

# LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL

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July - October 2007

## Arroyo regime wracked by new wave of crisis

By Bagani Dong-ilay

The government of Gloria M. Arroyo may be facing the most serious challenge to its political survival that could spell its downfall before her presidential term ends in 2010. Two recent corruption scandals involving Arroyo's appointed officials and her husband have worsened the political crisis staring this already scandal-ridden regime in its face.

The first scandal concerns the over-priced US\$329 million National Broadband Network deal with the Chinese company Zhong Xing Telecommunication Equipment Company Limited (ZTE). According to sources, the contract has been greatly overpriced because of kickbacks for the presidential family and their associates. The scandal broke into the open when businessman Joey de Venecia III, a son of House of Representatives Speaker and long-time Arroyo ally Jose de Venecia, exposed to the public the direct involvement of presidential husband Mike Arroyo in the anomalous deal.

The younger de Venecia made the expose to complain against the highly irregular way that the contract for the National Broadband Network was awarded to ZTE even though his company offered a lower bid. He then cited an incident where Mike Arroyo reportedly ordered him to "back off" from the bidding.

This scandal is causing a serious rift between the loyalists of Arroyo and de Venecia within the ruling coalition. The bourgeois opposition was quick to pounce on this and issued a new call for Arroyo's impeachment. Rattled by the turn of events, Arroyo called a meeting of congressmen and local officials to the presidential palace to make a loyalty check. During the meeting, 190 congressmen and 50 local officials were each given a package containing P500,000 (about US\$12,000). This incident leaked out to the media and poured more oil into the fire.

Widespread public disgust over this bribery scandal broke out. Three respected Catholic bishops -- Julio Labayen, Deogracias Iniguez and Antonio Tobias -- belonging to the Kilusan para sa Makabansang Ekonomya (Movement for a Nationalist Economy), declared that they

*Arroyo wracked, page 8, col 2 ...*



*Protesters burn an effigy of Gloria Arroyo, "the queen of darkness", during a massive rally in July in Manila, calling for her ouster.  
from Arkibong Bayan.*

## Arrest of Prof. Sison draws worldwide protests

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

Like wildfire, protest actions spread swiftly and widely following the arrest of Professor Jose Ma. Sison last 28 August in Utrecht, The Netherlands. The protests in different parts of the world continued until Prof. Sison's release from detention on 13 September.

Less than 48 hours after the arrest, Filipino and solidarity activists around the world mounted rallies and pickets in front of embassies and consulates of the Netherlands, the Philippines and the United States of America. Angry petition letters and statements demanding Prof. Sison's immediate release flooded the communication trunklines of the three countries' foreign offices.

In Amsterdam, The Netherlands, one day after Sison's arrest, more than 100 activists and sympathizers joined an

indignation rally in the city center called by the International Committee Defend and Dutch solidarity groups.

From Amsterdam, to Istanbul (Turkey), Jakarta (Indonesia), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Manila (Philippines), protesters shouted and demanded: *Freedom for Jose Ma. Sison! Stop the political persecution of Filipino progressives!*

Protests were mounted in various city and town centers in the Philippines; in Amsterdam and The Hague (The Netherlands); in Los Angeles, New York and Washington (USA); in

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*Workers unions and peoples' organizations hold protest rally (left) in front of the consulate of The Netherlands on 6 Sept in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to protest the treacherous arrest of Prof. Jose Maria Sison by Dutch police on 28 August. In Utrecht, Prof. Sison is greeted by friends and colleagues (above) upon his release from the Scheveningen prison, 13 Sept. fotos from Arkibong Bayan.*

**... Sison arrest, from page 1, col 3**

Vancouver, Ottawa and Montreal (Canada); in Milan and Rome (Italy); and in Sydney (Australia), Vienna (Austria), Brussels (Belgium), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Jakarta (Indonesia), Tokyo (Japan), Seoul (Korea), Oslo (Norway), Taipei (Taiwan), Istanbul (Turkey) and London (UK).

Prominent individuals such as former US attorney general Ramsey Clark called for the immediate release and a stop to the political persecution of Prof. Sison, currently Chairperson of the anti-imperialist International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) and Chief Political Consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Prof. Sison was arrested by Dutch police

based on trumped-up charges of inciting the alleged murder of Romulo Kintanar in 2003 and Arturo Tabara in 2004, even while Sison has been living as a political refugee in The Netherlands since 1988. The New People's Army (NPA) had admitted to killing Kintanar and Tabara, who were armed security agents of the Manila government and notorious heads of criminal syndicates at the time of their deaths.

Prof. Sison suffered 17 days of solitary confinement and daily rigorous interrogation before being ordered released on 13 September by The Hague district court, because there were "insufficient indications that the accused committed the offense he is

charged with". The Netherlands Court of Appeals later upheld the district court's decision and stating further that Prof. Sison is "not a criminal perpetrator in any sense".

In a statement unprecedented in The Netherlands, the Court of Appeals pointed out that the charges presented by the Dutch prosecutors "must be seen in their political context" and that "the statements given by the various prosecution witnesses cannot be simply accepted as reliable".

Witnesses for the prosecution were almost entirely supplied by the Manila government. They were interviewed by the Dutch prosecutors inside the Manila embassies of the US and The Netherlands and in the former US military base in northern Philippines, Clark Air Base.

At his release, Prof. Sison expressed his gratitude to family, friends and colleagues who expressed concern and campaigned against his detention. The detention was especially difficult, he said, "because I am innocent of the false and politically-motivated charge leveled against me."

Unfazed by the ordeal, he stated, "I will continue to exercise my freedom to speak and other democratic rights. I will continue to work for national freedom, human rights, social justice and an enduring just peace in the Philippines." ■

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# NDFP keeps door open for peace talks, Manila government steps-up all-out war on revolutionary forces

By Ed Ladera

Despite all-out and brutal attacks by the government of Gloria M. Arroyo against armed revolutionary forces and the legal opposition, the Negotiating Panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines declared recently that it has remained steadfast in resuming peace negotiations aimed at resolving the root causes of armed conflict in the Philippines. In a number of consultations with various peace advocates in October and early this month, the NDFP Negotiating Panel made clear its willingness for a peaceful and just resolution to the ongoing civil war.

