



# UPDATES PHILIPPINES

RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Amsterdamsestraatweg 50, 3513AG Utrecht, The Netherlands  
T: : +31 30 2310431 | E: [updates.philippines@ndfp.org](mailto:updates.philippines@ndfp.org) | W: [updates.ndfp.org](http://updates.ndfp.org)

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## EDITORIAL

### Losing friends in high places

President Duterte finally reappeared in public after an absence of nearly two weeks, quelling persistent rumors that his health condition is worsening. He's reportedly suffering from migraines and chronic back pains, Barrett's esophagus and Buerger's disease. And, as rumors have it, his latest disappearance was because he suffered a stroke. As his presidential term nears its end in 2022, it looks like it's the end of the road for Duterte, in more ways than just his failing health.

Duterte and his cronies have bankrupted the country through their bureaucratic corruption and military overspending. Sections of the ruling elite are growing more and more dissatisfied with the regime's totalitarian craving for absolute power and absolute corruption beyond 2022. They are alarmed by the worsening economic crisis, appalled by the mass murder in the name of the 'war on drugs' and anti-communism, extremely troubled by the longest Covid-19 lockdown in the world and disgusted by Duterte's kowtowing to Chinese imperialism.

Military and police officials of the Manila government, both active and retired, are rabidly loyal to the US. Led by Gen. Lorenzana, their grumblings against Duterte's coziness to China is becoming more and more vocal. The US is not all pleased that Duterte cannot be counted on to protect US and western interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

A broad united front is also developing among opposition forces, ranging from the right to the left. Strange bedfellows indeed. But because of the broadening opposition ranks, the target of the Filipino people's disgust for the five years of tyranny, mass murder, plunder and incompetence is getting ever narrower and sharper. Duterte's ruling clique is shrinking!

In its inexorable drive for absolute power in the next 12 months, the Duterte regime will be on a self-destructive path of treason, absolute corruption, murderous rampage and oppression. More and more Filipinos will join the resistance movement, the armed revolution and the Communist Party of the Philippines. The Filipino people will become ever more resolute in fighting and striving to defeat this murderous regime. **UP**



Chinese vessels in the Julian Felipe Reef.

Photo: [cpp.ph](http://cpp.ph)

### Fight Chinese annexation of Philippine territories – CPP

The Communist Party of the Philippines stepped up condemnations against China on 7 April for its "military aggression against the Philippines" in building military installations within the country's Exclusive Economic Zone. The CPP called on Filipinos, including security forces within the Duterte regime, to establish a "national front against Chinese imperialist annexation to assert the country's sovereign rights and drive away the Chinese imperialist aggressors."

The Party demanded the immediate withdrawal of all Chinese vessels "illegally moored in and around the Julian

Felipe Reef and other areas within the Philippine EEZ". It added that China must pay for the marine resources illegally harvested by state-subsidized Chinese vessels, the damages it caused to coral reefs and "back rental" for all the illegally occupied areas.

The Julian Felipe Reef, or Whitsun Reef, is located 175 nautical miles west of Batarza town in Palawan Island, well within the Philippines EEZ. The Armed Forces of the Philippines sighted 220 Chinese vessels in the area since 7 March 2021, believed to be manned by Chinese maritime militia personnel.

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On 13 April, the Manila government's National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea reported the sighting of even more Chinese ships, including naval warships, coast guard vessels and ships manned by Chinese maritime militia personnel. It said, "The continuous swarming of Chinese vessels poses a threat to the safety of navigation, safety of life at sea, and impedes the exclusive right of Filipinos to benefit from the marine wealth in the EEZ."

Earlier on 8 April, an ABS-CBN TV news team was chased away by Chinese naval warships off Ayungin Shoal, 105 nautical miles west of Palawan Island.

National Defense Secretary Gen. Delfin Lorenzana and Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. have been demanding the withdrawal of the Chinese vessels since last month. The foreign affairs department summoned Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian on 12 April, expressing displeasure over China's illegal lingering presence in the Julian Felipe Reef.

Reflecting the growing dissatisfaction among security officials, Philippine Military Academy alumni protested "the ongoing encroachment of Chinese vessels in the Julian Felipe Reef." Signed by retired generals Amado Espino Jr. and Ambassador to Indonesia Vidal E. Querol, they said that China displays "bad faith" in ongoing negotiations for the proper conduct in these waters. They called on China "to respect our government officials and for the Chinese government to adhere to the rules as laid by international law."

Several countries, including Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the US, have already raised alarm over this latest incursion of Chinese ships on Philippine territory. Various foreign affairs officials have called out China for its "destabilizing actions" that could undermine peace and stability in the volatile waterway, referring to the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea.

China, however, is standing pat on its claim that the "Chinese fishing vessels" are merely taking shelter near the reef, adding that the reef is part of China's Nansha Qundao (Philippines' Kalayaan Islands) islands. President Rodrigo Duterte himself has not made any statement against China's latest aggressive annexation activities.

The CPP denounced Duterte for his "continued kowtowing to China... Duterte is clearly persuaded by China's 'vaccine diplomacy', false promises of economic investments, numerous bribes he has received and relations with Chinese drug syndicates."

It said, "It is the patriotic duty of all Filipinos to defend Philippine sovereignty against all forms of foreign encroachments in the country's marine, land and air territories. In the face of outright Chinese annexation of Philippine territories and plunder of resources, the country must rise and resist together as one." **UP**



*1Sambayan convenor Supreme Court justice Antonio Carpio. Photo: pna.gov.ph*

## Opposition coalition 1Sambayan challenges Duterte regime

A pro-democracy coalition of opposition forces including Bayan Muna, Liberal Party, United Nationalist Alliance and Magdalo, launched the 1Sambayan (One Nation) on 23 March, uniting in their rejection of the Duterte authoritarian regime and their "love for the country and democracy". The convenors said that a united coalition could outnumber and defeat the Duterte regime.

