



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIAL

Food crisis, peasant suffering bound to worsen under Marcos Jr.'s watch

After the dubious 'electoral victory' of Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the son of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr. was officially declared the successor of Rodrigo Duterte as president of the Republic of the Philippines.

Marcos Jr. justified his taking the helm at the Department of Agriculture, "because of the severity of the food security problem." He vowed to secure the country's food supply chain, which has been affected by "outside forces" such as the Ukraine-Russia war. In solving the crisis, Marcos Jr. declared to pursue the policies of his predecessors and comply with international commitments.

The problems resulting from the armed conflict in Ukraine merely aggravates the crisis of Philippines agriculture. The crisis is in fact systemic, intrinsic to a backward, pre-industrial agricultural economy. Under the WTO regime, the country's commitment to reduce tariffs has resulted to the free entry of all agricultural products. This simply made the local market a dumping ground for cheap and heavily subsidized agricultural surpluses from other countries.

Prior to joining the WTO, the country's annual agricultural trade was most often in surplus. The last time agricultural trade was in surplus was in 1993. Since joining the WTO in 1995, agricultural trade went into deficit, growing from US\$149 million in 1995 to \$960 million in 2005 to a whopping \$7,867 billion in 2019.

The 2018 Rice Tariffication Law RTL removed quantitative restrictions on rice importation and replacing it with tariffs. This opened the floodgates to the unbridled importation of cheap heavily subsidized rice, destroying local production and deepening the country's dependence on imported staple food.

While Marcos Jr. brags about the 'economic progress' achieved during his late father's dictatorial rule, it is essential to highlight that Presidential Decree 27, the fake land reform program, supposedly the cornerstone of Marcos Sr.'s New Society, was a colossal failure.

PD27 exempted vast agricultural lands from land reform. It covered only tenanted rice and corn lands and even allowed a seven-hectare retention limit. It effectively exempted from land reform coverage some 55% of Filipino tenant-farmers and 44% of the total rice and corn lands.

The inherent defects of PD27 and the succeeding fake land reform legislations of the last four decades fail miserably to address the landlessness of the peasant masses for which they were professedly enacted to resolve! All these 'land reform' programs failed to break up the monopoly of big landlords and foreign agro-corporations over vast tracts of lands, to the detriment of the millions of landless peasants, and at the expense of genuine national economic development.

From 1972 to June 2021, the Department of Agrarian Reform DAR acquired and covered only 4,840,981 hectares of agricultural land, leaving vast private agricultural lands in the hands of big landowners and foreign plantations. Meanwhile, the unbridled conversion of prime agricultural lands into commercial and industrial uses damage local production.

Additionally, the Manila government's total war policy and terrorist operations against peasants and indigenous peoples defending their rights to the land, aggravates even more the misery of the land tillers.

Only a radical shift from the present neoliberal policies towards policies of genuine land reform, agriculture modernization and national industrialization will enable the country to achieve food sovereignty and self-sufficiency. **UP**



AFP-PNP kill 4 NPA hors de combat

In the early morning of 6 July, combined forces of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police raided a farm in a distant village in Binalbagan, Negros Occidental province, in central Philippines, where six members of the New People's Army were resting. Four of the NPA were captured without a fight and executed by the AFP-PNP.

A number of the victims were suffering from flu and other illnesses, and had to stay in the village to recuperate. They were barely armed and not in a position to give battle at the time. The executed Red fighters were later identified as Roel Ladera, Nikka dela Cruz, Alden Rodriguez and Roel Deguit.

Bayani Obrero, Spokesperson of the National Democratic Front - Negros, reported on 9 July, "A number of residents in the area tried to help the ailing Red fighters, but soldiers opened fire and lobbed hand grenades at community wells, claiming other NPAs might be hiding there.

Moments later, they were summarily executed akin to a firing squad. Then their corpses were repositioned for photos, to make it appear they died in battle."

The NDF Negros asserted that the killing of the NPA hors de combat is a violation of International Humanitarian Law embodied in the Geneva Conventions, as well as the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law signed between the NDFP and the Manila government.

Revolutionary organizations and the people of Negros conveyed their condolences to the bereaved family of Nikka 'Ka Chai' dela Cruz and the three other NPA hors de combat. "Her death further accentuates the executioner and terrorist character of 94th Infantry Battalion and the AFP in general," Ka Bayani said.