On 12 October in Amsterdam, the Panel signed a joint statement with Philippine Senator Maria Ana Madrigal, declaring the urgent necessity of resuming formal peace talks between the NDFP and the government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). In the joint statement, Senator Madrigal, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Peace, Unification and Reconciliation, proposed the setting up of a Technical Working Group (TWG) that would cooperate with the NDFP in forging draft agreements on socio-economic reforms and political and constitutional reforms. The NDFP proposed the setting up of committees of experts with five members each, but was amenable to the Senator's setting up the TWG.

Senator Madrigal agreed with the NDFP that Philippine society is afflicted with a grave economic, political, cultural and moral crisis and that the resumption of formal talks in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations is urgently needed.

The NDFP Negotiating Panel described some major impediments which the Arroyo regime has put up and needs to be acted upon:

- the repeated declaration of all-out war against the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA) and the NDFP, demanding the capitulation of the revolutionary forces and negotiations at the local level for the purpose of splitting them;
- the brutal campaigns of military and police suppression causing the

uprooting of more than a million people;

- the extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances of more than 1000 unarmed legal activists;
- the killing of NDFP Political Consultant Sotero Llamas, the forced disappearances of NDFP Consultants, their immediate family and staff, and the filing of false charges and issuing of warrants of arrest against NDFP Political Consultant Vicente Ladlad and NDFP Reciprocal Working Committee members Rafael Baylosis and Randall Echanis;
- the failure of the Arroyo regime to comply with its obligations in the Oslo Joint Statement of January 2004 and the Oslo Joint Statement of February 2004, regarding the terrorist blacklisting of the CPP, the NPA and Prof. Jose Maria Sison, the NDFP Chief Political Consultant;
- the failure of the Arroyo government to compensate the victims of human rights violations under the Marcos regime;
- and the false charges against Prof. Sison resulting in his unjust arrest, detention and continuing

persecution, and the Dutch police raids on the NDFP Information Office and homes of NDFP negotiating panelists, consultants and staffers.

In a separate document given to the Senator, the NDFP Negotiating Panel declared that these unprecedented attacks on Sison and the NDFP have rendered Europe an inhospitable place for the NDFP. It is thus necessary to transfer the venue of the GRP-NDFP peace talks to a place outside Europe, even as the Norwegian Government continues to play its role of Third Party Facilitator.

Norwegian Ambassador Hans Brattskar, Special Envoy of the Norwegian Government, newly appointed to take charge of Norway's third party facilitator role in the peace talks, met with GRP officials in Manila and with the NDFP Negotiating Panel and Consultants in Utrecht in October 2007.

Ambassador Brattskar and his three companions declared Norway's commitment to continue fostering the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. They listened to the NDFP delegation's explanation on the current situation of the peace talks. The NDFP officials stressed the openness of the revolutionary forces towards the resumption of serious peace negotiations in accordance with The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 and other agreements

**Peace talks, to page 4, col 2 ...**

*NDFP Chief Political Consultant Prof. Jose Maria Sison (left), Senator Jamby Madrigal (center) and NDFP Negotiating Panel Chairperson Luis G. Jalandoni sign the joint statement on 12 September, calling for a resumption of peace negotiations which would address the root causes of armed conflict in the Philippines. file photo.*



# Plummeting incomes, poverty & hunger



The Arroyo regime has been relentlessly and brazenly lying about development and poverty statistics. It recently ordered the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to amplify data on family income in the Philippines to show that the majority of the people are rising from poverty. This contradicts the results of the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) for 2003 and 2006 prepared by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

The FIES is a survey of incomes earned by employed Filipinos. It aims to find out expenditure patterns--what products and services Filipino families spend on and what they choose to skimp on. It is also the official basis for measuring poverty incidence and inequality.

NSO analyses have revealed that Filipinos' average annual income fell by 2.7% based on real peso values. From P148,000 in 2003, it fell to P144,000 in 2006. One indication of reduced income among Filipinos is the greater proportion spent on food. The NSO said that during hard times, many families skimp on or even totally do away with many other basic needs and services.

There is also a widening gap between the wealthiest and poorest Filipinos. In 2003, the combined income of the wealthiest 10% was 20 times bigger than that of the poorest 10%. Based on the 2006 FIES, the 30% poorest Filipino families subsist on only 8.6% of total income. On the other hand, 36% of the national income ends up in the hands of the wealthiest 10%. According to Forbes Asia, the combined income of the 40 wealthiest Filipinos amounts to P773.5 billion. This is equivalent to the income of 60% of the population or 52 million Filipinos. A comparison of FIES data in 2003 and 2006 would show that poverty incidence rose from 82% to 86% in the last three years.

The NSO has cited that the incomes of the poorest Filipinos rose by an average of 17.5% while that of the middle and upper strata rose by an average of only 15.9%. The difference is insignificant, and even more useless given the great disparity between the incomes of the richest and poorest Filipinos. One economist has even said that an increase in income does not necessarily translate to a rise in the real value of such income. Considering the rising costs of goods and services, the overall incomes of Filipinos today are much smaller than they were in 2003.

The regime hopes that NEDA's pronouncements would silence critics who have been assailing the government's statistical deceptions. Many sectors, including many critical economists, doubt the development data being issued by the government, particularly the so-called GNP growth rate in the second quarter of 2007.

The regime has also sought to cover up the widespread hunger and poverty underscored in a series of surveys, including that of the Social Weather Stations in September. The SWS said that up to 3.8 million Filipino families or 21.5% experienced hunger at least once in the last three months. The figure exceeds the all time high of 19% recorded in February and November 2006. This raises by 10% the new average hunger incidence compared to an average of 11% in the last nine years.

Meanwhile, the latest statistics from the Department of Labor and Employment show that from 2004 to 2006, the number of layoffs in Metro Manila rose by 100% due to company closures.

