rights. Amplify the demand for genuine land reform, and intensify the struggle against land-grabbing by landlords, plantation and mining companies, and infrastructure, ecotourism and energy projects.

The following weeks must see the further invigoration of the masses’ political activity and further advance of the movement to end Duterte’s tyranny. Before the elections, more massive demonstrations must be mounted, while preparing to act and engage in political struggles immediately after the elections to effectively advance the democratic struggles whatever shape the situation takes.

During this period, units of the New People’s Army (NPA) must mount tactical offensives that they can win in order to prevent Duterte from using the military and police for his schemes to suppress the people’s resistance. The NPA must closely monitor the movements of the AFP and PNP and take advantage of the big possibility of the state armed forces being overstretched if Duterte resorts to martial law.

We must do all we can to take advantage of the deepening crisis of the ruling system, advance the people’s struggles, and strengthen the Party and the entire revolutionary movement.

AB

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## With the support of the masses, the NPA is invincible

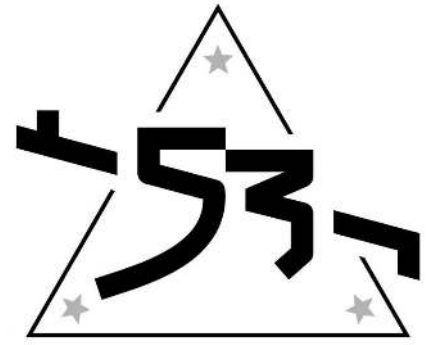
**D**uterte and his generals have failed to crush the armed resistance of the people after almost six years of intensified military operations. Last March 29, the people celebrated across the country the victories of the New People's Army (NPA) in the past year on the occasion of its 53rd founding anniversary.

In a report by the NPA-Negros, NPA units in the region mounted 13 offensives against operating troops of the AFP and PNP from January-February alone. Meanwhile, the NPA-Central Negros said it launched 35 military actions from March 2021 to March this year where the enemy suffered 60 casualties. In their statement, the NPA unit said it continues to expand membership, majority of which comes from the youth who are determined to advance the armed struggle for the people. The

battalion-sized people's militia has maintained its strength and has implemented policies of the people's democratic government in the countryside.

In Southern Tagalog, hundreds attended the celebrations held in Quezon, Rizal, Batangas, Mindoro and Palawan. According to the regional Party committee, the past years which saw difficult struggles have "steeled the determination and capability" of Red fighters.

In North Central Mindanao, the



Party committee enumerated four reasons why the people's war is sure to advance in the region. These include having a core of steeled Red commanders and fighters, the continuing unwavering support of the masses, the clear failure of the Duterte regime's "whole-of-nation" approach, and the worsening landlessness in the countryside. **AB**

### NPA attacks AFP soldiers in Rizal and Iloilo

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Rizal ambushed troops of the 80th IB near their camp at Maugraw, Sitio Quinao, Barangay Puray, Rodriguez, Rizal last March 26. Two soldiers were killed while two others were wounded.

According to the local NPA unit, the ambush was in response to the demands of the people to punish soldiers for their acts of terror in the province, including the most recent arrest of a Dumagat minority last March 23.

In Iloilo, Red fighters destroyed 14 motorcycles owned by CAFGU and regular soldiers guarding the Century Peak company in Sitio Insobrehan, Barangay Igcabugao, Igaras last March 21. The company is a notorious workers' rights violator and has denied its workers their sufficient wage and benefits.

Ka Ariston Remus, spokesperson of the NPA unit, belied claims of the 3rd IB that the motorcycles were owned by civilians. **AB**

### Groups mark Day of the Landless in Bicol

**M**ore than 30 vehicles and hundreds of peasants and their supporters launched the Caravan of the Landless for Land, Food and Justice from March 25 to March 30 in 40 towns and five cities in Bicol. The activity was led by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Bicol (Bicol Peasant Movement).