Ka Chai was a journalism graduate who, while working as a radio and newspaper reporter, immersed herself in practical struggles of the urban poor. Persecuted by the reactionary state, she worked underground organizing students and intellectuals and later joined the armed struggle.

Ka Bayani concluded, "The extreme socio-economic crisis and the intensifying political repression and state terrorism under the illegitimate Marcos II regime will only drive more people towards the path of armed struggle. Youth in their greater numbers will continue the unfinished mission of Ka Chai and the countless martyrs of the revolution." **UP**



*Reject Marcos!
Photo: Carlo Manalansan | bulatlat.com*

Protests greet Marcos Jr. inauguration

The inauguration of Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. on 30 June as the 17th President of the Republic of the Philippines was met by protests in the capital city of Manila, other cities in the Philippines, as well as in the US. The protesters rejected the "illegitimate Marcos II" who won the elections "through lies and historical revisionism." They also expressed their demands for higher wages, scrapping of the excise tax on fuel and lowering the prices of basic commodities.

One of the protest leaders, martial law veteran and artistic director Bonifacio Ilagan of the Campaign Against the Return of the Marcoses and Martial Law (CARMMA) declared, "He may have 31 million votes but that doesn't mean that he is a legitimate president! For us in CARMMA, the pain inflicted in the past is the reason for our resistance."

The protesters condemned Marcos, Jr.'s efforts to 'sanitize' the many crimes of his family against the Filipino people. Renato Reyes, Jr, Secretary General of patriotic alliance Bagong Alyansang Makabayan declared that the historical truth cannot be changed. "The Marcoses have ill-gotten wealth, human rights violations were rampant and poverty worsened" during the 20-year rule of Marcos, Sr.

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At the Heroes' Monument in Quezon City, families of victims and activists during martial law gathered and pledged to continue the resistance against the historical lies of the Marcoses.

Protests were also held in Naga City and Cebu City in central Philippines and in New York City and California in the US. They called on the Filipino people and the international community to "Reject the Marcos-Duterte regime! Continue the fight for genuine democracy!"

Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. was elected President, together with former President Rodrigo Duterte's daughter Sara Duterte as Vice President, in the 9 May 2022 elections. They are set to serve a six-year term. **UP**



*Religious leaders join protests against destructive mining operations.
Photo: Diocese of Marbel SAC | [licas.news](https://www.licas.news)*

Mindanao communities put up stiff resistance vs US mining companies

Indigenous lumad, Moros and local farmers in the communities of the Far South Mindanao region continue their resistance against land grabbing and plunder by US mining companies and the repression of the Manila government protecting these foreign mining interests.

In the last three decades, units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines have attacked and massacred the communities resisting the entry of open-pit mining operations in the region. The AFP's 6th Infantry Division and Joint Task Force Central use US-supplied arms, bombs and military

technology to attack the people in the communities targeted for the mining projects.

The region is rich in mineral resources. It holds copper deposits of up to 2.9 billion metric tons, iron deposits estimated at 2.5 million metric tons and gold at 2.275 million metric tons. In addition, there are significant deposits of silver, zinc, lead, manganese and other minerals. Along the borders of South Cotabato, Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat and Davao del Sur provinces lie the biggest gold deposit in Southeast Asia.

These mineral resources have attracted local and foreign capitalists to invest in mining projects in the region. Foremost is the Tampakan Gold-Copper Project which is the largest in the country and is valued at US\$ 5.9 billion.

The local communities, however, have successfully fought and stopped its operations.

At least 17 mining companies operating in the region are 100% foreign-owned. Of these, eight are US-owned and control concessions covering a total of 53,081 hectares. Among the biggest are Providence Mining, Shamrock Metals, Kalamazoo Mining and Galactica Mining. Its operations are based in Australia and has interests in several Southeast Asian countries. Meanwhile, Providence Mining is an American multinational which operates large mines in Africa and North America.

The operations of seven of these eight companies are concentrated in the mountain areas of Sultan Kudarat and South Cotabato which are the ancestral lands of the Moros and the Dulangan-Manobo. These are covered with forests and watershed areas which support the vast agricultural lands of the region. **UP**



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