The regime timed the release of the NEDA statement with the arrival of a team from the International Monetary Fund that was then conducting a review of basic economic conditions. The Arroyo government was pleased no end when the IMF declared that the Philippines came second among economies with the "best showing" in Asia. Nonetheless, the regime cannot escape the people's criticisms and loathing in the face of its brazen doctoring and deception. Even reactionary economists could no longer take the fakery. The more the regime dishes out its lies, the more it reveals its prevaricating nature. [Ang Bayan] ■

## ... Peace talks, from page 3

signed from 1992 to 2004. This means that the talks must be directed at addressing the roots of the armed conflict through economic, social and political reforms. The NDFP stressed that the capitulation which the Arroyo government is demanding is in violation of The Hague Joint Declaration and is not acceptable. The same is true of the regime's demand for a prolonged ceasefire, without addressing the roots of the armed conflict, without any socio-economic and political reforms beneficial to the people.

In a recent telephone conference with Representative Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III, Chairperson of the Committee on Human Rights in the Philippine House of Representatives, NDFP Panel Chair Luis G. Jalandoni encouraged Rep. Tañada to discuss with Senator Madrigal and Senator Francis Escudero, Chair of the Senate Committee on Human Rights, ways and means by which the legislative branch of government can promote human rights and the resumption of formal peace talks.

In its talks with the Norwegian officials and Senator Madrigal, the NDFP Negotiating Panel referred to its Proposal for Immediate Just Peace which it has been offering to the Arroyo government since August 2005. The NDFP proposes to sign a truce on the basis of ten major points expressing the fundamental demands of the people for basic reforms. Some officials in the Arroyo regime who had helped forge the 1992 Hague Joint Declaration and the 1998 Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) were again given a copy of this NDFP document, upon their request.

In the face of the Arroyo regime's continued hard line of waging all-out war against the revolutionary forces and its continued state of denial, as UN Special Rapporteur aptly states in his report to the United Nations, refusing to accept responsibility for numerous extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances and other gross human rights violations, the NDFP has declared its willingness to prepare for peace talks after the Arroyo regime has been changed. ■



# Antonio Zumel: He never wrote 30

On the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary  
of a great Filipino revolutionary

By Isah Antonio

Antonio “Manong” Zumel was the first elected Chairperson of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. He played a key role in nurturing the growth and development of the NDFP as the progressive alliance of 17 revolutionary formations that encompass the broad sectors of the Philippine society.

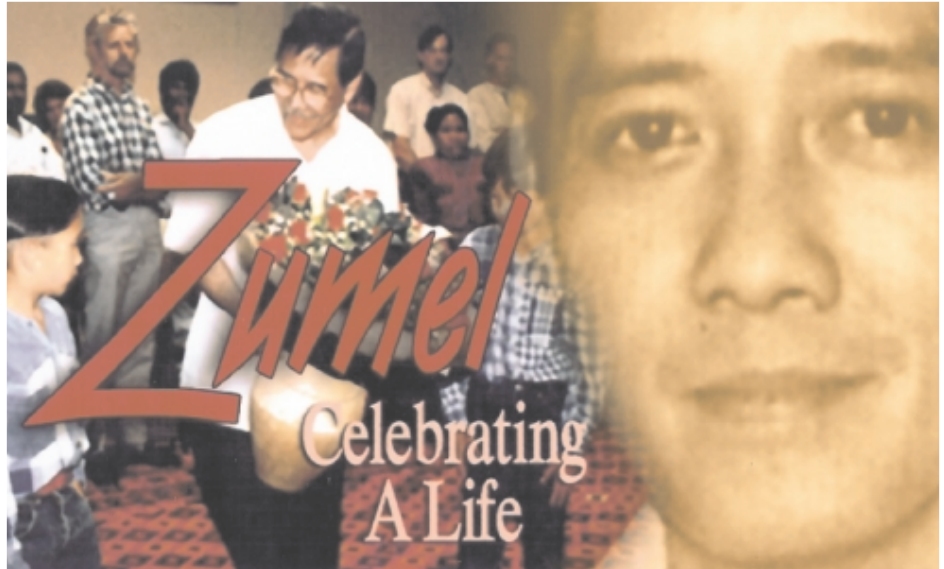
Before joining the underground revolutionary movement in 1972, he served two terms as President of the National Press Club. It was during his term that the NPC was very active in taking up the cause of press freedom. He became editor of major revolutionary publications such as Ang Bayan (The Nation), Liberation, Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas (News of Free Philippines, a news agency) and Dangadang (Struggle).

When the NDFP entered into peace negotiations with the Aquino government in 1986-87, Zumel became a member of the NDFP Negotiating Panel. Subsequently, he became a senior adviser in the peace negotiations with the Manila government.

Antonio Zumel would have been 75 years last August 10. As what had become a tradition then, comrades and friends would have trooped to his home in Utrecht and trade stories with him over topics as diverse as the raging revolution in the Philippines, the state of the media, music and family. And yes, these conversations would be interspersed with jokes and anecdotes that he never tired of retelling.

Zumel loved telling stories, indeed. But since he is no longer with us, we decided to have some of his comrades and friends (and some organizations) do the talking by quoting excerpts from statements and articles they have written about Zumel. This is our way of celebrating and honoring him.

*“He was one cadre that stood firm in the face of the many hardships and intense struggle experienced by the Party. He was a true comrade and friend, a wellspring of warmth and sincerity we still feel despite his passing. In victories, we remember him and his contributions to our advance.*



*In times of difficulties, we will remember him as an inspiration for his steadfastness and courage.” - Ka Ria and Ka Celso*

*“Comrade Antonio Zumel has left an indelible mark in the history of the proletariat and people. His revolutionary qualities and deeds inspire us. Let us emulate his example and make it a living force for the advance of the Philippine revolution. Let us always remember him as a communist, a fervent proletarian revolutionary fighter and a patriot ever determined to struggle for the liberation of the Filipino people from national and class oppression and exploitation.” – Prof. Jose Maria Sison*

*“In him, I felt that revolutionary principles became alive. He embodied these principles. Warm-heartedness towards kasama, comrades from other countries, friends, the masa, and allies—he radiated it. Boundless responsibility towards one’s work - this was flesh and blood in him. After he suffered a stroke and could not use his left arm, he continued to write articles and statements on the computer, using his right arm. A friend who visited him a few years ago asked if he was not weakening in his revolutionary stand after so many years. He answered: ‘Wala nang atrasan ito! (there is no turning back)’” - Luis G. Jalandoni*

