



# UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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## EDITORIAL

### Legalizing repression, justifying mass murder

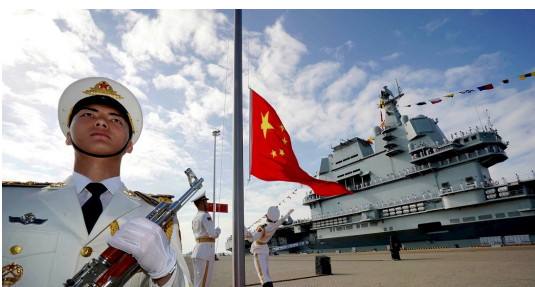
With the signing into law of the 'Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020', President Rodrigo Duterte has added yet another lethal weapon in suppressing criticism and opposition to his tyrannical rule.

The assurances of Duterte officialdom and loyalist trolls to observing universal norms on human rights ring very hollow. The law's chief implementers, after all, will be Gen. Esperon, Gen. Delfin Lorenzana, Gen. Eduardo Año, Teodoro Locsin Jr. and Menardo Guevarra. These are the same officials who have been resolute in justifying the Duterte administration's deadly repression, including the continued incarceration of opposition senator Leila de Lima, the suppression of ABS-CBN media network, online news outfit Rappler and its publisher Maria Rezza, the bombardment and destruction of Marawi City, the communist witch-hunt and murder of human rights defenders and the murder of more than 25,000 Filipinos in the guise of their 'war on drugs'.

With a rubberstamp legislature, a compliant judicial system, mercenary poll surveys, social media trolls and now with extraordinary police and military powers, Duterte and his cronies now have unassailable official authority. At the expense of the people's civil rights and sovereignty, the regime has arrogated absolute authority for selling off the national patrimony, ravaging the natural environment, smuggling illegal drugs and other contraband, amassing personal wealth and for silencing those who dare question its authority.

It has become crystal clear that the Duterte regime itself is the greatest threat to the safety and survival of the Filipino people. Despite the gargantuan obstacles of this Anti-Terrorism Act and other repressive measures, Filipinos are ever more determined to end their sufferings. They are constantly organizing and mobilizing themselves to oust Duterte and his cronies from power and hold them accountable for their heinous crimes.

The Filipino people are calling on the international community to support their valiant efforts. UN bodies and officials, peace-loving governments and international human rights organizations can use their resources and influence in undertaking independent and ground-based investigations, strengthening protection for human rights defenders and in preparing cases of torture and mass murder against Duterte and his officials. We call on the international community to help put an end to legalized repression and the mass murder of the Filipino people. **UP**



*Chinese troops aboard aircraft carrier Shandong. Xinhua file photo.*

### Heightened China, US military presence in Philippine seas condemned

The Philippine revolutionary movement recently condemned China and the United States for holding war exercises and increasing their military presence in the country's territorial waters and surrounding seas over the past several weeks. In a 4 July statement, the Communist Party of the Philippines denounced "(the) imperialist

superpowers for staging war exercises around the Philippines which are raising military tensions in both the western and eastern parts of the country."

Amidst renewed tensions between the two superpowers, especially in the wake of US President Donald Trump's accusations against China in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Philippines is being surrounded by increased US and Chinese military presence.

From 1-5 July, China conducted military exercises in the disputed Paracel Islands being claimed by China, Vietnam and Taiwan. The islands lie in the West Philippine Sea and are believed to contain valuable oil and gas deposits.

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On 2 July, US security officials expressed “concern” over China’s exercises, saying these “actions to assert unlawful maritime claims and disadvantage its Southeast Asian neighbours” will “further destabilize” the region.

On 4 July, the US Navy dispatched two aircraft carrier strike groups, led by the USS Nimitz and the USS Ronald Reagan, to conduct air defense exercises supposedly “in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.” This is the biggest US military exercise in the region in years.

Later on 9 July, China criticized the US for the deployment and exercises, calling these “provocative acts” meant to assert “navigational hegemony” and are creating a “tense situation” in the region.

Before all these, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), after its annual summit on 26 June, issued one of its strongest statements to date on China’s claim to the South China Sea. The statement asserted the validity of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which grants coastal states their exclusive economic zones (EEZ) for tapping fishery and fuel resources.

The CPP blamed the Rodrigo Duterte regime for showing “military, political and economic subservience to both the imperialist US and China” and for not standing up to these powers to assert national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In a separate statement, CPP Founding Chairman Prof. Jose Maria Sison said, “the worst kind of danger for a country like the Philippines is to become a complete captive and pawn of any imperialist power, whether the US or China, or to become a confused victim of these two imperialist powers.”

