



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIAL Reign of terror and lawlessness

Rodrigo Duterte and his terrorist security forces are running amok across the country.

The entire southern island of Mindanao is still under Martial Law. Since May 2017, the people of Mindanao have been subjected by Duterte's military and police forces to harassments and intimidation, arbitrary arrests and illegal detention, extrajudicial killings, occupation of villages and bombings of residential and agricultural areas. After ordering the obliteration of Marawi City in 2017, Duterte and his cronies are now profiting from reconstruction activities.

Since December 2018, Duterte's Executive Order 70 or his so-called 'whole-of-nation approach in ending the communist armed conflict', has placed the entire country under an undeclared Martial Law. Military and police forces harass and intimidate local civilian officials and community leaders. Opposition groups are labeled as 'communist fronts' prior to their offices being raided, members arbitrarily arrested and illegally detained. Assassinations of opposition leaders have become extremely rampant in Samar Island, Negros Island and the Bicol region, aside from Mindanao.

The source of terror, lawlessness and intensifying social conflict in the country is the government of Rodrigo Duterte. The tyrant brutally unleashes his security forces and prostitutes their own laws against the impoverished Filipino people, in order to protect and promote the interests of the local ruling classes, as well as those of his imperialist masters in Washington and Beijing.

This tyrant deserves no support from the Filipino people and the global community of nations. **UP**



*Children of the victims cry: Justice NOW!
Photo: mindanews.com.*

No justice for Ampatuan Massacre victims 10 years after

Ten years ago on 23 November 2009, 58 people, including 32 journalists, were massacred in Ampatuan town, Maguindanao province in the southern Philippine island of Mindanao. It is considered the worst single case of political and media violence in the Philippines and in the world.

The massacre was targeted against then Vice Mayor Esmel Mangudadatu of Buluan town, who wanted to launch his campaign for Governor of Maguindanao province against then Mayor Andal Ampatuan, Jr. of Datu Unsay town.

The convoy of family, supporters and journalists who were supposed to file Mangudadatu's certificate of candidacy were waylaid, tortured, some raped and then massacred by Ampatuan, Jr., local police officers and their armed militia.

Despite the arrest of Ampatuan, Jr., his brother former Governor Zaldy Ampatuan and their henchmen, and the overwhelming physical and testimonial evidences against them, no verdict has been rendered 10 years after the massacre.

In a statement commemorating the occasion, the Communist Party of the Philippines expressed sympathy with the families of the victims in their continuing clamor for justice. It decried the fact that the legal maneuvers of the Ampatuans have delayed the criminal proceedings.

"The same conditions of terror by state and feudal dynasties which led to the mass violence (in Maguindanao) are now reigning over the entire country. Mass killings and massacres have been carried out with relentless frequency," the CPP declared.

"Duterte has openly encouraged violence against independent-minded reporters, as well as against legal practitioners and religious people," it added.

The CPP called on the Filipino people "to unite and defend freedom and democracy against the Duterte regime's de facto martial law rule." **UP**

Class contradiction behind Negros attacks -- NDFP

The forces of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in Negros Island recently revealed that the intensifying struggle between the interests of the impoverished sugarcane workers and the local ruling classes of despotic landlords and bourgeois compradors is behind the escalating economic and political attacks being reported.

The most recent incident was on 31 October when combined elements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) raided the offices of the National Federation of Sugar Workers, Gabriela women's alliance and opposition political party Bayan Muna (People Foremost), and illegally arrested 57 individuals, including 10 minors. [[See related story](#)]

Bayani Obrero, NDFP Spokesperson in Negros, pointed out that Negros Island is currently a priority of the Duterte government's military campaign, "in order to protect the interests of the ruling classes."

"Negros is the seat of power of despotic bureaucrat-landlords and bourgeois comprador families like Cojuangco, Alvarez, Zayco, Sola, Hinojales, Montilla, Lamata, Maranon, Lacson, Ledesma, Ballesteros, Montelibano and Golez," Obrero explained. "Big bourgeois compradors such as the Lopezes, Tans, Sys, Gokongweis, Chans and Pangilinan own the sugar centrals, bio-ethanol plants, real estate and other big businesses (in the island)."

But the farm workers and sugar mill workers, according to Obrero, are currently engaged in a fight for just wages, work benefits and the right to organize themselves.

The NDFP official added that, in their eagerness to resolve the social crisis, the ruling classes use the violent instruments of the state, specifically, "the Joint Task Force – Negros of the AFP and PNP under the 'whole-of-nation' approach of the Duterte government".

State terror will not resolve the social crisis, according to Obrero. "(It) will sharpen the determination of the oppressed classes to advance the armed struggle to end the rotten US-Duterte regime."

Meanwhile, the local organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in the island raised the call: "A just People's War is the sole banner of our emancipation from a hundred years of oppression! This is the greatest undertaking of the Negrosanons to courageously advance forward their struggle for justice and liberation." **UP**



*Peasants and peasant advocates protest the Rice Tariffication Law.
Photo: Jire Carreon | uca.news*

Rice Tariffication Law causes misery for rice farmers

On 14 February 2019, President Rodrigo Duterte signed the Rice Tariffication Law allowing unlimited importation of rice into the country. The massive influx of cheap rice has since driven the farmgate price of local unmilled rice to as low as PhP 7.00 per kilo (US\$ 0.14).

Current farmgate prices are half the costs of production at PhP 13.00 to PhP 15.00 per kilo (US\$ 0.26 – 0.30). The law has endangered the livelihood of 2.4 million rice farmers and their families.

Danilo Ramos, Chairperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, Peasant Movement of the Philippines) decried the imposition: "The rice trade liberalization is slowly

killing the farmers and the rice industry itself!"

Meanwhile, opposition parliament members from the Makabayan (Patriotic) bloc have called for the repeal of the Tariffication Law.

In reaction to the protests, Duterte on 21 November declared the suspension of rice imports, saying "because it is harvest time" and that he wanted "to prevent riots". He ordered his Secretary of Agriculture William Dar to stop the importation of rice.

However, just two days later on 23 November, Duterte backtracked after meeting with his Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Secretary Dar. He ordered the resumption of the rice imports.

In a recent statement, the Pambansang Katipunan ng Magbubukid (PKM, National Peasants League) explained that the liberalization of the rice trade and agricultural production "will worsen the underdevelopment and backwardness of the country's agriculture... The (Duterte) government will be dependent on foreign commodities while not improving local production." **UP**