*“It is not easy to forget Comrade ‘Manong’ Zumel. Nor is it easy to forget a leader who is a staunch*

*advocate of the revolutionary emancipation of women. He never looked back to his days of machismo and checked himself at every turn, a fact which endeared him even more to women, as well as men, comrades. Moreover, his unbounded optimism for the emancipation of women along the revolutionary path has been a constant source of inspiration for many of us fortunate to have crossed his path.” – Aleta Alvino, Malayang Kilusan ng mga Kababaihan (Makibaka)*

*“Two curious items in the book (Radical Prose) explain why Mr. Zumel’s self-ironic nickname KP (katawang pangromansa, body for romance) was readily accepted as fitting even by the most militant of women. The first is an essay on five people martyred in the struggle against the Marcos Dictatorship. Mr. Zumel used the penname Puri Balandó, in honor of two women, Puri Pedro and Liza Balandó, both also killed by the Philippine military. For a person of authority in the people’s movement to use a woman’s name, made up though that may be, was quite rare. The second is an off-hand observation about the NDF leaders’ appearance at the National Press Club, just one sentence embedded in a report by Benjamin Pimentel: “(Zumel) had a purple ribbon tied to his right wrist, purple being the new protest color decreed by the women’s groups.” The charm of such non-machoness cannot be overstated. Emmi de Jesus, secretary-general of Gabriela Philippines, meeting Zumel just once, summed up her*

**Antonio Zumel, to page 6, col 1**

... Antonio Zumel, from page 5

*impression of the man: uliran, Tagalog for role model but more than a model, as the word also connotes something pure, quintessential, the ideal comrade.” – Ninotchka Rosca*

*“A test for Ka Tony’s dedication and unwavering commitment to unionism came years when he left the Philippine Herald for the Manila Bulletin. After covering a variety of beats, he was promoted news editor of the Bulletin. But it was a promotion with complication as Ka Tony described it. Accepting the promotion would make him a management man and this was definitely in conflict to his position as the vice president of the Bulletin union then. Even as he declined the promotion, his editor Ben Rodriguez made him assume the position, but Ka Tony never forsake the union.” – Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU)*

*“Manong, Ka Tony, Nonong devoted his life and profession entirely for the patriotic and democratic aspirations of the youth and the people. His life and struggle will continue to become an endless wellspring of inspiration and a pithy editorial for young, aspiring writers to take on a road towards not only for the freedom of the right to free speech, expression and thought, but that of the people. We bestowed upon him the Gawad Marcelo H. del Pilar, the highest citation given to fellow Guilders who have served well the purpose of journalism for truth and the publishers of truth, the people. His sanctuary is the people. It shall become ours as well.” – College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP)*

*“His humor was infectious, sometimes dated, sometimes corny, sometimes naughty, but always infectious. He would burst into great laughter every time a new joke is imported from the Philippines. But Manong in political exile was also a sad man. He longed for home. He yearned to see the Philippines truly free and democratic. Manong in exile was an angry man, too. He would be outraged by the absurd positions of the GRP panel in the peace negotiations, the malicious machinations of the contras, the violations of human rights that continue with impunity, the death of a comrade, an NPA or a civilian. He would always stand up and defend the people, the comrades, the NDFP and the Party in his writings.” – Edre Olalia*

*“The Filipino expatriate community has always been in search of its outstanding sons, daughters, fathers and mothers, those who have led simple but productive, exemplary and meaningful lives abroad, those whose patriotism and devotion to the people’s cause never waned while in exile,*

## “A bunch of liars”

**T**he League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) has claimed responsibility for giving cash to governors who had been called to a meeting in Malacañang. This belated statement--given two weeks after all the finger-pointing and disclaimers issued on the brazen bribery--serves no other purpose than to save Arroyo from accountability.

Gloria Arroyo's minions have been dishing out all sorts of contradictory statements. The LPP initially claimed that not one of its members received any money. Its latest admission has all the more convinced the people that Malacañang is behind the bribery.

In fact, the LPP's admission raises more questions than answers. For one, why was the cash-giving done in Malacañang and not at the LPP office? And why did the congressmen who had been called to an earlier meeting at the Palace receive identical paper bags full of money?

Seven former governors have said that it came as a surprise to them to learn that LPP had that much in funds. Compounding this, the LPP failed to show any receipts for the "assistance" they had allegedly given to newly elected governors as a "confidence-building measure."

Malacañang has also been hard put fending off disclosures by Gov. Jonjon Mendoza of Bulacan that the cash-giving took place inside a room at the Palace, and that it happened in the presence of Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Austere Panadero and Edward Plaza, an official of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp (Pagcor).

Meanwhile, Arroyo's party Kampi has claimed responsibility for doling out cash to the congressmen called to the Palace. The admission was made by House Deputy Speaker and Kampi leader Ma. Amelita Villarosa a month after the bribery scandal was exposed. The cash was supposed to be financial assistance to Kampi congressmen. Villarosa, however, could not explain why Kampi also gave "assistance" to Lakas congressmen.

Gloria Arroyo also allegedly knew about Kampi's plans. This therefore raises the question of why Arroyo even bothered to order an investigation of the cash-giving incident.

Kampi chair, DILG secretary and Arroyo political adviser Ronaldo Puno was also reportedly aware of everything. [Ang Bayan] ■

*those whose achievements may not be felt now but in the years and generations to come. We need not look elsewhere. Here is Manong Tony Zumel – the Marcelo del Pilar of our generation. He is our pride and honor.” – Migrante-Europe*

*“Comrade Tony will forever remain as an inspiration for the toiling masses. He is an inspiration for young people like us to remould ourselves for the people’s interest. Never did Comrade Tony waver in serving the people. His death will inspire thousands of youth to carry on his legacy which he mentioned in the last part of a poem he dedicated for the youth: THANK YOU FOR REAFFIRMING THE GOLDEN TRUTH THAT YOU, THE YOUTH, WILL CARRY ON TO ACHIEVE VICTORY!” – Anakbayan*

*“Those of us who have met him will always remember him as a friendly and resolute revolutionary. He was obviously a man who was totally dedicated to the revolution. One could*