Protesters called for free land distribution; food, livelihood and rights for all; sufficient aid, dismantling of the NTF-Elcac, and more. For their main activity, they held the Global Day of the Landless on March 29. Similar protests were held in Cavite and Pangasinan, as well as in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City on that day.

The Global Day of the Landless was first observed on 1995 on the initiative of the Asian Peasant Coalition to unite various landless movements and struggles in the countryside. This year, 110 peasant alliances, institutes and organizations, mostly from Asia and Africa, participated in the event.

In the past decades, widespread landgrabbing by big corporations and capitalist governments has accelerated, according to the Pes-

ticide Action Network (PAN) Asia Pacific. In the Philippines, this is seen in the expansion of capitalist plantations growing bananas, pineapples, corn and oil palm, as well as destructive mining. This has resulted in the dislocation of entire peasant and indigenous communities from their farms and ancestral lands.

There is also the push for landgrabbing in the guise of "climate change investments," according to the group. This include investments in farms and natural resources (including forests, seas, minerals, land, biodiversity), obsession with biofuel and environmental protection purportedly to balance carbon emissions. These schemes have resulted in a culture of impunity, and plunder by and bigger profits for aggressors. **AB**

# Balikatan 2022: Heightening US-China rivalry and counterinsurgency war

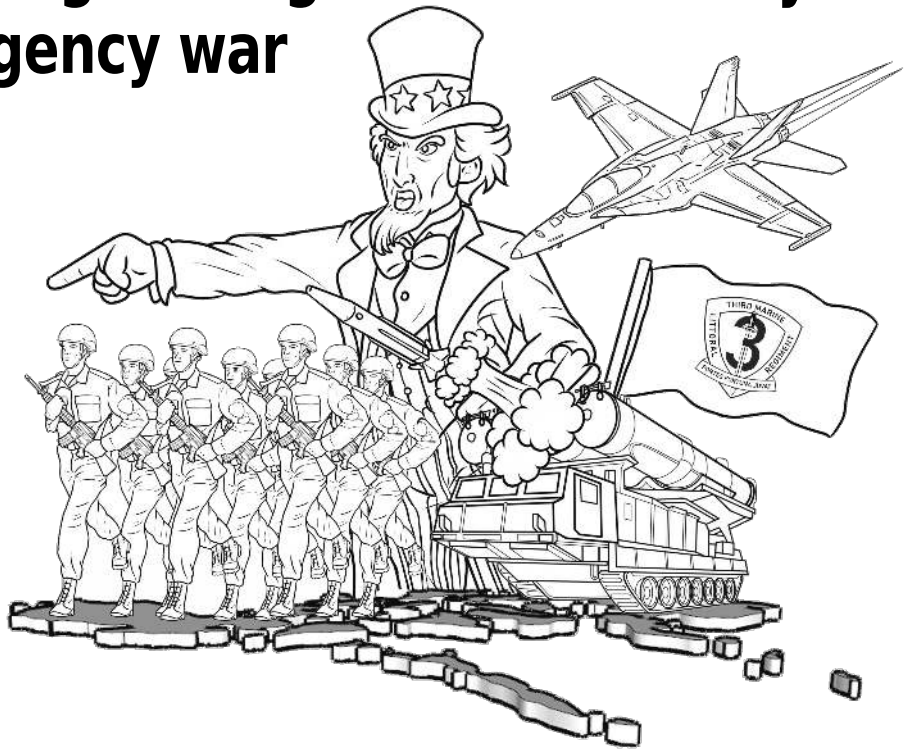
Both the US and the Philippine governments boasted of the Balikatan 2022 as being the "largest" in the last seven years of annual joint exercises between their armed forces. This year's exercises include aspects aimed at the US' war preparations against China. There are also features that are geared towards heightening the brutal counterinsurgency war against the Filipino people.

Up to 5,100 American soldiers and 3,800 Filipino troopers are officially participating in the Balikatan 2022 which formally runs from March 28 to April 8. For the first time, the exercises will include the 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR), a team of around 90 personnel whose mission is to prepare an attack against China.

