



# UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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## EDITORIAL Scourge to the Filipino people

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 continues to spread among the Filipino population. As of 29 March, 71 patients have died among the 1418 who have already tested positive for the disease. Tragically, 12 Filipino doctors fighting the pandemic have also succumbed to the disease. Our deepest sympathies go to their families and loved ones and highest honors to their memory in service to the people.

Health care workers, numerous volunteers and community action are dedicatedly battling against the further spread of the disease and doing what they can for those already afflicted.

The greater scourge to the Filipino people however is President Rodrigo Duterte and his ruling clique. Duterte slashed much-needed funds from the Department of Health in favor of military overspending. He allowed the entry of several thousands of casino tourists from Wuhan, even after the epidemic had already been raging there in January 2020. And in an effort to show that his government is now taking action against the pandemic, Duterte ordered island-wide lockdowns and expropriated even greater amounts of money and power from Congress.

All public transportation have been banned, armed police and military have been deployed to enforce curfews, checkpoints and other restrictions. An overwhelming majority of the population are being prevented from making a living. In the rural areas, peasants are prohibited from going to their farms.

Promises from the Duterte government for food and compensation for the economically displaced and healthcare resources for those in the frontlines are big, fat lies. Additional funds will further fatten up the ruling clique's personal accounts. The Duterte government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic will cause even more widespread unemployment, hunger, disease and death, than the disease itself.

Collective action of the Filipino people will be the key in getting through the scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Duterte regime. **UP**



*Secretary-General of the United Nations  
António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres.  
Photo: [refugeesmigrants.un.org](http://refugeesmigrants.un.org)*

## UN Secretary-General commends CPP ceasefire declaration

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on 25 March commended the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) for announcing a unilateral ceasefire with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), following his call for a global ceasefire to facilitate the global response to COVID-19. "The Secretary General encourages the parties to reach a lasting political solution and end this longstanding conflict. The Secretary General also hopes that this will serve as an example across the world to silence the guns and come together as we face the global threat of COVID-19," said Stephane Dujarric, Spokesperson of the UN Secretary-General.

The CPP issued its nationwide ceasefire on 24 March upon the recommendation of the Negotiating Panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and as a direct response to the UN Secretary-General's call. The purpose, the CPP said, is "to ensure and facilitate necessary, unhampered and immediate medical, health and economic assistance, support and movement of the people, brought about by the exigencies of the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected a growing number of Filipinos and non-Filipinos alike."

The Party ordered the New People's Army and the people's militias to observe the ceasefire from 26 March until 15 April 2020.

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The Royal Norwegian Government, Third Party Facilitator of the peace negotiations between the GRP and NDFP declared through its Foreign Minister Eriksen Soreide, “We welcome the humanitarian ceasefire declared by the (GRP) and the (NDFP) in order to combat COVID-19. Norway will continue to support peace efforts. We encourage all parties to conflicts to heed UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’ call for a global ceasefire.”

In response, NDFP Negotiating Panel Chairperson Fidel Agcaoili expressed utmost appreciation to the UN Secretary General for his commendation. He also warmly thanked the Norwegian Foreign Minister for welcoming the CPP ceasefire and Norway’s continued support for the peace talks.

According to the CPP, “The ceasefire is also a gesture towards national unity and based on humanitarian principles in the context of the serious public emergency to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all. Consistent with these context and considerations, the NDFP demands as a matter of justice and necessity that all political prisoners be released forthwith and a general amnesty be issued.”

Related to this, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michele Bachelet called on governments on 25 March “to take urgent action to protect the health and safety of people in detention...”

The CPP also declared that “the ceasefire may politically contribute as well towards a positive atmosphere conducive to the eventual holding of informal talks preparatory to the formal meeting to resume peace negotiations.” **UP**

### Mga sintomas ng impeksyon:



#### Prinsipal:

- ubo
- lagnat
- panghihina

#### Segundaryo:

- pagtatae
- sakit ng ulo
- pagkirit ng lalamunan

- Sa mas malalalang kaso, maaari itong magdulot ng pulmonya, sakit sa bato, at maging kamatayan
- Maaaring nasa katawan na ito nang 2-14 araw bago lumitaw ang mga sintomas. May mga pasyenteng positibo sa sakit pero walang anumang sintomas.

