



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIAL

Empowering state terror in the Philippines

Two weeks ago, the government of President Rodrigo Duterte received six T129B attack helicopters from Turkey, the first batch of military equipment worth a total of PhP13.7 billion. In December 2021, the Duterte regime also acquired two batteries of self-propelled Soltam ATMOS 155mm howitzers worth PhP2.4 billion from Israel.

Furthermore, the regime received from China on 16 January the first of two tranches, US\$11 million worth of drone systems, explosive ordnance disposal units, transport vehicles, fire trucks and engineering supplies.

These deliveries add to the weapons and munitions delivered by the US on 4 July 2021, worth about US\$1 million. The latter included heavy-caliber machine guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition. Since Duterte came to power in 2016, the US has already provided Duterte nearly US\$600 million of military assistance. The US still remains as the biggest arms supplier of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Why is Duterte and his foreign supporters in a big rush to provide his security forces this huge deadly firepower with just a few months before his term ends in June 2022? This doesn't even jibe well with their incessant claims that the New People's Army is suffering grave losses and will be destroyed before June 2022.

Duterte and his imperialist masters, especially the US, do not realize that brutal suppression of the Filipino people, who are suffering from unprecedented poverty, feudal exploitation and bureaucratic corruption, will only lead to greater resistance, armed or otherwise. Duterte does not realize that the revolutionary national democratic movement grew rapidly during the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, as it is growing now.

US imperialism has not learned the lesson that the use of even the most sophisticated weapons and other weapons of mass destruction lead only to their defeat, as shown in Vietnam and, most recently, Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, grassroots organizations, peace advocates, religious groups and prominent personalities as well, have been calling on the Duterte regime to cease bombing and shelling communities it suspects as NPA camps and instead resume peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

The NDFP, maintaining that lasting peace can only be achieved by addressing the root causes of the armed conflict, is wary of the deception and increasing brutality of the fascist Duterte regime. It is more inclined to negotiate with a successor to Duterte, not only for lasting solutions but also to address the immediate dire consequences of the pandemic and bureaucratic corruption. **UP**



*Duterte supporter. President Xi Jinping meeting with President Rodrigo Duterte.
File photo: pna.gov.ph*

China grants PhP1 billion military aid to Duterte government

China announced the arrival in Manila on 16 January of military rescue and relief equipment, estimated at PhP614 million, destined for the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The delivery represented the first tranche of military aid from China, totaling PhP1 billion (US\$19.6 million).

Chinese Ambassador to Manila Huang Xilian belatedly made the announcement on 22 January, adding that the second tranche will be delivered next month. The deliveries include drone systems, explosive ordnance disposal units, transport vehicles, fire trucks and engineering supplies.

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Chinese President Xi Jinping committed in 2019 to support the Duterte government in its 'counter-narcotics' and 'counterterrorism' campaigns. Ambassador Huang said he hopes that "the donation would play a role in fighting terrorism... China will continue to support the Philippines' disaster relief and recovery efforts and the AFP capability building to the best of its ability."

There is widespread resentment among the Philippine population against China's refusal to recognize the exclusive Philippine sovereign rights to the West Philippine Sea, despite the July 2016 decision of the UN Permanent Court of Arbitration rejecting China's claim to the whole of the South China Sea.

The Duterte government is also under widespread international pressure for its numerous human rights violations. It is being subjected to formal investigations by the International Criminal Court for allegations of crimes against humanity and other grievous violations of human rights. **UP**



NDFP Chief Political Consultant Prof. Jose Maria Sison. File photo: ndfp.org

Localized peace talks are anti-peace – CPP

The Communist Party of the Philippines blasted on 25 January the Executive Order 158 of President Rodrigo Duterte calling for 'localized peace talks', declaring that this "promotes a fake peace and will completely shut the doors to serious peace negotiations." CPP Chief Information Officer Marco Valbuena asserted that Duterte's directive aims "to kill the people's resistance to land grabbing, low wages and the expansion of plantations and mining companies" and is a "counterinsurgency weapon to conduct psychological warfare and intelligence operations against the people and the people's army."