More than 100 attended the launching activity, led by former Supreme Court justice Antonio Carpio, former Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales, former De La Salle University President Bro. Armin Luistro, SFC, former Foreign Affairs secretary Albert del Rosario, Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ, church leaders and prominent businessmen. 28 news reporters also attended, all major TV and print outlets reported on the event.

An additional 2713 attended online, including 323 1Sambayan members, 107 media and 2283 from the public. Its social media posts have reached 20 million thus far, engaging the public on Facebook, Youtube, Twitter and other platforms.

The convenors point out the need "to reclaim the country for democracy" and "install a new democratic leadership" through the formation of a national coalition of democratic forces. Political parties like the Liberal Party and the United Nationalist Alliance of former Vice President Jejomar Binay also joined. The coalition also brought in Bayan Muna and the legal right Magdalo group.

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On 13 April, more than 100 members of various democratic groups launched 1Sambayan's Negros Island Chapter. 1Sambayan lead convenor Justice Antonio Carpio greeted the initiators of the Negros Chapter. He explained what he meant by "good governance" and the attributes of national leaders "who must lift us out of poverty, must make us feel proud, reject extrajudicial killings and all forms of dictatorship, who do not rob us of our sovereignty and the right to national territory."

1Sambayan plans to field candidates for President, Vice-President and 12 Senators in the coming May 2022 national elections. **UP**



*US Sen. Diane Feinstein.  
Photo: senate.gov*

## US Senator acknowledges demands to suspend military aid to Philippines

On 7 April, US Senator Diane Feinstein responded to calls from the Action Network to condemn the killings and arrests of human rights defenders in the Philippines and to suspend US military aid to the Philippines.

Sen. Feinstein said, "As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which has jurisdiction over foreign military assistance, I take this matter extremely seriously. I will keep your thoughts in mind as the Committee considers future military assistance for the Philippines."

The letter sent by [Action Network](#) condemned the Duterte government, the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines for the 7 March killing of nine activists and the illegal arrest of several others in the Southern Tagalog region. The petitioners called on the US government to suspend any form of security assistance to the Philippines,

saying that "our tax dollars, weapons and military equipment are being used to violate the human rights of the Filipino people."

Sen. Feinstein continued, "I agree that the US has a responsibility to ensure that our military assistance is not used to support oppressive regimes... The Arms Export Control Act of 1976 requires foreign governments to use US supplied weapons only for legitimate self-defense and only in accordance with US export policy for such weapons. Violations of this policy may make the country ineligible for future military sales."

Action Network, a platform to create online petitions for specific political causes, had sent out emails to members of the US Congress.

In a related development, US Representative Susan Ellis Wild sent a "Dear Colleague" letter on March 26 urging her fellow Representatives to sign on to the Philippine Human Rights Act (PHRA) in order to get enough bipartisan support for her bill to suspend US military aid to the Philippines. She filed the proposed bill during the last session of Congress.

Rep. Wild also wrote a letter condemning the 7 March Bloody Sunday killings in the Philippines Southern Tagalog region. **UP**

## NPA mounts 16 offensives in 14 days across 9 provinces

The people's armed resistance to the murderous Duterte regime is surging all around the country. On 7 April, the Communist Party of the Philippines reported that the New People's Army mounted "at least 16 attacks on the regime's armed forces in just the last two weeks in nine provinces all over the country." It added, "This shows the determination of the NPA to foil the ambition of the fascist regime to defeat the armed revolution."

The NPA launched two tactical offensives in the province of Albay, 450 km southeast of capital city Manila. A unit of the Philippine National Police Special Action Company was ambushed in Ligao City, killing two and wounding another two. In another operation in Camalig town, the NPA paralyzed the equipment of the Ibalong Resource Development Company, notorious for destroying the environment and grabbing farmers' lands.

In the adjoining province of Sorsogon, two armed elements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) were killed in a partisan operation. Also in nearby Masbate province, two AFP soldiers were killed and another wounded when the NPA attacked the operating mercenary forces.

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In Oriental Mindoro, the NPA fired at the AFP battalion camp in Bansud, surprising the garrison forces and killing one of the troopers.

In Panay island, the NPA launched seven attacks in the region's three provinces of Capiz, Iloilo and Antique. The enemy forces suffered three fatal casualties. In Northern Samar, an ambush and a series of harassments killed a police officer and wounded another. Meanwhile, in Matiguinao, Western Samar, a sniping operation resulted in a fatal casualty against AFP forces.

In the province of Lanao del Norte, in Mindanao Island, an NPA unit blasted AFP soldiers in Iligan City, killing nine and wounding four. In the afternoon of the same day and village, the NPA fired at another AFP unit where a paramilitary was killed and two AFP soldiers were wounded.

In Lakag, Bukidnon, an AFP Special Forces Battalion attacked an NPA camp where two Red fighters and an AFP soldier died. Five hours later, the NPA ambushed the scouring AFP-SFB unit and killed four of them. In Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur, the NPA ambushed and killed a paramilitary CAFGU operative.

The successes of the NPA in the battlefield and its growth, the CPP said, would not have been possible without the increasing participation and support of the people who desire genuine social change. The Party points out, "Deep and wide mass support is the key reason why the New People's Army and the armed revolution it wages will never be defeated.

"Though the enemy is a gigantic monster using all the evil means, it won't ever succeed in severing the ties that bind the masses and the NPA nor in crushing their determination to march forward along the path of the people's war." **UP**



*NPA platoon in formation. Photo: fightbacknews.org*



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