*Excerpt from flyer on COVID-19.  
CPP Information Bureau.*

## Philippine revolutionaries mobilize vs. COVID-19

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on 17 March called on all revolutionary forces and the Filipino people to mobilize, organize and act collectively to respond to the public health emergency of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The CPP said, “In the face of the pandemic and the threat of the disease rapidly spreading among the Filipino people,” it called on Medical Officers and Red fighters of the New People’s Army, allied organizations of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and all agencies of the People’s Democratic Government (PDG) “to activate and strengthen existing village health committees and build thousands of other health committees in factories and communities. These committees, composed of local health workers and volunteers, must help organize the people’s

collective response.”

Health Committees were directed “to lead in studying and raising awareness about COVID-19 in order to plan the collective people’s response.” They can lead sanitation and community cleanup drives, promote personal hygiene, facilitate free distribution of face masks, soap and other cleaning agents, and mobilize people to produce face masks using alternative materials, the Party said.

Health Committees in factories were called to push for the provision of free medical and hygiene kits, and other measures to make the workers less vulnerable to the disease. The CPP said that urban poor communities must push for regular garbage collection, access to clean water, as well as free distribution of health kits and sanitation systems.

The Party called for a humanitarian united front “to help mobilize all possible resources in order to extend the broadest support for people’s actions against the threat of COVID-19”. It also called for the strengthening of the organizations of nurses, doctors, health professionals and practitioners to ensure their welfare as they stand in the frontline in the fight against the pandemic.

The CPP also criticized the Duterte government’s “martial law-mindset” of deploying armed military and police checkpoints, “causing further grave economic hardships, without any provision for financial insurance during the (lockdown) period... it is likely that there will be more people who will die because of hunger more than the disease.”

It said that the inability of the Duterte regime to provide medical and social measures – instead of military and police measures – thoroughly exposes the rotten fundamentals of the Philippine ruling social system.

## Assassination of CPP official, comrades condemned

Revolutionary forces in the Philippines and abroad vehemently denounced the cold-blooded murder of Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) official Julius Giron and his companions Dr. Ma. Lourdes Denero Tango and Arvie Alarcon Reyes, by Duterte security agents in the early morning hours of 13 March in Baguio City north of Manila.

The three were sleeping and unarmed when they were gunned down by combined elements of the Northern Luzon Command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP). Giron and Dr. Tango suffered up to seven gunshot wounds each, including several to the head. Reyes got four bullets to his chest.

In condemning the murders, the Communist Party of the Philippines said, “Giron’s blood is on Duterte’s hands. His assassination was carried out under Duterte’s war of suppression... his key security and military officials have long wanted to eliminate Giron who served as one of the Party’s leading cadres and principal peace consultant to the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).”

NDFP allied organizations described the killing as a war crime. The Christians for National Liberation said, “these (killings) concretely prove the insincerity of autocrat Duterte in the peaceful resolution to the armed conflict.”

Condemnations of the cold-blooded murders, as well as Red salutes for Giron, were also expressed abroad, including from the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany, Communist Party of Turkey – Marxist-Leninist and the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

Giron was 70 years old, suffering from infirmities of old age and already had difficulty keeping his balance. “Despite his advanced age,” the CPP said, “he remained ever the active revolutionary communist and one of the key leading cadres of the CPP. He was forever a student and teacher of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.”

Giron was a member of the Party’s Central Committee, its Political Bureau and Executive Committee. He was also a senior consultant of the NDFP in peace talks with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), entitling him to protection under the GRP-NDFP Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees.

CPP Founding Chairman Prof. Jose Maria Sison, in paying tribute to Giron said, “The greatness of Comrade Julius as a revolutionary patriot and communist fighter will be amplified and will shine even brighter to inspire the current generation of the revolutionary cadres and masses and future generations to achieve the total victory of the people’s democratic revolution and proceed to the socialist revolution.” **UP**



Comrade Julius Giron. Photo: cpp.ph