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EDITORIAL

Serious AFP/PNP Infighting Reveals Acute Conflict among Allies Within the Ruling Marcos Regime

Internal quarrels among the corrupt officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) have broken out in open challenge and threats of coups and destabilization. These come less than a year since the assumption to power of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. This “confrontation” reflects the entrenched contradictions among allied political dynasties and groups within the ruling Marcos regime.

Marcos Jr. tried to cover the gravity of the situation by declaring that this so-called crisis is “fake news.”

However, the series of events belie such a disclaimer.

Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Abalos demanded the courtesy resignation of all officers of the PNP, supposedly to “cleanse” the organization from drug protectors and network. On January 13, a total of 904 (95%) of the 954 generals and full colonels of the PNP have filed their courtesy resignations.

This fake anti-drug campaign in the police organization is used to camouflage Marcos Jr.’s thrust of consolidating his control of the PNP.

At the height of the Duterte regime, police colonels and generals were extrajudicial killers and accomplices.

If their subordinates shot dead a drug suspect, the pay was bigger. If the drug suspect is apprehended instead of shot, the reward was smaller. That explains the frenzy of killings by the police. To escape blame and make it appear the police had clean hands, hired assassins were easily contracted because there was money for it.

When confidential funds from Duterte ran dry, the PNP became the source and supplier of drugs.

DND OIC Jose Faustino Jr. on Tuesday said he decided to leave his post purportedly to “protect the reputation” of the AFP. But his resignation followed the reappointment of Gen. Andres Centino as AFP chief, replacing Lt. Gen. Bartolome Bacarro. At least nine officials of the DND have tendered their courtesy resignation after Jose Faustino Jr. stepped down as the department’s officer-in-charge.

Based on the circulating PNP memo issued for PNP units in Western Visayas, there was an instruction from the Chief PNP Gen. Rodolfo Azurin, Jr. for PNP units to be placed on alert over “developing issues in Camp Aguinaldo.”

These open conflicts in the AFP and PNP are clear manifestations of the bitter contention between its officers and political patrons. They compete for control of bureaucratic corruption involving enormous amounts of public money. This involves control of hundreds of billions of pesos of public funds for “AFP modernization” involving the purchase and maintenance of equipment, for counterinsurgency, infrastructure projects under the so-called “Barangay Development Program,” as well as US foreign military funding. All these are always in the web of corruption.

This problem is bound to worsen as the acute and chronic crisis of Philippine society aggravates, and as Marcos Jr. consolidates his hold on power.

In this context, the revolutionary people’s army, the New People’s Army (NPA) continues to grow in strategic areas of the archipelago. The decadent mercenary fascist AFP and PNP can never defeat the NPA. **UP**

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Thank you!

'Victory of truth and justice' – groups hail dismissal of charges vs activists in PH



Image: Karapatan

A local Philippine court dismissed on 9 January 2023 a trumped-up perjury case against 10 human rights activists initiated by former National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. Esperon Jr. accused the said activists of lying when they sought protection from the Supreme Court against feared state-sponsored attacks.

“This is a victory of truth and justice, against lies and enemies of the people who instigated this form of judicial harassment against us, after our efforts to seek legal protection from threats and attacks,” said Cristina Palabay, Secretary General of Karapatan.

Those acquitted by the court were Rural Missionaries of the Philippines national coordinator Sr. Elenita Belardo, Karapatan Chairperson Elisa Tita Lubi, Karapatan secretary general Cristina Palabay, Gabriela secretary general Joan May Salvador, Ronel Clamor, Gabriela Krista Dalena, Edita Burgos, Jose Mari Callueng, Wilfredo Ruazol, and Gertrudes Libang.

The case stems from Esperon’s 2019 complaint which claimed that leaders from Karapatan, Gabriela and Rural Missionaries of the Philippines lied in their petition for writ of amparo before the Supreme Court. The writ of amparo is a legal remedy available to any person in the Philippines whose right to life, liberty and security is violated or threatened by unlawful acts of public officials. The writ covers substantially proven threats of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

“The numerous legal offensives churned out by Esperon and the legal cluster of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, which includes this malicious perjury case, should, once and for all, cease upon the abolition of this dangerous government body,” Palabay said, adding that hundreds of rights defenders remain in jail because of similar malicious charges.

This is the third case wherein the allegations and testimonies of Esperon Jr. were not given credence by courts. In October 2022, a Quezon City court denied Esperon Jr’s appeal to block the website of alternative news organization Bulatlat. In 2021, a Manila court dismissed murder charges against dozens of activists and civilians for failure to provide sufficient evidence.