*learn so much from him. We also appreciated very much his openness to hear and learn about the experiences of other revolutionary parties and organizations. As he wanted to actively support the struggle of workers and the anti-imperialist struggle in other countries, he also participated in many meetings and rallies in Belgium. By doing so, he strengthened revolutionary internationalism in his very humble, but genuine way.” – Parti du Travail de Belgique (PTB)*

*“His enthusiasm and determination never failed to inspire us as he refused to bow for the strong and the powerful, even when his own body was already weak and frail. His persistent concern for the people’s movement, not only in the Philippines but all over the world, challenged us to redefine the true meaning of international solidarity. It is because we have known Manong Tony and others like him that we are confident that the people’s victory is inevitable.” – Filippijngroepen België (FGB) ■*



# News from the battlefield

## Victorious tactical offensives of the New People's Army

By Isah Antonio

Successful tactical offensives were launched nationwide by the New People's Army in response to the call of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the national command of the NPA to intensify the armed struggle against the US-Arroyo regime which continues to wreak intense hardship and havoc on the Filipino people. The people's guerrillas also launched punitive actions against big companies and despotic landlords that exploit and oppress the people and cause destruction to the environment.

Following are reports of the successful military operations staged by the Red fighters of the people:

- The people's guerrillas raided the Philippine National Police (PNP) station in Cantilan, Surigao de Sur in Mindanao on 23 September and confiscated 18 firearms, including 14 M16 rifles, 7 rounds of M203 grenade launchers, assorted rifles, grenades and ammunition. Two PNP personnel were wounded in the firefight.
- Without firing a single shot, the NPA Red fighters of the Alejandro Lanaja Command seized 16 high-powered rifles of M16 and M14 when they raided the detachment of the 72nd Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army in Montevista, Compostela Valley last 7 October. The raid followed an earlier ambush on 10 August staged by the same NPA unit against the troops of the 72nd IB. In that ambush, three elements of the paramilitary CAFGU were instantly killed while one army regular was wounded. High-powered rifles were confiscated from the enemy. The elements of the 72nd IB also serve as a private army of despotic bureaucrat Mayor Manuel Brillantes. They protect his palm oil plantation, intimidate and harass the local population who oppose the mayor's interests, and help in landgrabbing activities for the expansion of Brillantes' plantation.
- In the two military operations, the NPA captured four enemy troops: the detachment commander Sgt. Raul Reyes, Pfc. Marjun Gatela



*A unit of the New People's Army in southern Mindanao, composed mostly of new recruits, in company formation during a politico-military training. file photo.*

and two members of the CAFGU. The prisoners-of-war were accorded humane treatment and their rights to due process were observed by the NPA custodial force. Contrary to the record of the enemy who torture, sexually abuse and often murder their captives, the NPA's handling of prisoners of war is proven just and humane and in accordance with war protocols and the NDFP-GRP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

- Last 4 October, a platoon of the New People's Army in Camarines Sur, in the Bicol Region, raided the Australian owned company El Dore Mining Corporation and seized 30 firearms, eight laptop computers and communications equipment. The revolutionary movement earlier warned companies such as the El Dore, that they will be stopped from conducting mining operations that cause destruction to the environment.
- The Li Chiang Vencer Plant in Montevista, Compostela was also the target of a tactical offensive by a unit of the Armando Dumandan Command of Front 33 Operations Command of the NPA in southern Philippines. On 9 September, the NPA unit was able to seize one M16 rifle, one M14 rifle, and other types of firearms.

The NPA launched the disarming operation against the company for its harassment and intimidation of

the people in the area, using goons and paramilitary. The company has also been very active in supporting the reactionary army in its operations against the people and the revolutionary movement.

- Five soldiers of the reactionary armed forces were killed and 12 others were wounded when members of the Nerissa San Juan Command in Catanduanes, also in the Bicol Region launched military operations against the enemy forces on 27 September and 6 October. Among the enemy wounded was platoon leader 2Lt. Eduardo Dompol.
- Out-manuevering the enemy forces that chanced upon them last 10 July, the NPA fighters of the Lejo Cawilan Command in Tinglayan, Kalinga, in northern Philippines, fought back and gave battle to the soldiers of the 21st IB. They wounded three soldiers while the rest scampered away in disarray. The next day the same NPA unit launched sniping operations on the detachment of the 77th IB. A member of the paramilitary CAFGU was killed.

These tactical offensives of the New People's Army belie the claim of the detested, corrupt and murderous US-Arroyo regime that its Oplan Bantay Laya I & II are successful in crushing the revolutionary movement. With the support of the people, the people's fighters will continue to launch victorious tactical offensive nationwide. ■

# NDFP files UN charges for disappearance of consultants, companions

By Ed Ladera

NDFP Chief Negotiator Luis Jalandoni on 10 August and 29 October filed formal complaints before the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UN WGEID) in Geneva against President Gloria Arroyo as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), for the disappearance of two NDFP consultants, a staff and the staff's wife.

The enforced disappearances of NDFP consultants Leo Velasco on 19 February 2007 in Cagayan de Oro City and Cesar Batralo in San Mateo, Rizal on 21 December 2006, and NDFP staff member Federico Intise and his wife Nelly in General Santos City on 26 October 2006,

were presented with substantiating documents to the UN body on 10 August.

On the Velasco disappearance, Jalandoni cited the local police report dated 19 February 2007 which described "the abduction by two male persons wearing jacket with alleged mark on the back 'CIDG' [Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police]". He also stated that the eyeglasses of Velasco, which fell and were given to a journalist by a private security guard, were later taken by CIDG Director for Northern Mindanao Julian Pantonal. Moreover, Jalandoni added, Lt. Col. Jack Baltazar of the Intelligence Service of the AFP admitted on 7 August 2007 that the ISAFP had long

**UN charges, to page 11, col 2 ...**



*Human rights advocates in Hong Kong held a protest rally in front of the Philippine Consulate on 30 August, International Day of the Disappeared, to expose the culpability of the US-Arroyo regime in the enforced disappearance of over 200 political activists since it took power in 2001. foto from Arkibong Bayan.*

**... Arroyo wracked, from page 1, col 1**

would launch a mass movement to urge Gloria Arroyo to step down from the presidency for "not having the moral ascendancy to stay in office". The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines also denounced the brazen bribery.

