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Amsterdamsestraatweg 50, 3513AG Utrecht, The Netherlands

T: : +31 30 2310431 | E: updates.philippines@ndfp.org | W: updates.ndfp.org

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***We draw inspiration from the heroes and martyrs of the past centuries
as we join the Filipino people in valiantly fighting
for national freedom and democracy in the Philippines.***

***Celebrate the 48th Anniversary
of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines!***

EDITORIAL

Duterte regime sees Red in the community pantries

As one observer remarked, the only thing red in the mutual aid stalls are the tomatoes.

Well-meaning Filipinos started these self-help initiatives, putting up makeshift stalls on the sidewalks of poor communities. Anyone can leave food and other necessities, so that others can take what they immediately need. But the ultra-paranoid Duterte regime branded these activities as subversive, and the regime's rabid anti-communist enforcers went into action.

Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade harassed the community pantry initiator, Ana Patricia Non, calling her Satan with the tempting apple, while Communications Undersecretary Lorraine Badoy insinuated that Ms. Non was making money from the donations. They tagged the community pantry organizers as communists. Their accusations, thankfully, blew up in their faces.

In a matter of days, hundreds of such initiatives spread like wildfire all over the country, following the same motto, "Give what you can, take what you need" in helping each other. When Parlade, Badoy and others from the regime regarded this as communistic, people come to realize that the Duterte regime and the ruling classes do exactly the opposite: "Take all you can, leave nothing to others."

Billions of pesos of public funds have been earmarked to combat the raging pandemic and distribute financial aid for the increasing number of jobless and hungry Filipinos. But under the incompetent and corrupt Duterte regime, the suffering of the great majority of the people worsened rather than abated.

As the community pantry movement spreads like wildfire and gets ever wider support within and outside the Philippines, cracks within the ruling clique grow ever wider. In addition to grumblings among high-level security officials displeased with Duterte's inaction to Chinese incursions in the West Philippine Sea, these latest antics of Parlade and Badoy, the mouthpieces of the National Task Force to End the Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) serve as additional wedges. Senators are calling for the duo's heads and the diversion of the NTF-ELCAC's lavish budget to social services.

The balls of fire that the duo hurled at the community pantry, missing the target, boomeranged at their faces. More and more people realize that to have a better chance to fight hunger and poverty, they must turn humanitarian efforts into political action and oust the corrupt, incompetent and traitorous Duterte regime.

The rope that holds Damocles' sword is fraying. **UP**

Community pantries for the poor spread like wildfire

Started a few weeks ago by volunteers in one community in Metro Manila, setting up a table filled with vegetables, fruits and other foodstuff where the poor can get what they urgently need, the 'community pantry' motto of "Give what you can, take what you need" has become a country-wide phenomenon, inspiring hundreds of community pantries to spring up all over the Philippines.

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Hungry Filipinos line up daily at community pantries for food. Photo: altermidya.net

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The innovator of the community pantry, 26-year-old Ana Patricia Non, started in Maginhawa Street in her Quezon City neighborhood on 14 April. She reports that 350 community pantries have now been organized all over the Philippines. Some claim the number as high as 700, community pantries springing up as far north as Aparri in Cagayan Valley province and as far south as Zamboanga City, in Mindanao Island. Community residents volunteer money, food and manpower for the community pantries, while people gravely affected by unemployment, poverty and hunger queue up for much-needed relief.

On 19 April, however, Duterte government officials, led by Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade and Communications

Undersecretary Lorraine Badoy, questioned the motives of Ms. Non and the community volunteers. Gen. Parlade said the government is checking the background of organizers for possible links to the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army and National Democratic Front of the Philippines. Parlade and Badoy are spokespersons of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC).

The allegations prompted Ms. Non to close her community pantry for a few days. Public backlash against the Duterte officials however, coupled with snowballing support, encouraged her reopening. Parliamentarians have called out against the NTF-ELCAC's red-tagging, saying the rise of the community pantries is a sign of the people's desperation in the face of government's failure to support Filipinos affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Filipino communities abroad are also supporting the community pantries, sending money to relatives and friends in the Philippines to make their contributions. The Federal Republic of Germany, through its embassy in Manila, donated foodstuff to Ms. Non's community pantry. "Deeply impressed by the solidarity spirit of the Filipinos. Great respect for the volunteers and the initiative," twitted German Ambassador to the Philippines Anke Reiffenstuel. **UP**



National Defense secretary Gen. Delfin Lorenzana. Photo: pna.gov.ph

Military officials withdrawing support tagged 'fake news'

Department of National Defense secretary Gen. Delfin Lorenzana denounced on 18 April as "irresponsible propaganda" several reports of a group of Armed Forces of the Philippines officers threatening to withdraw support from the Rodrigo Duterte government. "This is fake news," he said, "I am not a part and will never be a part of any such group."