The 3rd MLR was organized just this March 3 at the US Marine Corps Base in Hawaii, USA. According to Marine Corps Assistant Commandant Gen. Eric Smith, the unit will be optimized for conducting expeditionary advance base operations (EABO) and is "specialized to deal with the rising threat of China."

In US military language, EABO pertains to operations of relatively small and covert, highly mobile and easily movable units deployed to occupy naval or inland territories that are within range of enemy weapons, including missiles. These will serve as forward units to strike on the enemy's surveillance and weapons systems and support a larger operation.

These units are primarily armed with radar systems and missiles. EABO missions include taking control of seas and shores and denying the enemy the capability to operate in these areas. Their mission also consist of putting up forward positions for arming and refueling, and conducting reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition.



Expectedly, the 3rd MLR took on the major role in the early days of Balikatan 2022 in Cagayan to train for said missions, which included a simulated invasion of the shores of Claveria in the province. In nearby town of Aparri last March 28, US troopers went through with the amphibious landing of the MIM-104 Patriot. This is the first time the US deployed said surface-to-air missile system in the Philippines. At the same time, the US Marines demonstrated their High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems in a live-fire exercise in Capas, Tarlac.

During the Balikatan, the Marine Corps War Fighting Laboratory observed the exercises in order to come up with techniques, tactics and methods for the 3rd MLR. This unit is set to be augmented with up to 2,000 personnel, which will be divided into smaller units comprising 75-100 Marines. The regiment will reportedly join in the next Kamandag and Balikatan exercises, before reaching operating capability in 2023.

## Interoperability: US command of the AFP

While the Balikatan intensifies war preparations against China and raises the prospect of war in East Asia, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is dragged into defending

US interests. This situation has remained in effect due to Rodrigo Duterte's refusal to abrogate unequal military treaties with the US.

Under the pretext of "interoperability," the US military tightens its command and control over the AFP. One of the highlights in the current Balikatan is a "command post operation" in order to supposedly enhance the joint capabilities of both militaries in planning, command and communication. This is no different from the command post operation in January 2015 in Mamasapano, Maguindanao where even generals of the AFP were being ordered around by US soldiers.

The US also makes the AFP drool over arms and military equipment which will be used in the counterinsurgency war and in future wars of the US. The Balikatan is used as an event for the US to showcase surplus war machinery (including the costly F-16) which it intends to sell to the AFP under the Foreign Military Financing which favors American defense corporations.

The US has long been directing the AFP's counterinsurgency war with the particular aim of using US weaponry, including combat helicopters, jet fighters and bombs in its counterrevolutionary war against the people.

# The US is behind the AFP's counterinsurgency

The Philippine Army First Scout Ranger Regiment's commanding officer recently went to visit Indonesia from March 29 to April 1 to plan out the scheduled military exercises between the Philippines and Indonesia in June 2022. The exercises supposedly aim to share knowledge, tactics and techniques, and methods of conducting counterinsurgency operations.

While it appears that the neighboring countries are independently planning out their actions, their counterinsurgency campaigns are being conducted within the US "global war against terrorism." The series of training by the militaries of these nations such as "Balikatan" in the Philippines and "Gandura Shield" in Indonesia, make these armies appendages of the US military in fighting revolutionaries and rival imperialist nations.

In the Philippines, even as ruling regimes change, the Armed Forces of the Philippines' remains obeisant, following the baton of the US counterinsurgency doctrine. Even as Rodrigo Duterte's term ends in June, the brutal counterinsurgency war designed by him and the US will continue to terrorize peasant and tribal communities. This poses a challenge to the guerrilla warfare being waged by the New People's Army in defense of the people.

## Increased forces against a "weakened enemy"

Despite repeatedly bragging that the NPA will be crushed before the end of Duterte's term, the AFP and the Philippine National Police (PNP) added new combat units against the people's army in 2021. Currently, there are 166 combat battalions of the Army, Air Force, Marines, Scout Rangers, PNP Special Action Force and other police and military units deployed against the NPA.

