



# UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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VOL I NO 17

31 DECEMBER 2019

## EDITORIAL

### Leading the fight for national & social liberation

The writers and editors of UPDATES Philippines join the Filipino people and revolutionaries around the world in saluting the Communist Party of the Philippines on the occasion of its 51st anniversary.

The CPP has been leading the Philippine revolution since its re-establishment in 1968, fighting to uproot the moribund society ruled by US imperialism and its local puppets of big comprador capitalists and feudal landlords.

The Party has succeeded in building organizations of the working people, undertaking land reform, building organs of local Red power and promoting social services for the poor majority, in territories covering 72 out of the total 81 provinces in the country. It has masterfully led the New People's Army from several personnel and arms in 1969 to several thousand today, covering more than 110 guerrilla fronts. Despite its clandestine nature, the Party's membership has grown in the tens of thousands, leading revolutionary work in the NPA, the mass organizations, the united front and the people's government.

It is fitting that thousands of people joined the celebrations in various gatherings across the country. The local Party branches and communities welcomed visitors from adjoining towns and urban centers. They paid tribute to the martyrs of the revolution, recalled the victories of the previous year and reviewed the tasks for the coming years.

Meanwhile, a few hundred military, police and local government officials of the Duterte regime held anti-communist rallies in Metro Manila and some provincial towns. Despite the squander of government resources and funds, the rallies failed to draw support from the local communities. They did succeed, however, in showing that Duterte's popularity and their victories over the revolutionary movement are only real on Facebook pages, so-called social surveys and press releases of Duterte officials.

The Filipino people detest the treasonous, treacherous and murderous Duterte regime. They cherish the Party and the revolutionary forces of the NDFP. We share the Filipino peoples' hopes and look forward to greater victories in the new decade, towards the attainment of national liberation, agrarian reform, national industrialization, genuine democracy and lasting peace. **UP**



*New People's Army unit south of Manila.  
Photo: cpp.ph*

### CPP, GRP declare Holiday ceasefires

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) declared reciprocal and unilateral ceasefires from 23 December 2019 to 7 January 2020, as part of goodwill measures for the resumption of peace negotiations between the GRP and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Upon the recommendation of the NDFP Negotiating Panel, the CPP Central Committee issued a statement on 22 December 2019 ordering all commands and units of the

New People's Army (NPA) and the people's militias nationwide to a ceasefire effective from 00:00H of 23 December 2019 to 23:59H of 7 January 2020.

The CPP further added that the ceasefire order would take effect "upon issuance of the corresponding and reciprocal ceasefire orders in the form of Suspension of Military Operations (SOMO) and Suspension of Police Operations (SOPO) to be issued by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP)."

According to the NDFP Negotiating Panel, the reciprocal and unilateral ceasefires of both parties are intended to generate a positive atmosphere conducive to holding informal talks as a preparation to the formal meetings of the peace negotiations. It is also a goodwill and confidence building measure for the Christmas and New Year holidays.

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On 23 December however, armed encounters between NPA forces and elements of the GRP's Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) took place in the provinces of Bicol and Iloilo, south of Manila.

GRP officials condemned the incidents, accusing the NPA of violating the ceasefire order. Local units of the NPA however explained that the AFP and PNP forces were conducting sustained military operations in the area. The NPA units conducted defensive actions against the GRP forces.

Fidel Agcaoili, Chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel, explained that as of 24 December, the Duterte government has not yet transmitted their Suspension of Military Operations (SOMO) and Suspension of Police Operations (SOPO). This should be the basis for the reciprocal nature of the unilateral ceasefire orders, as stated in the CPP ceasefire order.

Agcaoili confirmed the receipt of the SOMO and SOPO only on 27 December 2019, which ordered the GRP's military and police personnel to a ceasefire until 7 January 2020. **UP**



*House of Representatives member Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate. Photo: Rep. Zarate's FB page.*

## 131 Parliamentarians support resumption of peace talks

131 members of the House of Representatives in the Philippines crossed party lines on 20 December to express their support for the resumption of peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

The six-member Makabayan (Patriotic) Bloc led the filing of House Resolution 636, which “expresses the sense of the House of Representatives to support the resumption of peace talks based on previous agreements between the two Parties.”

According to Representative Carlos Zarate of the Makabayan Bloc, these previous agreements include The Hague Joint Declaration of September 1992, which laid the foundation and framework of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

Among the parliamentarians who signed House Resolution 636 were Deputy Speaker Neptali Gonzales II, Luis Raymond Villafuerte Jr., Loren Legarda, Johnny Pimentel, Minority Leader Bienvenido Abante, and Deputy Minority Leader Jose Christopher Belmonte.

Members of the majority bloc like Maria Laarni Cayetano, Joey Sarte Salceda, Antonio Albano, Elpidio Barzaga Jr. and Rufus Rodriguez also signed the resolution.

“It’s like an all-party resolution calling for the resumption of peace talks following the announcement of President Duterte last December 5 that peace talks would be given a chance again to open, after they were earlier cancelled by the GRP,” said Rep. Zarate.

President Duterte terminated the peace talks in November 2017.

Rep. Zarate, who is also Deputy Minority Leader, condemned the attempts of “peace saboteurs” to scuttle the fresh push to revive the peace talks. “They are setting preconditions to the talks and issuing absurd militarist statements.

“It is good that more and more people, like our fellow solons, are seeing the need for genuine peace... and they are not swayed by the lies of these militarists, in and out of government,” he stressed. **UP**

**WISHING ONE & ALL GREATER VICTORIES IN THE NEW DECADE  
FOR OUR COMMON ASPIRATIONS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE,  
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND LASTING PEACE!**