On the same day, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Sobejana made a similar statement, saying he "dismisses the alleged

existence of a Viber group which claims membership from among senior and junior officers, both active and retired."

The denials were prompted by the 'Viber 300', later 'Viber 500' group, said to be composed of active and retired high command AFP officers, demanding President Rodrigo Duterte to denounce China's incursion in the West Philippine Sea and to assert the Philippines' legal claims in the area. They demand that Duterte stop taking China's side on the issue. "The demand of the Viber 500 to denounce China's invasion in the strongest possible terms is now impossible to ignore. A withdrawal of support is very imminent," said one of their social media posts.

Viber 500 counts retired generals in Duterte's government, "except retired Gen. Carlito Galvez", as group members.

Gen. Lorenzana said Viber 500 are "destabilizers" as he called on them to "cease from propagating malicious statements." Gen. Sobejana also said, "It is obvious that the motive of these malicious posts is to create panic and confusion. We advise the public to remain calm and dismiss them as another disinformation."

Reports of the group's activities continue, however, even as Duterte's Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro Locsin, Jr. continues to send off diplomatic protests against Chinese incursions in the West Philippine Sea. **UP**



Philippine Coast Guard rafts chug near Chinese vessels in the West Philippine Sea. Photo: PCG.

EU hits China for endangering peace in South China Sea

The [European Union](#) on 24 April criticized China for the increasing tensions in the South China Sea, citing that the swarming of Chinese fishing and armed vessels in the Julian Felipe Reef (Whitsun Reef) is “endangering peace and stability in the region.”

The EU spokesperson for foreign affairs and security policy said the EU strongly opposes “any unilateral actions that could undermine regional stability and the international rules-based order.” All parties involved in the conflicting

claims in the region should “resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS),” the EU said.

In this regard, “the EU recalls the Arbitration Award rendered under UNCLOS on 12 July 2016.” The Permanent Court of Arbitration on the UNCLOS rejected China’s claims over the South China Sea based on its ‘nine-dashed line’. The PCA also declared that China’s activities in the West Philippine Sea violated the Philippines’ sovereign rights to its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf. China refused to participate in the arbitration proceedings and has repeatedly rejected the ruling. Responding to the EU’s criticism, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson reiterated that the Julian Felipe Reef and its adjacent waters are Chinese territories.

In the Philippines, defense and foreign affairs officials of the Rodrigo Duterte government have been continuously protesting the illegal presence of the Chinese vessels in the area, 175 nautical miles west of Palawan Island. Duterte himself, however, has refused to take action, admitting in his televised rambling on 19 April that he already had an “agreement” with China. His officials deny the existence of any agreement regarding China occupying any part of the West Philippine Sea.

The Communist Party of the Philippines slammed Duterte’s revelation, “President Rodrigo Duterte is a traitor to the Filipino nation by allowing China to gain military and economic control of the West Philippine Sea, especially the marine resources within the country’s EEZ.”

[CPP spokesperson Marco Valbuena](#) said that Duterte “has kowtowed to China by setting aside the Philippine’s claims under the UNCLOS... With Duterte’s acquiescence, and in exchange for promised loans, private deals and political support, China has reclaimed land and constructed large military facilities within the country’s territorial seas, strengthening its foothold and eroding Philippine sovereign rights.”

In a related statement, [NDFP Chief Political Consultant Prof. Jose Maria Sison](#) said, “Duterte is a tyrant and butcher to the Filipino people but acts as a beggarly dolt and coward to China.”

Prof. Sison said, “the Philippines is not limited to either waging war or making diplomatic protests.” It can file complaints and demand action from UN agencies and international courts “against China’s acts of aggression, invasion and occupation of the maritime features in the West Philippine Sea,” he said. **UP**

CPP salutes Communist Party of Cuba’s 8th Congress

The Communist Party of the Philippines extended on 20 April “warmest greetings of proletarian solidarity” to the successful holding earlier in the week of the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba. The CPP expressed unity with the CPC, the Cuban government and people “in their continuing struggle to uphold national freedom, work for economic progress and address the needs of the Cuban people in the face of the relentless attacks and aggravation by the US imperialists.”

The Philippine communists also congratulated the CPC for the election of Miguel Diaz-Canel as First Secretary, and said “we look forward to how the new generation of Cuban revolutionary leaders will continue the CPC’s militant and mass-oriented style of leadership as exemplified by Fidel and Raul Castro”.

The CPP cited Cuba’s “exemplary response to the Covid-19 pandemic”, its deployment of health workers across the world and its independent development of a vaccine, demonstrating Cuba’s achievements in building a democratic and progressive society.

“The achievements of the Cuban revolution serve as an inspiration for the working class and oppressed peoples the world over, in their struggle against imperialism and quest to end the exploitative capitalist system,” the CPP said. **UP**