Sison said that Duterte has “a two-faced character” in being submissive to both superpowers and “cannot be trusted to act in the interest of the Philippines and the Filipino people.”

The CPP and Sison condemned the Duterte government’s refusal to assert the Philippines’ territorial and economic rights under the UNCLOS, especially as these were already affirmed by the 2016 ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. They criticized the regime for allowing China to reclaim land and build military facilities within the country’s territorial seas, EEZ and extended continental shelf.

Duterte also recently backed out of his threats to end the US-RP Visiting Forces Agreement. He instead went ahead with the purchase of US military weapons and continues to allow the US to build military facilities inside Philippine military camps.

“The rights of the Filipino people can best be protected by a government that arises from the revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation,” Sison said. **UP**



Photo: peoplesdispatch.org

## Duterte’s Anti-Terror Law draws widespread condemnation

Broad condemnation and resistance has arisen against the Anti-Terror Law signed by President Duterte on 3 July. Protests zero in on the new law’s repressive provisions allowing warrantless arrests up to 14 days, surveillance of 30 days and powers of ordering arrests by a Duterte-appointed Anti-Terrorism Council.

Nineteen lawyers’ groups and legal personalities have filed cases in the Supreme Court. Among the petitioners are the

Integrated Bar of the Philippines, National Union of People’s Lawyers, Concerned Lawyers for Civil Liberties, Free Legal Assistance Group, Public Interest Law Center, the Makabayan parliamentary bloc, former Senior Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio, Far Eastern University Institute of Law Dean Melencio Sta. Maria Jr., Atty. Howard Calleja, Congressman Edcel Lagman, lawyers from Mindanao and indigenous peoples groups.

They condemn the Anti-Terror Law and call for the issuance of a Temporary Restraining Order to stop its implementation scheduled for 19 July 2020.

Protest actions call for junking of the ATL. On 11 July, the Movement Against Tyranny and Concerned Lawyers for Civil Liberties led a public protest in Metro Manila. More than a thousand protesters from various organizations joined. They repeatedly shouted “Junk, Junk Terror Law!” Speakers from the different organizations gave educational and militant speeches.

This protest mass action followed a 4 July indignation protest at the University of the Philippines. Gabriela Youth representative Clarice Palce stressed the importance of public clamor to junk the Terror Law.

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Youth Act Now Against Tyranny National Convenor Raoul Manuel stressed that the youth would not cower in fear and will not be silenced. “The Anti-Terror Law must be junked!” Meanwhile, the College Editors Guild of the Philippines also denounced Duterte as the “No. 1 Terrorist!”

Protest actions have also been held in the cities of Baguio, Legaspi and Cebu, among others.

Church organizations have also condemned the new law. The National Council of Churches in the Philippines, the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches and the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines have all issued strong condemnations of the Anti-Terror Law.

The Bangsamoro Parliament on 2 July passed a resolution urging President Duterte to veto the anti-terrorism bill, arguing that it would lead to abuses that would unfairly target Muslim Filipinos.

Overseas, Bayan USA, Migrante USA, Gabriela USA and Anakbayan USA vehemently condemned on 3 July Duterte’s signing of the Anti-Terror Bill into law. “We are outraged by the implications this ATL will have on the Filipino movement for liberation and democracy.”

On 12 July, the Europe Network for Justice and Peace in the Philippines likewise held an online protest against the Anti-Terror Law.

International entities also condemned the ATL. The UN Human Rights Council declared, “it will have a chilling effect on Human Rights work.” Amnesty International Asia-Pacific Director Nicholas Bequelin said, “This law is the latest example of the country’s ever-worsening human rights record. Once again, this shows why the UN should launch a formal investigation into the ongoing widespread violations in the country.” **UP**



*Image: cpp.ph*

## CPP, NPA not in UN terrorist list – Valbuena

The Communist Party of the Philippines clarified on 6 July that the CPP and the New People’s Army are not included in the ‘designated terrorist organizations’ of the United Nations. Marco Valbuena, CPP Information Officer, in a statement said that neither the CPP nor the NPA have been involved in terrorist acts, contrary to what the Manila government repeatedly insinuates.

“The CPP and NPA are revolutionary organizations that uphold and pursue the Filipino people’s aspirations for national freedom and social justice,” Valbuena said. “Terrorism is anathema to the revolutionary principles of the CPP,” he added.