This superfluity has enabled the AFP and PNP to deploy five to six

battalions in their priority subregional areas or guerrilla fronts of the NPA. Also, two to three battalions are assigned to non-focused subregions and guerrilla fronts.

An estimated 60% of the total number of combat units against the NPA are deployed in the regions of Southern Tagalog, Eastern Visayas, Southern Mindanao, Bicol and North Central Mindanao. There is also a marked increase in reactionary forces deployed in Far South Mindanao and Negros.

Meanwhile, the newly-created 102nd IB is currently in Cagayan, bringing the number of battalions in the province to five, aside from the PNP's combat forces. The move aims to defeat the NPA in the area in order for the US and the AFP to focus on China, which is only around 840 kilometers from the province. It was in the shores of Claveria, Cagayan that the US 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment recently trained for the specific mission of attacking China. *(Read related article in page 4.)*

## Shock-and-awe forces

Since 2017, the enemy has been carrying out Joint Operations in line with the US Army's Combined Armed Operations. This purports to overcome the lack of coordination between different military branches for a sustained attack.

The commands of combat units, artillery and tanks, attack planes and helicopters and naval forces are unified for a coordinated shock-and-



awe attack against the guerrilla forces. Correspondingly, Joint Task Forces headed by the generals of the infantry divisions were organized in the regions. The US also provides support to the AFP's cyberwarfare capability in order to enhance the latter's internal communications system in commanding battles.

They deploy more forces to lay siege on communities by integrating the police forces in the operations.

It is also under this principle that the Brigade Combat Team was created with its own combined arms and continuous training by the US. This unit was deployed to the 11th ID which was formed in 2018 with a funding of at least ₱900 million. The 11th ID's operations cover the provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, where US military forces maintain their base.

The seemingly overwhelming military superiority, including hundreds of billions of funds poured by Duterte, is not a sign of strength but an indication of the ruling system relying on armed suppression to perpetuate themselves in power.

# The masses' support to the people's war is unwavering

"Brothers/sisters and comrades, take whatever you need." Posted on a hut, the invitation greeted Red fighters of the New People's Army inside a guerilla zone in North Central Mindanao. They were overjoyed amid the banana trees which surrounded the hut. After having their fill, they cleared the farm from weeds and planted more banana trees.

The invitation was a relief to the comrades who have been dealing with intensified military operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for several months. The operation involved troops from at least two battalions with close air support of helicopters and jet fighters. The operations brought terror to the masses, dislocated them from their communities and livelihoods, and destroyed the forests. Throughout this period, Red fighters endured great challenges, including months of food shortages.

As expected, the enemy was unable to sustain such large-scale focused operations. When the situation decelerated, a team of Red fighters was immediately dispatched to link up with the local people.

They encountered abandoned huts and farms, evidence of massive dislocation. It was clear that residents hastily fled their communities. They left behind their things and some jobs were clearly unfinished. Even domesticated animals were left behind.

A few days later, the Red fighters came across the peasant who owned the hut with the bananas. He told the comrades that it has been six years since an NPA unit operated in his area but he still prepared his farm for the comrades should they find themselves there. This deep concern for the comrades' well-being is the kind of support the NPA receives even in areas battered by militarization.

