



# UPDATES PHILIPPINES

RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

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VOL IV NO 14

31 JULY 2022

## EDITORIAL

### State of the Nation Address exposes Marcos Jr. as a big fraud

With the concluding statement of his first State of the Nation Address, “I know this in my mind, I know it in my heart, I know it in my very soul: The state of the nation is sound,” Ferdinand Marcos Jr. reveals his utter lack of understanding of the current Philippine realities. There is nothing sound in the state of the nation!

Marcos Jr. obscures the fact that the country is in deep crisis. Even watered-down official statistics show that 26.14 million Filipinos live in absolute poverty, while 10.19 million more are at a subsistence level. Latest data available shows that the Philippines has the worst unemployment and inflation rates among Southeast Asian countries.

Under Duterte’s watch, government debt ballooned from PhP5.7 trillion (US\$103B) in 2016 to PhP12.7 trillion (US\$229.5B) in the first quarter of 2022! Marcos Jr. deliberately fails to mention the continuing campaign of state terrorism and gross human rights violations unleashed by the tyrant Duterte, pervasive bureaucratic corruption and military overspending.

Marcos Jr. ignores the mess left by Duterte and instead praises him generously. He is, after all, most indebted to Duterte for the automated electoral cheating that has allowed him to usurp the authority of president.

Notwithstanding the high importance that Marcos, Jr. attaches to tax collection, he keeps mum about his family’s tax obligations amounting to PhP203 billion (US\$3.67B). Nullifying their felonious tax obligations are in the works!

Marcos Jr. declares his wish to leapfrog to the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’. It is beyond his comprehension that to develop industrially, the Philippines cannot skip genuine land reform, modernization of agriculture, and national industrialization. Internet connectivity alone cannot replace the prior development of producing machine tools, basic metals and chemicals. Instead of focusing on generating decent jobs in the country, Marcos plans to enhance the same bankrupt ‘labor export policy’ promoted by his father.

Professing himself a nationalist, Marcos Jr. declares that he “will not preside over any process that will abandon even one square inch of territory of the Republic of the Philippines to any foreign power”.

However, he avoids denouncing China for encroaching on the country’s EEZ and taking control over shoals and reefs to use them as military bases, in violation of the UNCLOS and the final judgment of the Permanent Arbitration Tribunal in 2016! He also fails to mention the extra-territorial rights given to US troops under the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement.

In this context, the Filipino people are fully justified in continuing with ever greater resolve and militancy the new democratic revolution through protracted people’s war. **UP**



Parade of demands.

Photo: Carlo Manalansan | [bulatlat.com](http://bulatlat.com)

### Filipinos present “real State of the Nation”

More than 8,000 protesters gathered along Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, near the Batasang Pambansa parliament complex on 25 July where President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. was scheduled to present his first State of the Nation Address. Grassroots organizations under the banner of patriotic alliance Bagong Alyansang Makabayan launched their own ‘Peoples’ SONA’, presenting the ‘real state of the nation’ and expressing their demands on the Marcos II regime.

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Earlier, The People's Summit, organized by think-tank Ibon, BAYAN, the Makabayan coalition of opposition parties, Movement for Good Governance and Genuine Democracy, and other groups, presented the 'People's Agenda for Change'.

Hammered out in a three-day session, The People's Summit says the People's Agenda for Change serve both as fighting demands and an outline of the basic reforms that need to be undertaken "to address the systemic roots of the crisis facing the country such as run-away inflation, widespread poverty, joblessness, graft and corruption, injustice, and others."

Their urgent demands and proposals, they said, will be submitted to relevant government agencies. The People's Agenda for Change will also be presented to the Filipino people "to galvanize their involvement in shaping the new government policies that affect them," said the Summit's organizers.

During the protest action on 25 July, human rights alliance KARAPATAN decried the eerie silence of Marcos Jr. on civil and political rights issues such as extrajudicial killings, political prisoners, press freedom, disinformation, peace negotiations, justice for victims of human rights violations and the International Criminal Court's investigation of the Duterte regime.

Danilo dela Fuente, Vice Chairperson of martial law victims organization SELDA, said, "Marcos Jr. cannot claim that he is innocent and is off the hook from being liable on the violations inflicted upon us by his father's bloody regime... The audacity of Marcos Jr. to deny this truth and escape accountability!"

Indigenous peoples' organization Katutubo Youth, rejected Marcos Jr.'s silence on the almost daily bombing of their communities. They find themselves in the worst situation in history: 159 extrajudicial killings, 2,013 illegal arrests and 573,931 forced evacuations. They also decried the government order to close all Lumad schools, including 11 closed by then Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte, now Vice President and Secretary of the Department of Education.

Meanwhile, Peter Murphy, Chairperson of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines, expressed solidarity with the SONA protesters who showed "the true state of the nation." He said, "We urge the dictator's son not to follow his father's cruel and bloody footsteps, and instead to work with his critics and the Filipino people's movements who do have realistic, specific proposals to help solve the pressing problems of the Philippines to achieve just, peaceful and genuine development." **UP**

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## **Indiscriminate AFP bombings kill civilians, damage communities – CPP Report**

The Information Bureau of the Communist Party of the Philippines reported on 15 July that bombing operations conducted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines from May 2017 until April 2022 have been gruesomely indiscriminate. The CPP said, "Up to 82.89% of its aerial strikes and shelling operations had no clear targets, more than 35% of which dropped near civilian communities," killing at least 10 and wounding four more, causing damages to property and resources, widespread trauma, economic displacement and the forced evacuation of more than 10,000 families.

