



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Join the launching of CPP Founding Chairman Prof. Jose Maria Sison's latest book:

Resist Neoliberalism, Fascism and Wars of Aggression (Selected Writings, 2019)

Sunday 7 February 2021, 15.00 - 17.00 (UTC+1)

(pre) register: <https://bit.ly/JMSBooklaunch>

EDITORIAL

Covid-19 vaccine à la Duterte

As of this writing, at least 10,290 Filipinos have died due to the coronavirus. Up to last week, at least 25,260 were still ill and about 1,300 more each day get sick. The Philippines has one of most coronavirus cases in Asia. Millions have lost their livelihood. And yet the government of Rodrigo Duterte is miserably trailing in the effort to vaccinate the Filipino people against the virus.

Ever so fond of his mercenary generals, Duterte appointed Gen. Carlito Galvez way back in March 2020 as chief whip of his Covid-19 task force and added-on the title of 'vaccine czar' in October. So what have they done thus far, aside from a lot of puffed up press releases?

Instead of mass testing and the consequent contact-tracing, Filipinos have to pay to be tested. In late December, 'some cabinet officials' and the Presidential Security Group were given coronavirus vaccines, in violation of laws on clinical trials and emergency use authorization. Clear as day, Duterte and his officials prioritize themselves over the frontline healthcare workers and vulnerable population!

Duterte and Galvez have also been campaigning vociferously to buy Sinovac's CoronaVac, even before the Chinese pharma has applied for any clinical trial or emergency use in the country. Lashing out against accusations of corruption, Duterte virtually admitted that aside from Gen. Galvez, Finance Secretary Dominguez and Duterte himself will be sharing in the drug sales commissions! While tens of millions of vaccines have already been rolled out for free in various countries around the world, Duterte and his cronies are drooling over the sales commissions – to hell with the people's health!

Covid-19 vaccine à la Duterte is treasonous, corrupt, anti-people and repressive. The Filipino people must fight ever more resolutely for the free and safe distribution of Covid-19 vaccines to the healthcare workers, the most vulnerable population and eventually to the general population. **UP**



PNP orders killing of Cordillera indigenous leader

The Cordillera Regional Director of the Philippine National Police, Brig. Gen. Rwin Pagkalinawan on 20 January issued a 'shoot-to-kill' order against Cordillera indigenous leader Windel Bolinget, should he 'resist arrest'. Mr. Bolinget, Chairperson of the Cordillera People's Alliance, representing the indigenous peoples of northern Philippines, is facing charges of murder in Davao del Norte, in the southern island of Mindanao.

Sarah Dekdeken, Secretary General of the CPA, decried the arrest and shoot-to-kill orders as the attempt of

the Duterte government to silence Bolinget and the CPA from asserting indigenous peoples' and the Filipino peoples' rights against development aggression. "Bolinget did not commit any murder or physical harm against any individual. He never went to Davao del Norte nor visited any part of Mindanao in 2018," she said.

The CPA called for the dropping of the fabricated case against their leader.

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“Gen. Pagkalinawan’s order is a pretext for the extra-judicial killing of Bolinget... It is clear that from the beginning, they didn’t have any plan to let Bolinget undergo trial for what he is being accused of and give him a chance to defend himself in a court of law,” the CPA said.

PNP personnel have been known to kill unarmed suspects ‘resisting arrest’. The UNHRC had reported that Duterte’s police forces reuse confiscated firearms as ‘evidence’ that those they killed resisted arrest.

Mr. Bolinget, a member of the Kankana-ey and Bontok indigenous groups in Mountain Province, has been accused by Duterte’s security officials of recruiting for the New People’s Army. He has been included in a military hit list, along with other CPA leaders. ‘Wanted’ posters with his picture have been distributed in various places in Mountain Province.

A court in Tagum City, Davao del Norte, recently issued an arrest warrant for Bolinget and several others allegedly for the murder of Garito Tiklonay Malibato on 21 March 2018 in Tagum. Following the arrest warrant, the PNP in Kalinga province in northern Philippines announced on 15 January a PhP100,000 (US\$2,000) bounty for any information on Bolinget’s whereabouts. Gen. Pagkalinawan then issued his shoot-to-kill order on 20 January.