The organized masses are deeply worried during times of in-

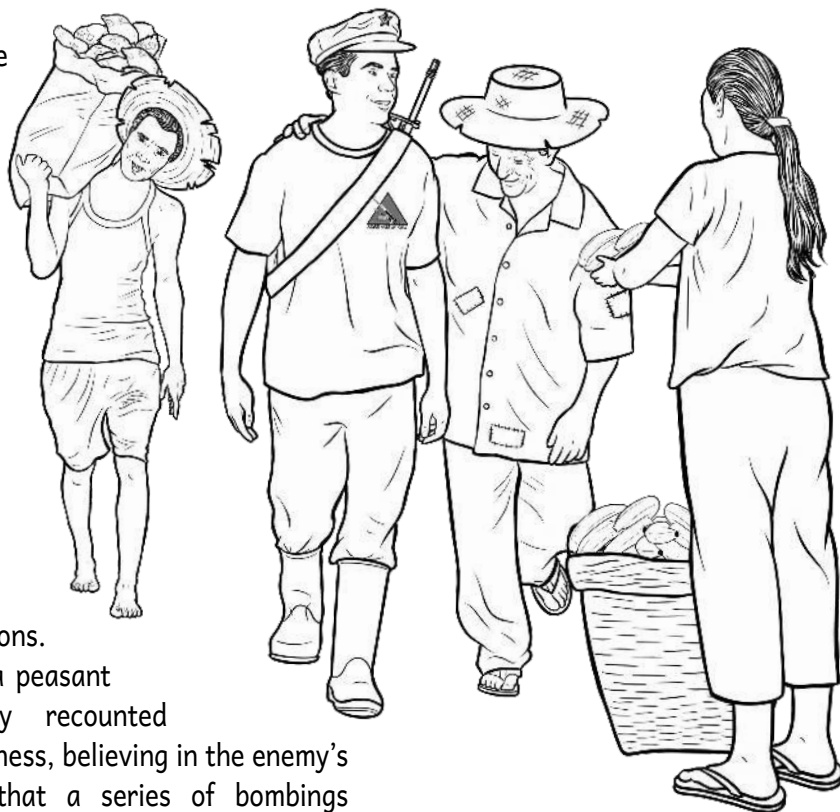
tense operations.

Once, a peasant tearfully recounted his sadness, believing in the enemy's boast that a series of bombings using FA-50 jet fighters wiped out a unit of Red fighters. A week after the incident, he plucked up the courage to visit the site of the bombings. He couldn't imagine leaving the comrades' remains to the wild pigs. He was overjoyed when he saw that his beloved Red fighters were all alive and well.

There was also the time when the comrades lost their way and found themselves in a farm owned by brothers who never encountered the people's army before. In a short time, the comrades explained the revolution and secured the brothers' support. The brothers did not find it hard to comprehend the cause of the Red fighters as they found themselves talking with fellow farmers who shared similar hardships and problems. Aside from giving immediate support, the younger brother decided to join the people's army.

These experiences show the masses' unwavering willingness to support and directly participate in the people's war.

While the Red army is engaged in intensive war with the enemy, they ensure that the comrades avoid



surprise attacks. They readily pass information if they notice tracks or telltale signs of the presence of fascist soldiers. They go on patrols to secure their surroundings.

They ensure that the Red fighters' health are well taken care of to maintain their high capacity to fight. They offer their crops and other food as support. They also help in storing food in between operations.

In the midst of enemy attacks on their livelihoods and communities, they continue to wage revolution. They don't stop in expanding and strengthening their organizations. They avoid the enemy's indiscriminate and forcible campaign of "surrenders." If they have been coerced to surrender, they make themselves scarce so that the soldiers cannot use them in combat operations. They carefully hide the things that the people's army leave to them for safekeeping. Above all, they wholeheartedly allow and support their children to join and stay in the people's army.

(From *Ang Kalihukan*, NDF-NCMR revolutionary paper.)

AB



## The masses and the people's war await you

The youth, especially young intellectuals, can contribute greatly to advancing the people's war, according to Ka Amihan Guerrero, New People's Army (NPA)-Agusan del Sur spokesperson. Ka Amihan was among the Red fighters who wrote to members of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) on the occasion of the NPA's 53rd anniversary last March 29.

"I know that you have sufficient knowledge why the NPA and armed struggle are needed. I know that you are also aware of KM's important role in strengthening and advancing the armed struggle to a higher level," Ka Amihan wrote in her letter.

She described the urgent need of their platoon to reinforce the two members who came from the petty bourgeois class who handle up to three key tasks. Because they are overburdened, some duties are forgotten or left behind. Hence, there are many "vacant" positions for "youth applicants."

