



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIAL

Poster boys of state terrorism and fake news

Trust the government of President Rodrigo Duterte to show the world new depths of brutality and lawlessness. The past three weeks saw a tragic barrage of murders, abductions and illegal detention all perpetrated by uniformed armed security agents of the Duterte regime.

Elements of the Southern Luzon Command under Gen. Antonio Parlade abducted a 4-year old boy on 12 May, to coerce his political detainee mother to 'surrender' to government demands. On 21 May, combined police and military units murdered Rommel Riza, Christopher Boton and Cristina Estocado in their sleep. The victims' families are being denied access to their deceased loved ones. A fourth victim, Kemuel Ian Cometa, is still missing. House searches and arrests are wantonly conducted, based on planted evidence of firearms, explosives and 'subversive documents'.

As we write this, we received the tragic news that senior NDFP peace consultants Reynaldo Bocala and Fr. Rustico Tan have been murdered in their homes in Panay Island and Camotes Island, respectively, by police and military agents. Bocala, 75 years old, and Fr. Tan, 80, were both unarmed when they were killed.

The perpetrators and their masterminds crow about their 'achievements' and 'victories'. National Security Adviser Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and Gen. Parlade boast of 'foiling terrorism' and promoting 'freedom and democracy' through their kidnappings, illegal detention and murders.

They routinely claim that victims 'fought back', resulting in a 'gunfight'. They claim that the kidnapped and detained children are being 'protected' against parents whom they are hunting down as 'communist terrorists' or they are already holding as political prisoners!

These latest atrocities, however, only serve to amplify the outrage of the Filipino people against the murderous Duterte regime. Generals Esperon, Parlade and their ilk, with all the 'achievements' of state terrorism, are succeeding only in driving greater numbers into the ranks of the New People's Army and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

No amount of fake news will conceal these heinous crimes against the Filipino people and the international community. The brutal attempts to crush all opposition and resistance will be in vain and will be their own undoing. **UP**



Free all political prisoners! Photo: cpp.ph

AFP soldiers abduct 4-year old boy

Four-year old MJ was forcibly abducted by armed elements of the 203rd Infantry Brigade of the Armed Forces of the Philippines on 12 May in Rizal town, Occidental Mindoro. About 10 soldiers broke into the home of the Fernandez family, guardians of MJ, at around 7:00pm, aimed their guns at family members and forcibly grabbed the boy. The soldiers overpowered the Fernandez family and hastily drove away, almost running over the guardians.

The AFP 203rd Infantry Brigade is part of the AFP Southern Luzon Command of Gen. Antonio Parlade. The soldiers claim they took MJ to return him to his mother.

The Fernandez family have been the guardians of MJ since his mother, Emilia Marquez, was taken prisoner by the Duterte government in 2017. She was arrested while caring for MJ in the hospital who was then one-month old and sick with meningitis. Emilia is facing trumped up charges.

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Ma. Patricia Andal, Spokesperson for NDFP-Mindoro condemned the abduction, “This incident has resulted in a severe trauma not only to MJ, but also to the family of his guardians. The reason for abducting the child is to use him as a political tool, for psychological operations, in order to pressure MJ’s parents to cooperate with the Duterte regime.”

She added, “NDFP Mindoro calls on all the people to reject the atrocities of the state especially when it affects children. We should not allow this incident to pass especially as it has trampled on the rights of the child and on our families.”

Coni K. Ledesma, head of the NDFP Special Office for the Protection of Children, demanded the immediate return of MJ to his guardians. She said that there should be “a widespread campaign to demand MJ’s return and for the AFP to stop victimizing children in their dirty war of terror!” **UP**



*Indigenous Dumagats protesting dam construction in their ancestral domain.
Photo: untvweb.com*

NDFP forces denounce intensifying attacks against Dumagats

Macario Liwanag, Rizal province spokesperson of the New People’s Army, reported how local police forces and the 80th Infantry Battalion – Armed Forces of the Philippines summoned 30 indigenous Dumagats on 29 April to Antipolo City to supposedly receive financial aid from the Duterte government. The Dumagats, however, were promptly arrested and charged with ‘association’ with the revolutionary movement in Rizal province.

In San Jose village of the same city, the AFP 2nd Infantry Division forced another group of Dumagats, supposed former ‘NPA supporters’ in various provinces in the region, to surrender.

According to Liwanag, the Dumagat indigenous communities are being attacked because of their opposition to the construction of the Wawa Bulk Water Supply Project in barangays of Rodriguez, San Mateo and Antipolo city. This PhP 24.5 billion 30-year raw water supply project, approved by the Duterte government, will displace the communities and adversely affect the livelihood of peasant and indigenous peoples in the area.

Military operations of the AFP Southern Luzon Command, coupled with deceptive government propaganda, have been disturbing the peace of Rizal’s towns. The Philippine Army and PNP-Rizal have imposed restrictive military lockdowns in the villages of Antipolo City and Rizal Province.

Liwanag added, “Justice has not yet been served to victims of the ‘Bloody Sunday’, yet the 80th AFP Infantry Battalion and Philippine National Police in Rizal are on the rampage again... In March, a few weeks after the ‘Bloody Sunday’, a similar tactic was implemented wherein 30 minority peoples of Barangay Puray were arrested on charges of rebellion.”

Arman Guerrero, NDFP-Rizal spokesperson, said that amid these attacks, the struggle of the people in Rizal is “like a surging water that the regime cannot stop... The US-Duterte regime is fast-tracking the Rizaleños’ desire to take the path of armed revolution and overthrow his terrorist reign.”

The targeting of indigenous peoples is also happening in other areas in the Philippines. Marco Valbuena, Communist Party of the Philippines Chief Information Officer, stated, “For more than four years now, Duterte and his military cabal... have intensified their attacks against national minorities.”

Valbuena cited the massacre of nine Tumandoks and the arrest of 17 others in Tapaz, Capiz on 30 December 2020, the persecution of Aetas under the Anti-Terror Law, and the murder of Dumagats in the recent Bloody Sunday in Southern Tagalong as among the recent cases.

“The regime continues to target national minorities as they defend their ancestral lands from entry of destructive dam projects, plantations, and multinational mining operations,” Valbuena said. **UP**

Four years after Marawi War, hundreds of thousands still homeless

The people of Marawi, four years after the Duterte terrorist war and bombing in May 2017, still suffer with more than 320,000 people remaining homeless. They remain in evacuation centers without the basic needs for health and protection against Covid-19.

The Duterte administration declared martial law in the whole of Mindanao in May 2017 to defeat a so-called Maute Group. In the process, the regime's Armed Forces of the Philippines, with US military support, launched a war of destruction on Marawi, causing many thousands of civilian casualties and widespread demolition of community infrastructures and homes. The area has now been turned into a military reservation of the US and AFP called Camp Ranao.

The widespread destruction has not been reconstructed. Promises of 'rehabilitation and rebuilding' remain unfulfilled. Billions of pesos of funds for reconstruction have disappeared. The more than 320,000 displaced and homeless people of Marawi continue to be deprived in inadequate evacuation centers, lacking basic health, food, and other necessities.

Marco Valbuena, Communist Party of the Philippines Chief Information Officer on 23 May condemned the Duterte regime and the US military for the widespread destruction of and the illegal land-grabbing of the lands of the people of Marawi. He reiterated the revolutionary movement's support for the people of Marawi, and the Moro people in general, in their just struggle to return to their homes and in their struggle for genuine self-determination. **UP**

Right of Return. Internally displaced Meranaws call for justice, accountability and safe return to their Marawi homeland.
Photo: bulatlat.com



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