The parliamentary opposition has also started to file impeachment complaints in Congress. They are hoping to get the support of the House Speaker, given the rift between him and Arroyo.

Meanwhile, the progressive alliance Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN, New Patriotic Alliance) and partylist groups Bayan Muna, Gabriela Women's Party and Anakpawis intensified their call for the ouster of Arroyo. They cited the long list of scandals and crimes against the people of the present regime: the 2004 electoral fraud, large-scale graft and corruption, unsolved deadly bombings of civilian targets, unabated extra-judicial killings and enforced disappearances of activists, and other serious human rights violations.

Greater unrest is also developing within the ranks of the reactionary military. Soldiers in the field express their disgust over the P500,000 bribe doled out by Arroyo to politicians while a measly P150 (US\$3.50) increase in monthly combat pay has been denied them "because of lack of funds". Rumors of a coup d'etat have been spreading like wildfire around military

camp. High-ranking military officials have reported of ongoing recruitment for a military putsch. They point to officers led by Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Col. Ariel Querubin, who are currently imprisoned in a military camp for allegedly planning a coup d'etat in February 2006, as responsible for orchestrating the recruitment from their prison cells.

Senator Antonio Trillanes, a former Navy lieutenant, has himself initiated a call for Gloria Arroyo and her vice president Noli de Castro to resign and to hold snap elections. Trillanes is known for being one of the leaders of the failed Oakwood Mutiny launched in 2003 against Arroyo. He has a wide following within the reactionary armed forces.

Local newspapers are also fanning rumors that there are cracks and demoralization among the officials of Arroyo, with the reported plan of some cabinet members to resign.

Faced with this latest crisis and struggle for survival, Arroyo has made overtures to patch up her quarrel with Speaker Jose de Venecia. She also hurriedly issued a presidential pardon to former president Joseph Estrada who had recently been convicted of plunder by the anti-graft court, with the obvious purpose of discouraging the

pro-Estrada forces from joining the snowballing movement for the resignation or ouster of Arroyo.

The massive explosion on 19 October in Glorietta 2 that killed eleven and wounded more than one hundred people, is widely believed to be the handiwork of pro-Arroyo forces to divert national attention from the widespread call for Arroyo's resignation or ouster. Glorietta is a major shopping complex in the Makati business district in Metro Manila.

The Communist Party of the Philippines has denounced the latest scandals and called for more tactical offensives by the New People's Army and intensification of popular protest actions to oust the US-backed Arroyo regime. In its statement, the CPP acknowledged the tremendous challenges which the current situation presents and called on the revolutionary forces to massively and quickly "arouse the people, harness their anger and bring them to the streets and create a thunderous movement to oust this burdensome regime".

The CPP stated, "we must effectively lead the people. We must mobilize them in their numbers in the streets. We must take advantage of the deepening rifts within the ruling classes and further expand the united front to put an end to the Arroyo regime." ■



# Elections in Turkey and the revolutionary stand

By Partisan Magazine

The deepening crisis of the imperialist-capitalist system intensifies the contradictions among the ruling classes and such contradictions reflect on society and deepen every day. Turkey as a dependent country is witness to these increasing contradictions, manifested today in various forms.

In April 2007, the ruling party AKP (Party for Justice and Development) presented one of their representatives as candidate for the presidential elections. Some factions of the ruling classes, but especially the army, stated that they are against this candidature of an 'Islamic' party's representative'. Then they came up with slogans like "secularism vs. fundamentalism", "our Kemalist Republic is in danger", "don't let fundamentalism take power". Other factions of the ruling classes also organized demonstrations in the biggest cities under the slogan "protect the principle of the Kemalist Republic" and they demanded earlier elections.

It is very obvious that under the guise of a "secularism vs fundamentalism" issue, the discussion about the elections is nothing else but the reflection of the contradictions amongst the ruling classes. Making it look like a secularism-fundamentalism issue, most of the population does not believe the issue.

When the ruling AKP won in the 2002 elections, the imperialists -- both US and EU imperialists, but mainly the US imperialists -- presented the AKP as a "new kind of Islam" they call it "liberal (warm) Islam", which would serve as

an "example for the Middle East". The AKP has from the beginning been a loyal servant of the imperialists in any kind of issue; especially for US imperialism, mainly to realise its 'Greater Middle-East Project', since Turkey is a very important country not only politically and economically but also geo-strategically and militarily.

However the Turkish Republic has, since its foundation, never been a "secular state" nor, "secular republic". Religion is being protected, advanced, financed, and directed by the state. Also they are trying to make the army look like the protector of secularism, though it is known that most of the courses for mosques, little mosque's and Koran lessons were given during the military dictatorship of September 12th 1980. Religion classes are still taught in the first years of school and are obligatory.

One year after the AKP's electoral victory - what coincidence- US imperialism invaded and occupied Iraq. And the discussion to send soldiers from Turkey to Iraq started. But because of the many protests in the country and the general political situation, the resolution to send the soldiers to Iraq was not passed. This is only an example of the 'loyalty' of the ruling party.

Another period that began was the EU membership resolution. With this game, the main purpose was to keep the masses "quiet". The AKP has not yet accomplished the "mission" that imperialism has given it.

All the other parties before were not any different. The CHP (Republican Peoples Party), formed together with

the foundation of the Turkish Republic, is nothing but a fascist party and so are the other reactionary parties. It would take very long to enumerate the crimes they have committed against the people. In the last years, there were coalitions which were formed amongst various ruling parties, but the function was the same.

The ruling party, the liberal religious party AKP, is the winner and remains as the only ruling party. The CHP, which is a party that for tens of years was ruling as a single-party dictatorship and has the mission of being a state Republican Party, is currently the second party. In the 2002 elections, both of them went beyond the 10% nationwide electoral support threshold to gain seats in the Parliament. In these current elections they seem to have taken the guarantee for this. Besides them, the MHP-Party of the Nationalist Movement seems to be the third party. The reactionary, fascist DP-Democratic Party and the reactionary, liberal party GP-Youth Party will try to exceed the 10% nationwide vote limit.