There are tasks for organizational consolidation such as political education, she says. "The comrades need to maintain and sharpen their thinking ... so that they are alert and can immediately counter the enemy's strategic and planned psywar."

Medical officers are also needed so that health services, something that is in such a short supply in the countryside, will reach more people. Also needed are comrades who can teach Red fighters who have low or no capacity to read, write and count, and comrades who can undertake widespread education campaigns among the masses, especially about their rights.

One of those who heeded the call is Ka Elyan, who left his campus and street activist life for the countryside. In his letter, he related that his first years in the people's army were not easy. "In the process of becoming a Red fighter, I went through many sacrifices and hardships ... including learning the language, each fighter



and the masses' particular characteristics, the work that is needed and how to adapt to the culture." He embraced the process as someone once told him, "there is nothing easy in waging revolution."

Ka Lisa agrees that becoming a Red fighter is not easy. "Inherent to army life is intense self-remoulding," she narrated in her letter. But as she has seen the deep roots of inequality and societal poverty, she is steadfast in waging the people's war. "This is the only way ... to change everything—not just to paint over the rotten society with happy colors, but to change its core."

This is also the topic of Ka Kredo's letter. "Leaving the life we were born into is complicated. But we need to persevere in remoulding ourselves and forge our revolutionary outlook, stand and methods." He challenged the youth to dare uphold the interests of the majority in the midst of so many bourgeois reasons—doubts, fears and indecision. "Instead of being chained to the life we know, we should choose the life of relevance."

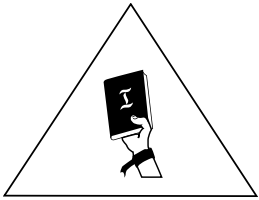
In Ka Ani's letter, she narrated that Red fighters are aware of the

situation of the youth in the cities during the time of pandemic and school closures. The fighters experienced firsthand the youth's hardships in blended learning and the problems it brought to parents and children. Worse, a calamity is looming in the horizon—the restoration of the Marcoses and perpetuation of a Duterte in state power.

"The future is bleak," she said. "The people face the enormous challenge of decisively stopping this calamity. We, the youth, have a big role in winning this struggle."

Ka Ani recalled how the youth started arousing, organizing and mobilizing thousands under the Marcos dictatorship. "It is in our hands as heirs of the revolution to advance the people's war to victory," she said. "If those who came before us succeeded in sacrificing and meeting the call to bear arms to fight for genuine justice and peace, we should be more able to do so now."

Together with scores of the oppressed, Ka Ani and the comrade fighters has this to say: "See you! We and the people in the countryside are waiting for you!"



**KAGUMA**

On March 28, 1971, the Kaguma (Katipunan ng mga Gurong Makabayan) was established to unite teachers along the path of national democracy. The Kaguma is an allied organization of the NDFP.

**2,654**

workers in the Amazon warehouse in Staten Island, New York in the US, voted in favor of the **Amazon Labor Union**, the first union established within the giant company.

**4th**



**ALU**

**Philippine rank among 22 countries where cronyism is rampant.**

Around 10% of the country's wealth is owned by billionaires in collusion with the state.

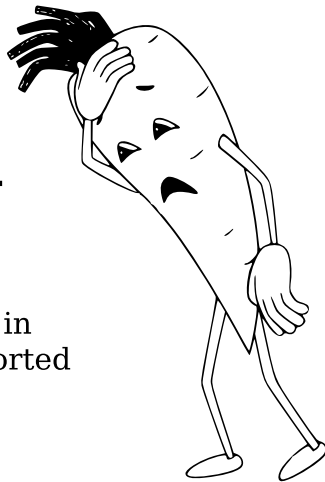
*Source: Crony Capitalism Index, The Economist 2022*

**10,206**

of more than 30,500 schools were opened for limited in-person classes despite the fact that majority of areas are already under **Alert Level 1**. The **DepEd** and local government units are pointing fingers at each other for the slow opening of classes.