The [Updated Report on AFP Aerial Bombing and Strafing, and Shelling](#) contains information about 151 incidents of bombings, strafing and shelling by various units of the AFP, as reported by various units of the New People's Army, "as well as news stories on incidents publicized by the AFP." Of the total, 108 involve aerial bombings, 66 of artillery shelling and 49 of aerial strafing.

"One of the worst incidents was the early morning bombing of a Moro community in Maguing, Lanao del Sur, on 1 May 2022, where at least five civilians, including children, were killed," the CPP said.

The bombing damaged the local mosque, as well as homes and farms.

Earlier this year, on 29 January, the AFP dropped at least five bombs on a community of small miners in Santa Clara village, Gonzaga, Cagayan province. "Reports indicate that the AFP mistook the community as an NPA camp... The number of civilian casualties have yet to be determined."

The intensified aerial attacks and artillery shelling were part of the Duterte government's counterinsurgency operations against the NPA. However, of the total bombing operations, "only 10 actually hit an NPA camp, three hit abandoned NPA camps," the report said. The AFP strikes in 2020 and 2021 killed 66 NPA Red fighters and wounded 15 more. There were no NPA casualties in 2017, 2018, 2019 and this year.

The report revealed that the indiscriminate and inaccurate attacks also hit their own forces, killing 68 and wounding at least 20 AFP soldiers and police personnel. *[continued next page...]*

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In a related news, Juanito Magbanua, NPA-Negros Island Spokesperson, reported the killing of three civilians by troopers of the AFP's 62nd Infantry Battalion in Trinidad village, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental province, in the morning of 26 July. "Former day care worker Christina Jacolbe, her 16-year old daughter Everly Kee and relative Rodan Montero were massacred by butcher soldiers at their hut," Magbanua said.

The Manila government's security forces, he said, "have long been senselessly killing farmers and innocent civilians to increase their NPA death count and make their fake encounters believable!"

He called on human rights advocates, church people, the media and civil society "to launch fact-finding missions and expose these merciless atrocities perpetrated by state forces." **UP**



*NDFP file photo.*

## NDFP: No basis for resumption of peace talks

"There is yet no basis for the resumption of peace talks." Thus stated Julieta de Lima, Interim Chairperson of the Negotiating Panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines in a recent interview. This was her reply to the Marcos II government's statement that there will be no more peace talks with the NDFP.

De Lima explained that the Marcos II regime continues to enforce the issuances of former President Rodrigo

Duterte preventing peace negotiations. "The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has not yet shown any desire to do away with the obstacles put up by Duterte since 23 November 2017." She cited Duterte's 2017 declaration terminating the negotiations and his designation of the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army and NDFP as 'terrorist organizations'.

De Lima also said that GRP demands for "ceasefire first" and the laying down of arms for the talks to resume are unwise. "Why should the NPA lay down their arms or surrender without having peace negotiations first, and without satisfying the people's just and reasonable demands for full national independence, democracy, social justice, economic development through genuine land reform and national industrialization, expansion of social services, cultural progress and independent foreign policy?" De Lima emphasized.

She also lambasted the GRP's call for 'localized peace talks'. She said, "These 'localized peace talks' are actually tricks of entrapment, deception, surrender and violation of revolutionary principles," she said. "As of now, the NDFP and all its allied forces have no choice but to wage the people's democratic revolution against the obsession of the GRP to destroy the revolutionary movement and to preserve the unjust, oppressive and exploitative ruling system," De Lima stated.

Meanwhile, the Citizens' Alliance for Just Peace called for the resumption of peace negotiations at the national level in order to address the roots of the armed conflict. In a statement released on 23 July, the peace alliance said, "The roots of the armed conflict in the country, which includes poverty, landlessness, foreign domination of our economy, inaccessibility to services and inequitable distribution of resources, demand a comprehensive and systemic response."

They stressed, "In this time of deepening economic crisis, it is counter-productive to engage in a very costly all-out-war or a program like the failed localized peace talks of the past administration." These resulted in fake and forced surrenders, harassment and other rights violations, they said. "No local NPA command has actually engaged in said local talks." They reported that the Armed Forces of the Philippines are coercing and misrepresenting civilians as armed combatants.

They called on the Marcos II regime to "respect the work and agreements that have been entered into by past leaderships" and "stop the practices of red-tagging, filing of trumped-up cases against dissenters, and extrajudicial killings; the release of all political prisoners; and the abolition of the NTF-ELCAC." The CAJP is the largest alliance of peace advocates in the Philippines. **UP**

A devastating earthquake of magnitude 7.0 hit Abra province in northwestern Philippines on 27 July 2022. Please [contact us](#) or Philippine comrades in your area to find out how you can support the thousands of victims, especially the most vulnerable and impoverished rural communities.