The independent 20-30 candidates that are shown to be supported by the Kurdish National movement might enter the parliament. Besides those, there are some reactionary, fascist and reformist parties which will not be able to enter parliament. Even if in the previous election legal left organisations participated, 13 million out of 46 million did not vote. This comprises 26% percent of the total number of voters.

According to a research, about 25% of the electorate did not vote because they don't trust the AKP government or any other party which is seen as part of the system. Months leading into the 2007 elections, the ruling classes made propaganda saying that definitely and surely everybody must go out and vote.

## Why Boycott?

As mentioned above, the Kurdish National Movement and some revolutionary organizations participated in the elections. Partizan and two other revolutionary organizations boycotted the elections.

In the struggle for power, there are many tactics and methods to use and to learn from. There are periods wherein tactically participation in elections could bring advantages to the movement, but this depends on the concrete conditions of the country in such a period. If the tactic of



foto from aljazeera.net

## Nepal inches closer to becoming a republic

Nepal inched closer on 4 November to the abolition of centuries-old monarchic rule and the declaration of a republic when the Parliament voted to declare the country a republic after Constituent Assembly elections.

The special Parliament session, called to reach a consensus on the issue of monarchy, ended with the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) voting for the CPN - Unified Marxist-Leninist proposal to declare Nepal as a republic after the elections for the Constituent Assembly. The CPN-UML, in turn, voted for the

Maoist proposal for a proportional electoral system in the Constituent Assembly polls.

The two parties form a majority in the 330-member Nepal Interim Parliament; the Maoists have 84 seats and the CPN-UML has 83. The new consensus reached raised the possibility of a political polarization which might even sideline the Nepali Congress party which, together with the former Nepali Congress (Deuda), is currently the largest party in the interim parliament with 132 seats. The CPN-UML and the

Nepali Congress are members of the ruling Seven Party Alliance which runs the government.

Constituent Assembly elections are scheduled on 22 November. But the Election Commission claims that the introduction of the new proportional electoral system "would take much more time" and that the Parliament would still need to pass new election laws and rules. According to sources, the polls might be rescheduled in March or April 2008. The repeated delay in the holding of Constituent Assembly elections, according to knowledgeable observers, calls for further vigilance against the continuing sabotage by the US, the deposed King and other reactionary forces.

The Constituent Assembly is mandated to draft a new Constitution. ■

## COLOMBIA: Peasants hold nationwide protests amid brutal state repression

Despite weeks of increased repression and intimidation by the government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez, peasants and indigenous peoples across Colombia mounted a successful nationwide mobilization on 10 to 12 October to call "for the defense of national sovereignty, for self-determination, for humanitarian agreement and for popular participation in government". They also called for the immediate resignation of the Uribe government because "the government is illegal and illegitimate".

Organized by the National Coordination of Agrarian and Popular Organizations of Colombia, the nationwide mobilization drew thousands of protesters, converging in the capital towns of the country's states. Among others, the protesters denounced the pending free trade agreement with the US, legislation which would roll back Colombia's agrarian reform program, forced fumigation which destroys food crops and causes various illnesses, and escalating state repression.

In a vicious effort to sabotage the mobilizations, the Uribe government cracked down on the organizers and community folk several weeks prior to 10 October. On 29 September, dozens of security agents and secret police attacked the offices of the Peasant Farmer Association of the Cimitarra River (ACVC) and abducted four of its leaders, Andrés Gil, Oscar Duque, Evaristo Mena and Mario Martínez. They were later charged with "rebellion" and denied bail.

On 5 October, unidentified armed men took village chief Carlos Alberto Urbano



off a bus and shot him in front of all the other passengers, including his wife and son. On 8 October, in Arauca state, armed men identified with the army's 18th Brigade abducted and brutally murdered brothers José Aurelio Beltrán, 23, and Pedro José Beltrán, 24. Later that day, the same armed group murdered village founder Gratiano Argote. Reports also cited numerous incidents of illegal and arbitrary arrests, intimidation and harassments, and physical attacks against the rural citizenry. There were also several incidents of violence during the protest actions, as the security agents attacked

the pickets and barricades put up by the peasants.

Security agents and government officials continually accused protest organizers of being allied with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in order to justify the increased repression and direct military action against the unarmed peasants and indigenous peoples. The protesters denounced the antidemocratic Uribe government and said that they "hold it directly responsible for the human rights crisis surrounding the national, agrarian and popular mobilization". ■



... Turkey elections, from page 9, col 3

participating in elections is not handled correctly and according to the specific conditions of every country, then it will nourish reformism. There are historical experiences.

Mainly and especially in semicolonial countries, the parliament is only used as a mask for fascism. In our country the constitution is still the one of the military coup d'etat from 12 September 1980 and since then has not changed. The Turkish parliament does not have the function of a parliament. For this reason, and also considering the weakness of the revolutionary forces, to enter elections is not a correct tactic in the present conditions of our country.

For this reason the "I have a vote, but I won't give it" boycott activity started. There have been many different kinds of activities during that period. Flyers, placards, actions, panels, researches, militant actions, etc. It can not be said that it was enough and a great success, but it was not only an important stand against the state and its puppet government but it was also a stand against reformism and revisionism.

The main goal of a boycott is to show the broad masses that elections are not the hope that they are waiting for, that entering parliament will not bring about genuine social change but will only divert the toiling masses from the real struggle. We can see that still many people have not voted, this is of course not because of the mobilization from the movement but because of the reality and poverty they have to live in.

We have seen in the early 90s what happened to progressive national councils. When the Kurdish national councils entered parliament and spoke Kurdish they were imprisoned. This is only an example. In these recent elections, in many areas, progressive candidates were attacked, arrested or imprisoned, especially in the areas where there is a big Kurdish population.

In the end, the elections have been held, and once more the ruling party and all the other factions of the ruling classes including the army are going to show their loyalty to their masters. New projects and policies are waiting. What is important is that the movement keeps up the work in order to make the broad masses conscious of the fact that their real liberation lies in their hands and that their way is not the parliament, it is the victory of national and social liberation struggles! [Partisan Magazine] ■

## UN Rapporteur hits political killings in the Philippines

from Ang Bayan

**P**rof. Philip Alston formally submitted his final report on the human rights situation in the Philippines to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on October 30.