*Source: Department of Education, March 22, 2022*

**₱2.5 MILLION**



**70%**

daily are lost by carrot farmers in Benguet due to flooding of imported carrots. **Since last year, their sales have dropped by 40%.**

of all farmland across the world is controlled by **1% of largest agricultural companies.**

*Source: International Land Coalition and Oxfam, 2020*

*Source: League of Associations sa La Trinidad Vegetable Areas*

**₱203 BILLION**

taxes on property which the Marcos estate has failed to pay over the past 30 years since the death of the dictator.

**28**

years since the Philippines was connected to the **world wide web** or internet. The first connection was established on the morning of **March 29, 1994** with a speed of **64 Kilo Bytes Per Second (kbps)**.



## Soldiers run amok in Negros, kill 2 civilians

**T**wo civilians were killed by soldiers running amok after they were outmaneuvered by a unit of the people's army in Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental. They abducted and subsequently murdered farmer brothers, Jayson and Arnulfo Sabanal, residents of Sitio Maliko-liko, Barangay Carabalan last March 25. The victims were presented as Red fighters supposedly killed during the encounter.

The soldiers also prevented 77 residents of the sitio from going about their lives, threatening them with bombs should an encounter happen again in the area. Last March 27, the house of Raffy Dayupan was torched by troops of 94th IB in Sitio Camuag in the same barangay. A mortar hit and damaged the house of Kiko Paculanang in Sitio Maliko-liko. The soldiers also torched a handtractor and thresher of the farmers in the area. Moreover, last March 29, residents of Barangay Quintin Remo and nearby villages reported that they were red-tagged by elements of 62nd IB. Last April 1, military forces killed Elbert Quillano (Ka Carding) and Jessa Quillano (Ka Clea) while in their custody in Sitio Kulihaw, Barangay Buenavista.

In Negros Oriental, elements of police and military arrested Nemfa de Lima, a farmer and resident of Sitio Uwayan, Barangay Budlasan, Canlaon City last April 1. They also attempted to arrest Noel Montefalco. Military troops ransacked and strafed his home in Sitio Natoling and planted firearms while he

was not there.

In Iloilo last March 29, Elmer Forro was arrested in Barangay Lutac, Cabatuan by the PNP-Iloilo. Forro is the secretary-general of Bayan-Panay. Trumped-up charges were filed linking him to an ambush by the NPA last April 7, 2020 in Lambunao.

In Surigao del Sur, four chain-saw operators were fired at by elements of 75th IB in Kabalawan, Km. 23, Anahaw Daan, Tago last March 24. Jomar Loyola was wounded in the incident and was left in the area. Last March 31, Chariz Tawide Jacinto, a resident of the same barangay, was arrested without a warrant. In Tandag City, famer Jason Mansinatao was also arrested without a warrant in Naw Sauhon, Maitum last March 30.

In Bulacan, a fake encounter was staged by 70th IB to cover up their strafing of civilians in Sitio Osboy, Barangay San Mateo, Norzagaray last March 30.

In Butuan City, a soldier of the 65th IB shot and wounded a farmer in his thigh in P16, Barangay Los Angeles last March 27. AB

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### Fabricated charges against Doc Naty dismissed over lack of due process

LAST MARCH 30 the Bayugan City Regional Trial Court dismissed trumped up charges of kidnapping and illegal detention against Dra. Natividad Castro, known as Doc Naty. According to the court, the police violated Doc Naty's rights for due process and that it has no jurisdiction over her. Thus, she was released from the Agusan del Sur Provincial Jail where she was held for 40 days.

The court opined that Doc Naty was deprived of due process because she did not receive a subpoena before she was served a warrant of arrest. She was also not given an opportunity to defend herself in a preliminary investigation, which is a "violation of substantive rights." Even the warrant of arrest presented to Doc Naty was in a different name.



**Union of electricians.** Workers of Hypervolt Contractor Corporation voted last April 3 in a certification election in favor of Hypervolt Workers Union representing them in negotiations with the management. Hypervolt is a company which lays out electrical wiring and builds related infrastructures.