On 21 January, Bolinget voluntarily submitted himself to the National Bureau of Investigation for custody and protection, so that he could challenge the allegations against him in a competent court. **UP**



CPP calls for nationwide campaign for free Covid-19 vaccine

The Communist Party of the Philippines on 10 January expressed deep concern for the health and welfare of the Filipino people and urged them to get Covid-19 vaccination. It declared that the people must overcome their fear of vaccines. “Let us base our decision on publicly

available scientific information, as well as findings of regulatory bodies, concerning the efficacy and safety of the Covid-19 vaccines being developed by pharmaceutical companies.”

The CPP called on all Party units to carry out an information campaign to raise the people’s awareness of vaccines, in line with the revolutionary movement’s campaign to prevent the spread of Covid-19 infections.

“Vaccines are among the most important scientific achievement of humanity in the fight against debilitating diseases and in improving people’s quality of life,” the CPP said. “It is thus a great offense that the Duterte government has done nothing to help raise the country’s capability to do research and develop vaccines.”

The Party called on the people to raise the demand for free vaccines to all. “The people must be made aware of the crucial responsibility of the state to provide the people with free vaccines to ensure a large majority of the population are immunized from the disease.”

The CPP cited that advanced capitalist countries as well as less developed countries, have already rolled out millions of vaccines for their citizens for free. The Party accused the Duterte government of failing to draw up a comprehensive plan for inoculating the Philippine population. “The regime allotted a mere 2.7% of the required PhP 27 billion to vaccinate 60% of Filipinos. This reveals that it has absolutely no plan to lead a major vaccination campaign.”

It stressed that the Duterte’s government’s efforts to acquire vaccines have been mired in controversy. “His officials jockey against each other in the race to bag the juicy contracts and earn their kickbacks. The unauthorized and secret inoculation of Duterte’s security guards and cabinet members, using smuggled vaccines even before any vaccine could be authorized, has offended health workers and the Filipino people.”

The Duterte government compels local government units and private companies to buy vaccines for their own needs. “This has caused a great divide between the haves and have-nots across the country,” the CPP said. **UP**



Students & faculty of the University of the Philippines protest campus repression by Duterte government. Photo: cpp.ph

Duterte regime steps up suppression campaign vs. student activists

Gen. Delfin Lorenzana, Department of National Defense Secretary of the Duterte government, on 15 January unilaterally abrogated the UP-DND Accord of 1989 that prohibits armed state security agents from entering campuses of the University of the Philippines without prior concurrence from university officials, claiming that the UP has been a “breeding ground” for members of the

Communist Party of the Philippines and New People’s Army.

Following the announcement, Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade, spokesperson of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, warned that not only the UP but dozens more universities are being used by the CPP and the NPA as their “recruiting ground”.

Objecting to the allegations, presidents of four major universities asserted that no such recruitment exists in their grounds and demanded that the Duterte government respect the tradition of academic freedom in the schools.

Dr. Michael Alba of Far Eastern University, Br. Raymundo B. Suplido, FSC, of De La Salle University, Fr. Isaias D. Tiongco, OP, of University of Santo Tomas, and Fr. Roberto C. Yap, SJ, of Ateneo de Manila University, said, “this charge is really getting old -- a rehash of the accusation the general made in 2018 -- irresponsibly since cast without proof.”

Prof. Fidel R. Nemenzo, Chancellor of the UP Diliman campus said, “It is unthinkable that despite the millions of taxpayers’ money poured into military intelligence, the AFP is making such baseless accusations.”

Days after, on 22 January, the AFP Information Exchange posted on Facebook 27 former UP students who “became NPA (died or captured)”. The list included several prominent people very much alive and working in their own fields as lawyers, businessmen, journalists and even as officials of the Duterte government.

The AFP intelligence service reportedly picked names from a 1980s era list of student activists. The “dead NPAs” condemned the accusations. They posted online videos showing they were neither active nor captured NPA, and very much alive. Several are preparing libel suits against the AFP for its red-tagging activity.

Security agents of the Duterte government have been accused of killing activists who have earlier been victims of AFP and police harassment and red-tagging.

In a statement on 26 January, the CPP avers that Gen. Lorenzana “wants the military to establish its intimidating armed presence in UP and other universities to instill fear in the student population and stop them from thinking and acting critically against corruption, mendacity, treachery and tyranny of the ruling Duterte regime.”

The CPP said, “In fact, he is only succeeding in further stoking the students and youth’s intellectual interest in the NPA and the armed revolution.” **UP**



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