Duterte signed EO158, "Strengthening the policy framework on peace, reconciliation and unity, and reorganizing the government's administrative Structure for the purpose" on 27 December 2021. It called for 'localized peace talks' and replaced the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity.

Despite the rhetoric, Valbuena said, the EO "does not address the problem of systematic oppression and exploitation" in Philippine society. "It serves only to sugarcoat the relentless drive to terrorize the people by establishing so many military camps and detachments to surround and control civilian villages, forcibly recruit people to paramilitary groups, conduct night raids against people's homes, incessantly harass people to 'admit' and 'surrender' to being New People's Army supporters and target for extrajudicial killing those who refuse to cooperate and give up their principles."

Valbuena called on the Filipino people, "especially advocates of a just and lasting peace, to reject and denounce" EO 158.

Prof. Jose Maria Sison, NDFP Chief Political Consultant and CPP Founding Chairman, likewise criticized Duterte's directive as "a pack of lies and false promises." He declared that Duterte is spreading "the false promise of addressing and resolving the root causes of the armed conflicts, and of transforming Philippine society by staging fake localized peace talks."

He explained that, in reality, 'localized peace talks' is aimed at approaching suspected revolutionaries, including their families and friends, and offer them bribes like the Community Support Program and the Barangay Development Program. Those who accept the bribes, he said, "are publicly presented as surrenderers and made to participate in psychological warfare, intelligence and combat operations." He said military officials can also kill those who already 'surrendered' in order to receive higher cash rewards, like how Duterte's police forces kill 'drug personalities' in their 'war on drugs'.

He concluded that there is no way for the Filipino people and their revolutionary movement to achieve just peace "but to wage the revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation more resolutely and fiercer than ever before." **UP**



*One of the entrances to Patungan village guarded by residents against the constant threats by police, military and armed goons.
File photo: Selina Gabriel | bulatlat.com*

Cavite villagers foil demolition attempt by real estate magnates

Uniting under the call Save Patungan Now, residents of Patungan village, in Maragondon, Cavite province, set up barricades and successfully resisted the most recent attempt to demolish their homes and community on 13 January by a 1,000-strong contingent of the Philippine National Police, Armed Forces of the Philippines and armed goons. The demolition crew, working at the behest of real estate corporations of the Sy and Virata families, stormed the village, dismantled the barricades, destroyed homes and repeatedly fired their guns.

The villagers, however, were able to stop the demolition crew's advance. At least twenty villagers were injured,

while six of them were arrested and detained by the armed security agents.

Located some 70 kilometers south of Manila, Patungan village (recently renamed Sta. Mercedes) sits along the coast at the southern tip of Manila Bay, surrounded by more than 600 hectares of lush mountains and pristine coastal waters. Around 1,200 farmers and fishers call Patungan home. The area is being eyed for 'ecotourism' and upscale residential projects.

Since 2012, the MTV Realty Corporation of the Viratas has been encroaching on the community, despite the absence of any land title. MTVRC forcibly claimed the mountains and coastal areas of Patungan and began constructing roads. It deployed armed goons who threatened, harassed and deceived the villagers, forcibly driving several of the families away.

The villagers organized themselves under the Save Patungan Now Movement. With the support of other fishers and peasant organizations, environment activists and youth groups, they were able to frustrate violent demolition and land grabbing attempts in 2012, 2014, 2016, and the most recent on 13 January.

MTV Realty Corporation has reportedly sold its 'claim' to the Manila Southcoast Development Corporation of the Sy family. The MSDC is currently constructing upscale residential and beach resort projects at the nearby Hamilo Coast and Hacienda Looc in Nasugbu, Batangas province, where thousands of farmers and fishers have already been displaced.

More than 5,000 of the total 8,650 hectares of Hacienda Looc were already awarded to the local farmers in 1990, as part of the Manila government's agrarian reform program. In 1994, however, the Manila government unilaterally rescinded the awarded land titles and sold Hacienda Looc instead to the MSDC.

The MSDC is owned by the SM Investment Corporation, one of the largest conglomerates in the Philippines, with interests in shopping mall development, real estate development, retail, banking and tourism. **UP**



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