**Fasting of Himamaylan 3.** NDFP peace consultant Ramon Patriarca, activists CJ Matarlo and John Michal Tecson protested through fasting last March 30 to commemorate the bloody operations of AFP and PNP forces or the Synchronized Enhanced Managing of Police Operations (SEMPO) in three towns in Negros Oriental which murdered 14 farmers in 24 hours.

**March for truth.** Some 2,000 supporters of Leni Robrero and activists assembled in Paciano Rizal Park in Los Baños, Laguna in a program to condemn the spread of disinformation and violence which continues from Marcos dictatorship up to the present. The brother of Sen. Leila de Lima, who also attended the event, criticized the persistent attacks of the regime against its critics.

**Fight against privatization of Guimba Water District.** Residents of Guimba, Nueva Ecija protested in front of Guimba Water District (GWD) last March 28 to oppose the company's privatization plans. Guimba's water system will be put under a joint-venture agreement between PAMANA Water Corporation and the management of GWD. Residents argued that the JVA is just an excuse and water services will be taken over completely in 25 years.

# Duterte's triple treachery to Philippine sovereignty

Rodrigo Duterte signed last March 21 amendments to Public Service Act (PSA or Republic Act 11659) which further opens up the Philippine economy to foreign investments and capitalists. This is after the successive approval of amendments to the Foreign Investments Act (RA 11647) last February and the Retail Trade Liberalization Act (RA 11595) last December 2021.

The amendment to the PSA will allow foreign capitalists to fully own and operate telecommunication, domestic shipping, railways and subways, airlines, expressways and tollways and airports, paving the way for foreign capitalists to completely control the country's critical infrastructure.

Foreign ownership of key industries does not only threaten the country's sovereignty, but also its security. Based on the country's experience under all-out privatization, this new law will lead to higher costs of transportation and communication.

The Foreign Investments Act reduced the amount of paid up capital to \$100,000 or ₱5,000,000, and the required workforce to 15 (from 50) to fully own and operate a local enterprise. The related updated "foreign investment negative list" will now also open up more economic fields for foreign capitalists including tourism and agriculture which will pave the way for expansion of plantations and ecotourism projects which have displaced peasants from their land.

The Retail Trade Liberalization Act will now allow foreign capitalists to invest as low as ₱10 million (from ₱127 million under the original law in 2000) to set up a retail store in the Philippines, which will compete

against mid-sized and small Filipino retailers, and further promote foreign goods instead of locally produced commodities.

Foreign capitalists, particularly American capitalists, together with their local bouregois-comprador agents are most gratified by these laws. They have long called for the removal of limitations for foreign businesses.

This triple measure brings the country back to the era of the Parity Rights Amendment under the Bell Trade Act of 1946 which allowed US citizens equal rights to exploit the country's economic resources.

## Drowned by foreign investments

A look back at Philippine history shows that there is no evidence that foreign investments have developed the country. In fact, it has been instrumental in keeping the country backwards and non-industrial.

In a study by Ibon Foundation, the share of foreign investments relative to the gross domestic product (GDP) increased since the 1970s. Inward FDI flows were at an annual average of some US\$80 million in the 1970s (1970-1979) and reached an average US\$6.2 billion over the



last decade (2012-2021).

Its equivalent share in GDP quadrupled from a little less than 0.5% to 1.9% over that same period. The inward stock of FDI and its share to GDP also increased. Yet, despite increase in foreign investments, manufacturing and agriculture is down to its weakest in 70 years.

The bulk of FDI goes to manufacturing, according to Ibon. Most of these are in the export processing zones and not related to developing of local industries. Manufacturing shrank to 18.6% of GDP in 2020—its smallest share since 1950. Meanwhile, agriculture recorded its weakest share to GDP in history—9.2% last 2019.

Surely, these triple neoliberal measures will worsen the country's reliance to foreign capital and debt. These laws will also reinforce the country's orientation of exporting low-value added semi-manufactures connected to the global assembly line controlled by multinational corporations. These will worsen the country's inability to stand on its own feet. AB