He further clarified that “the CPP and NPA are also not included in the most recent updated list of ‘designated terrorists’ of Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom.”

Valbuena said that the CPP and NPA are not included in the UN National Security Council Consolidated List which designates 710 persons and groups as terrorists. Among these are Philippine-based groups Jemaah Islamiyah, Abu Sayyaf and the Rajah Solaiman Group. All three have alliances or contacts with international terror networks like Al Qaeda and Islamic State.

On 5 December 2017, President Duterte signed a proclamation declaring the CPP and NPA as terrorist organizations under his Republic Act 10168 or the Terrorist Financing Prevention and Suppression Act. He cited a decision in 2002 by the US government categorizing the CPP and NPA as foreign terrorist groups. **UP**

## Red Salute to two veteran Filipino revolutionaries

The Philippine revolutionary movement rendered its highest respects to two veteran revolutionaries, Comrades Juanito Rivera and Jaime Soledad, who recently died from lingering illnesses, and who both dedicated their lives to the cause of the Filipino people.

Juanito Rivera or Ka Juaning was a communist, a Red commander and a mass leader of vast experience. Coming from a peasant family, he understood very well the problems of the working people and served them, the proletariat and the peasant masses, in many different ways and capacities.

Together with Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) Founding Chairman Jose Maria Sison, Ka Juaning co-founded the New People’s Army on 29 March 1969 in Talimundok, Capas, Tarlac. He became part of the CPP Central Committee in May 1969. *[continued next page...]*



*Comrade Juanito Rivera.*

*Photo: Dabet Catañeda | bulatlat.com*

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Sison said, “Up to the time of my capture in 1977, I knew Ka Juaning as a dedicated, competent and effective proletarian revolutionary fighter and ever loyal servant of the people. Thus, he assumed higher responsibilities in the CPP, the NPA and revolutionary movement while I was in prison... I am aware that after his imprisonment his health condition did not permit him to go back to the armed revolutionary movement.

“From a distance, I continued to admire him for his continuing service to the peasant masses and the interviews that he gave to journalists, social researchers and peace advocates.”

Sison continues, “Ka Juaning faced grave risks and dangers to his life and surmounted tremendous odds in fighting for the people’s just cause and struggle. He is an outstanding and inspiring historical revolutionary figure, whose example is worthy of emulation by the people and the revolutionary movement.”

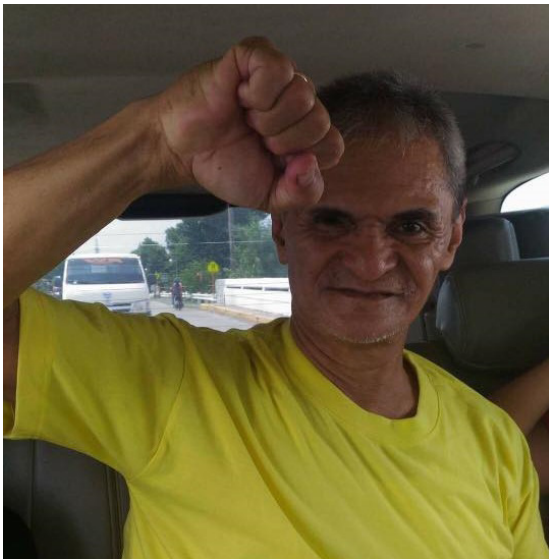
Comrade Jaime Soledad, also variously known as Ka Mike, Jordan and Fred, spent his life serving the people, from being a student to recently succumbing to cancer at the age of 70.

He abandoned the Reserved Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) of the University of the Philippines, and joined the NPA and the CPP. He led in founding and advancing the revolutionary movement in Leyte island. He was a writer and translated revolutionary materials to the Waray and Bisaya languages from 2005 to 2009.

Ka Jaime served as the spokesperson of the NDFP-Eastern Visayas during the Corazon Aquino regime. He was illegally arrested in 2009 and later released as a consultant

for the NDFP-GRP Peace Negotiations. In Oslo during peace talks, Ka Jaime assiduously accomplished his new tasks for the struggle.

The CPP offers its highest Red salutes to Comrades Juanito Rivera and Jaime Soledad. Their contributions and legacy ensure that the revolutionary movement will surge forward in the face of increasingly rabid attacks by the oppressors. **UP**



*Comrade Jaime Soledad. Photo: cpp.ph*



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