Alston, Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions of the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) conducted his investigation on the Philippines last year. Alston went on to present his 21-page report despite the presence of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita who Gloria Arroyo sent in a last-ditch attempt to mitigate the report's impact.

Despite Arroyo's attempts to water down the results, Alston's final report mirrored the already publicized initial conclusions of his investigation.

The report revealed that the Philippines was among 30 countries with verified reports of extrajudicial killings. It correctly identified Oplan Bantay Laya as the framework governing the killings of progressive activists under Gloria Arroyo's six-year rule. Alston assailed the regime's practice of maliciously linking the legal mass

movement to the armed revolution to justify the killings.

Alston also cited the growing number of journalists killed in the country, killings related to agrarian reform conflicts, the killings of streetchildren by vigilante death squads and human rights abuses related to conflicts in western Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago.

Alston condemned the vilification and persecution of the victims themselves, while their killers go scot free. He assailed the Armed Forces of the Philippines for being in a state of denial concerning the numerous extrajudicial executions in which its soldiers were implicated.

Meanwhile, due to Alston's disclosure of grave human rights violations in the Philippines, the US Senate on November 5 tied the grant of an additional US\$2 million in military aid to the Arroyo regime to the latter's compliance with Alston's recommendations. Alston urged, among others, that the military respect human rights and put a stop to violence against legal organizations. [Ang Bayan] ■

... UN charges, from page 8, col 2

been targeting Velasco, only they were not the ones who got him.

The NDFP Negotiating Panel accused the CIDG unit and CIDG Director Pantonal of abducting Velasco. The Panel declared that, under the principle of command responsibility, President Gloria Arroyo, AFP Chief of Staff General Hermogenes Esperon, PNP Director General Oscar Calderon, 4th Infantry Division Commanding General Jose Barbieto, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, are also accountable for the above-mentioned enforced or involuntary disappearances.

The NDFP had earlier filed complaints against the Arroyo regime with the same United Nations body for the involuntary disappearances of NDFP consultant Rogelio Calubad and his son Gabriel and NDFP staff member Leopoldo Ancheta.

On 29 October, Jalandoni filed additional complaints on the enforced disappearances of NDFP Consultant Prudencio Calubid, his wife Celina Palma and companions Gloria Soco and Ariel Beloy on 26 June 2006 near Sipocot, Camarines Sur. Citing the principle of command responsibility, Jalandoni held Mrs. Gloria Arroyo and her army and police generals for the enforced disappearances of Calubid, his wife and two companions. Antonio Lacno, himself abducted together with Calubid but was able to escape, testified to the torture perpetrated by the military abductors.

"It is a shame," said Jalandoni, "that the Arroyo government is in the UN Human Rights Council, even as UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston, the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, Amnesty International, among others, have exposed its gross violations of the human rights of the Filipino people." ■

# **NDFP pays tribute to Makoto Oda**

**(2 June 1932 - 30 July 2007)**

**T**he National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) renders the highest honor to Makoto Oda, renowned novelist and writer, internationalist anti-war and peace activist and esteemed friend of the Filipino people.

Makoto Oda first gave significant support to the Filipino people when he served as a Jury member of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal First Session on the Philippines. This was held in 1980 at Antwerp, Belgium. This Tribunal Session found Ferdinand Marcos and the US guilty of grave crimes against the Filipino people, declared the NDFP legitimate representative of the Filipino people and the armed conflict between the Marcos regime and the Filipino people as a condition of belligerency requiring the application of the international laws of war. This verdict served to isolate the Marcos dictatorship internationally and fostered international solidarity for the Filipino people.

We had the opportunity to refresh our links with him at the PPT Second Session on the Philippines at which he again served as a Juror, despite his serious illness. Suffering from stomach cancer, Makoto Oda made no mention of his serious illness as he actively participated in a grueling five-day session. He listened intently to the testimonies of the families of the victims regimes of Gloria Arroyo and George W. Bush. After the reading of the PPT verdict declaring Ms. Arroyo, Mr. Bush, and the state security forces of Arroyo guilty of crimes against humanity, Makoto Oda spoke on how he had not been aware of the gravity of the suffering inflicted with

impunity against the Filipino people.

He declared, "I was at the First PPT Session in 1980. Now I am here at the Second Session. Next time, I will go to the Philippines, to celebrate with the Filipino people, their victory, their independence!"

In his letter to his friends in April 2007, after he was told by his doctors that he had terminal cancer, he wrote, "I said to the Filipino people that at least I would like to organize an investigation group and go to the Philippines to find out the facts just like the Hong Kong citizens did. But it is no longer possible to do so in my health condition. I shall be more than grateful if somebody could do so." He sent the PPT verdict to his friends "concerning the present dreadful situation in the Philippines." He humbly stated that at the Tribunal in March at The Hague, he found out that he knew almost nothing about the situation in the Philippines and this may be the same for other people in the world. That is why he was sending out the PPT verdict.

Makoto Oda was invited by Italian Senator Lelio Basso, also a renowned internationalist, to be one of the founders of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal in 1978. This was in recognition of his outstanding record as a famous novelist, a fierce social critic and a political activist. He strongly condemned the US war of aggression against Vietnam and was a firm advocate for disaster victims neglected by the Japanese government. After 9/11 and the US wars of aggression in

Afghanistan and Iraq, he denounced the "war on terror" unleashed by US President George W. Bush.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines conveys its deepest heartfelt condolences to his wife Soon-Hye Hyun and their daughter, Nara Oda, and other relatives, his friends and colleagues, including those in the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal. The NDFP joins the family and friends of Makoto Oda in mourning his death, even as we render the highest honor to him for his great and inspiring life.

*Long live the noble memory and great example of Makoto Oda!*

*Long live the friendship and solidarity between the Japanese people and the Filipino people!*

*Long live the international solidarity of peoples struggling against imperialism and all reaction!*

Delivered on behalf of the National Council of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

04 August 2007

**By LUIS G. JALANDONI**  
**NDFP Chief International Representative**  
**Member, NDFP National Executive Committee**



The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines. Its goal is to build a society that enjoys national sovereignty, genuine democracy, social justice, progress and peace. It seeks to unite will all forces willing to achieve these goals.

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