“The situation on the ground, which we have seen, witnessed, and experienced many times cry out the truth --- it is state forces, their master warmongers in the likes of their former national security adviser, who are liars and enemies of the people. Their statements, actions, and ulterior motives, perpetuate rights violations, injustice and impunity in our country,” Palabay concluded. **UP**

CPP condemns AFP for its “dirty war against infants and pregnant women”



Image: Revolution.nu

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on 7 January 2023 condemned the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for abducting at least four pregnant women “with the aim of using them against the New People’s Army (NPA)” to surrender.

The 402nd Infantry Brigade of the AFP abducted and kept hostage NPA fighters Cherilyn Rebita (Ka Jan), and Jackilyn Egtob (Ka Jane) together with a civilian Roselle Polinar. Rebita and Polinar were both pregnant at the time while Egtob was recuperating from injuries and was on medical leave according to the CPP.

The three were detained by AFP troops in a safe house in Nasipit, Agusan del Norte, Mindanao. While under detention, “they were subjected to mental torture with constant threats to their lives and their families,” said the CPP. Their families were not informed nor were charges filed against the three.

On 10 October 2022, Rebita gave birth to her daughter, Baby Rhea at the San Vicente Birthing Clinic. On October 12, Polinar also gave birth.

The CPP recounts that shortly after giving birth, Rebita together with Egtob were forcibly instructed by the military to return to their NPA unit and convince other NPA fighters to surrender while holding...

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..Baby Rhea hostage. The CPP also said the AFP threatened to harm Polinar if Rebit and Egtob were to “double-cross” them.

On 3 November 2022, Rebita and Egtob were brought to a rendezvous point in Butuan City where they met two other NPA fighters Aurily Havana who is pregnant, and Jennifer Bi-nungkasan who was scheduled to go on medical leave, the CPP said in a statement. “That was the last time the two pregnant women were seen. The infants they would give birth to are now also considered victims of disappearance under military custody.

“It is the obligation of parties involved in the armed conflict to reunite families separated by the armed conflict. It is highly illegal for any power to change the personal status or status of a child’s family...all these form war crimes,” said the CPP.

On 7 January 2023, the Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) presented Havana, Bi-nungkasan and Polinar to the public as surrenderees.

After Rebita and Egtob rejoined their NPA unit, they posted a video on 28 December 2022 where they revealed their experience and called for the release of Baby Rhea. Public pressure to release the baby mounted and a few days after, Baby Rhea was brought by a woman to her grandmother.

The campaign to release Polinar and her baby, Havana and Bi-nungkasan is still ongoing, according to CPP. **UP**



Image: Revolution.nu

CPP: “Localized Peace Talks”, camouflaged state terrorism, will fail

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on 27 December 2022 condemned the “localized peace talks” peddled in the media by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) “to hide from the public view the de facto state of martial law and rampant violations of human rights.”

The CPP’s Chief Information Officer, Marco Valbuena, said, “In areas where the AFP suspect people of supporting the New People’s Army, entire populations are placed under military control. The peasant masses and minority people are subjected to food and economic blockades in violation of international humanitarian law.

Farmers who need to work in their their fields or mountain farms are restricted. People are subjected to surveillance, interrogations and threats. Arbitrary arrests or abductions, torture, massacres and extrajudicial killings are becoming common in places under the AFP’s control.”

According to Valbuena, the tactics being applied under martial law were the same tactics used by US forces in the Vietnam War, in which the people are subjected to state terrorism. Valbuena points to instances of combat operations where the AFP dropped bombs and fired artillery near communities, effectively terrorizing the local population and destroying their livelihood.

Valbuena further adds that these tactics are used in areas to drive farmers and indigenous peoples away from their farm and ancestral lands to give way for the entry or expansion of foreign-owned mining operations and plantations. Valbuena further adds that in Davao City, in the “peace zone” established by former city mayor and now Vice-President Sara Duterte and the AFP, “the land is being grabbed by large banana and cacao plantation companies.”

Rosa Guidon, Spokesperson of the NDF-Ilocos on 26 December, 2022, said that the AFP’s attempts to talk to different units of the NDF in different regions to make them “surrender” will fail. It will not break the consolidated national organization of the CPP-NPA-NDF.

Valbuena concluded, “Over the past five years (since Duterte unilaterally terminated peace negotiations with the NDFP in 2017), the AFP has fooled zero local NPA unit or local Party committees with their “localized peace talk” rhetoric. All revolutionary forces are firmly united behind the policy that all negotiations with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) will be conducted at the national level. This policy is based on the fact that the roots of the ongoing armed conflict or civil war are not local and encompasses the entire country.” **UP**