



# UPDATES PHILIPPINES

RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

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*UPDATES Philippines extends New Year's greetings to all of you!  
As the Filipino people persevere in the struggle for a just and lasting peace,  
for land reform, social and national liberation, we wish a bright future  
for peoples' struggles around the world!*

## EDITORIAL

### Prospects for greater victories in 2021

2020 proved to be a very difficult year for the Filipino people. We had been battered relentlessly by debilitating natural calamities and the even more destructive man-made disaster in the form of the US-Duterte fascist regime.

The record-setting typhoons and even the Covid-19 pandemic are disastrous enough. These were however worsened many times over by Rodrigo Duterte's government. He used the calamities as opportunities to hog more wealth and political power for himself, his cronies and security officials. The calamities provided the regime additional rationale for intensifying its armed repression and murder against the Filipino people. In 2020, we witnessed an even greater explosion of unemployment, impoverishment and economic bankruptcy which could not be covered up even by the rosier press releases, opinion polls and Facebook campaigns of the Duterte hardcore followers.

The worsening poverty and violent repression however are causing more and more people to rise up in indignation and to fight. Despite the murderous rampage of Duterte's security forces and contrary to their propaganda, the revolutionary movement is persevering all across the country – in the vast countryside as well as in the urban areas. It has continued to gain strength in 2020.

Duterte is truly turning out to be the best recruiter of the New People's Army and Communist Party of the Philippines!

Even as the Duterte regime digs itself deeper into its own grave of corruption and murderous repression, this New Year will provide opportunities for the Filipino people and their revolutionary movement to gain greater strength. It provides opportunities for greater victories for democratic rights and social justice and the over-all advancement of the revolution for national and social liberation. **UP**



ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda.

Photo: [icc-cpi.int](http://icc-cpi.int)

### Filipinos, international community welcome ICC report vs. Duterte government

Human rights defenders in the Philippines and around the world welcomed the report of International Criminal Court Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda that found “reasonable basis to believe” that the government of Rodrigo Duterte may have committed crimes against humanity.

The findings are contained in [Ms. Bensouda's annual report of 14 December](#) which saw reasonable basis that “murder,

torture and the infliction of serious physical injury and mental harm... were committed between 1 July 2016 and 16 March 2019, in connection to the War on Drugs campaign launched” by the Duterte government.

Philippine human rights alliance Karapatan and Rise Up for Life and Rights lauded the ICC report. Rise Up said, “state officials and police forces were both brazen and confident that they would enjoy impunity in their crimes.”

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Atty. Edre Olalia, President of the National Union of People's Lawyers, said that the findings of the report will have "a very considerable development that has far reaching repercussions". NUPL Chairperson Atty. Neri Colmenares, for his part said that Duterte may face arrest in the near future for his role in the extrajudicial killings and in instituting a culture of impunity among his security forces. Meanwhile, the International Commission of Investigation into Human Rights Violations in the Philippines (INVESTIGATE PH), composed of legal luminaries from scores of countries, announced that it would lead an independent people-led probe of the dire situation in the Philippines, pointing out "that the world community has a responsibility to speak up and seek the truth".

Duterte and his officials dismissed Bensouda's report. They claimed the ICC has no jurisdiction to pursue this case since the regime withdrew from the ICC and the Rome statute in March 2019.

In her report however, Ms. Bensouda confirmed that the ICC retains jurisdiction over crimes which occurred in the Philippines from 1 November 2011 up to and including 16 March 2019. "Furthermore, the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed up to and including 16 March 2019 is not subject to any time limit," the report said. **UP**



Family, colleagues and friends of victims cry out for justice. Photo: bulatlat.com

## Duterte guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity – CPP

The Communist Party of the Philippines on 26 December accused President Rodrigo Duterte of responsibility for "innumerable war crimes and crimes against humanity." [On the occasion of the Party's 52nd Founding Anniversary](#), the CPP Central Committee asserted that massacres, extrajudicial killings, torture, abductions and arbitrary arrests and illegal detention continue with increasing frequency under the Duterte regime.

Duterte has militarized his government, the CPP said, "there is de facto Martial Law in the country with the enactment of the Anti-Terrorism Law." This law, according to the CPP, gives Duterte limitless powers in using state machinery to suppress any protest and dissent by the Filipino people. The regime has also deployed around 50,000 combat troops – 150 battalions – to fight the New People's Army. These troops occupy rural communities and subject the peasant masses to armed suppression.

The Party also warned that Duterte intends to perpetuate himself in power, possibly by declaring a 'revolutionary government', installing a dictatorship in the guise of setting up a federal government.

Duterte's single six-year term is set to end in June 2022. The regime is facing increasing isolation due to the worsening socio-economic situation, worsening poverty, rising joblessness, its failure to adequately respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thousands of landless peasants are also being driven to bankruptcy due to skyrocketing costs of production and land rent, and landgrabbing by big corporate interests.

Prof. Jose Maria Sison, Founding Chairman of the CPP, said, "The Duterte regime is trying hard to surpass the state terrorism and brutality of the Marcos fascist dictatorship. It is engaged in blind red-tagging, slander, extortion, arbitrary arrests, torture and murder."

Prof. Sison said, "But they grievously offend the people and drive them to engage in various forms of struggle and the most threatened young militants to join the NPA."

The CPP revealed that the NPA is growing despite the intensified armed repression. "Most of the NPA commands have adapted," the CPP said. "(The NPA) has succeeded in forming new guerrilla fronts or expanding existing guerrilla fronts, while strengthening and deepening the support of the peasant masses."

It cited victorious efforts of the NPA in Bicol, Eastern Visayas and Southern Tagalog regions in evading the encirclement by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and in mounting tactical offensives against the AFP.

Prof. Sison said, "As long as the root causes of imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism persist, the conditions for the growth of the armed revolution will be fertile and the reactionary government and its imperialist masters will fail to destroy it." **UP**

## Revolutionary forces reject Duterte's designation of CPP as 'terrorist'

The Duterte government's designation on 9 December of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) as a 'terrorist organization' was firmly rejected by the CPP, according to CPP Chief Information Officer Marco Valbuena. Duterte's Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC) announced the designation on 26 December. It failed to take into account that the CPP stands outside the legal jurisdiction of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).

According to Valbuena, the CPP is governed by the rules of the People's Democratic Government (PDG), established in the course of the revolutionary war to advance the national and democratic rights of the people. The CPP, New People's Army (NPA) and the revolutionary forces, he said, have already acquired the status of belligerency. They are therefore not subject to the juridical authority of the GRP. They are governed by the rules of the PDG, the Geneva Conventions and International Humanitarian Law.

"The CPP does not recognize the judicial authority of the GRP," Valbuena said. "Neither does the CPP recognize the Anti-Terror Law of President Duterte as a legitimate law. The ATL's constitutionality is being challenged in the GRP's Supreme Court by 37 prestigious organizations and individuals."

Human rights defenders and opposition groups point out however, that the ATL and the ATC's designation of the CPP as 'terrorist organization' also threatens their legal and political rights. At a time when the GRP Supreme Court is still considering challenges to the constitutionality of the ATL, the ATC's announcement is seen as an insult to the 37 Supreme Court petitioners.

Furthermore, ATC claims that the UK and Australia have listed the CPP and NPA as 'terrorist organizations' are false.

Valbuena said such designations by the ATC can be challenged by legal and political organizations for violating their rights. They have been unjustly declared as "fronts of the CPP" or "providing funds or other assistance" to the CPP and NPA without any kind of evidence. They may also cite legal opinions, he said, that the actions of the revolutionary movement are actually to be considered as rebellion and not terrorism. **UP**



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