



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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BREAKING NEWS:

2 hors de combat NPA fighters, 1 civilian killed by AFP

Troops from the 94th Infantry Battalion of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) killed two members of the New People's Army (NPA) including Arjen Mahinay (Ka Nonong), a red fighter who is recovering from a recent stroke together with his official medic Junjun Callet (Ka Roben), and one unarmed civilian named Jomarie Calumba last 5 February 2023 in Barangay Oringao, Kabankalan City. BHB-South Central Negros issued a statement condemning the AFP's actions as clear violations of international humanitarian law especially in the case of killing hors de combat red fighters and a civilian. **UP**

EDITORIAL

US Defense Secretary Austin visit bolsters Philippines' role in the event of US-China War

Commitments made in the recent visit of US Defense Sec. Lloyd Austin served to reinforce the neo-colonial relationship between the US government and the Marcos Jr. regime. Marcos Jr. gave Austin assurances to allow the US to establish more military bases and facilities inside AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) military camps and allow "joint maritime patrols" with the US military, in exchange for new military hardware contracts.

Despite Marcos Jr.'s pretense of pursuing an "independent" foreign policy and neutrality on the US-China belligerent confrontation, it's clear that the Manila government is a staunch ally of the US.

In addition to the systemic neo-colonial ties, Marcos' personal agenda in currying favor from the US, is to legitimize their ill-gotten wealth restrained by existing US jurisprudence pursuant to the Hawaii District Court decision in favor of Human Rights plaintiff against the Marcos estate in 1992.

Marcos is allowing the Philippines to be used by the US as a launching pad for its provocations against China. He is practically allowing the imperialist US to drag the Philippines into a war against its own interest.

This is virtually turning the Philippines into a target of China's attack, whether for aggression or counter-aggression. The Chinese embassy in the Philippines has immediately reacted to the agreement saying, "US actions escalate regional tension and undermine regional peace and stability".

With the deal, Washington has closed the gap in the arc of US alliances stretching from South Korea and Japan in the north to Australia in the south. Philippines which borders two of the biggest potential flashpoints - Taiwan and the South China Sea - is vital to US military strategy against China.

New EDCA (Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement) sites will be built in Cagayan, Isabela, Zambales and Palawan, in addition to the existing US military facilities inside AFP camps in five locations.

The US and its lackeys have been using the term "rotational presence" to circumvent the prohibition of the 1987 constitution against foreign military bases.

But the truth is that the US military forces have maintained permanent presence in the country for more than twenty years now, stationing troops from Luzon to Mindanao. The US has kept weapons and military equipment in various military bases. Naval warships of the US have regularly docked in Philippine ports and other parts of the country's waters, anytime they wish, with or without permission of the Philippine government.

The Filipino people, together with peoples of Asia and the world, must continue to demand a stop to imperialist war mongering and an end to war preparations especially by the US. They must demand the dismantling of all US military bases and call for the removal of US and other foreign military troops in the country, as well as the dismantling of Chinese military facilities within its maritime territory. **UP**

Groups oppose construction of 6 nuclear power plants



Image: Revolution.nu

The Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment condemned plans by the Marcos Jr. regime to construct six nuclear plants in the town of Labrador in Pangasinan province as exposed by the Pangasinan People's Strike for the Environment (PPSE).

Residents of the town who joined the PPSE were shown a "consent" document by the local government to allow the establishment of such nuclear plants. The local government claimed that the nuclear facilities are "safe, inexpensive, clean and dependable" and that the municipality will "derive income from it and give benefits

and employment" to residents.

The PPSE, however, warned that the nuclear waste from the plants will remain radioactive and dangerous for tens of thousands of years and will be a threat to the communities. The PPSE instead recommended for community-led solar and wind projects among other sources of renewable energy.

Earlier in September 2022, national groups like Kalikasan and AGHAM (Advocates of Science and Technology for the People) formed an alliance to oppose plans to reopen the moth-balled Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

It can be recalled that the United States and the Marcos Jr regime signed the 123 Agreement Negotiations for Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation where the US will export nuclear equipment and materials and deploy advanced nuclear reactor technology to the Philippines. This agreement was formalized during the visit of US Vice President Kamala Harris in November last year.

In a statement, House Deputy Minority Leader and ACT Teachers party-list Rep. France Castro said once in force, the so-called 123 agreement will "provide the legal basis for US exports of nuclear equipment and material to the Philippines."

Castro and other Makabayan Party List members criticized the proposed nuclear power plants to address the lack of electrical power as just a ploy to hide the military uses of the plants. Makabayan pointed out that the nuclear technology that US wants to introduce into the Philippines has dual purposes. Many aspects of the nuclear development programs can be easily diverted for the purpose of war. **UP**

Groups call for removal of CPP, NPA, and NDF terrorist listing



Image: Revolution.nu

Last February 8, 2023, member organizations of Bayan (New Patriotic Alliance) called for the removal of the arbitrary terrorist designation by the Anti-Terror Council of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the New People's Army (NPA) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). They also called for the removal of the terrorist designation of all the NDFP consultants and activists. The organizations brought their demands to the Department of Justice

In a statement, Bayan said that "instead of designating these organizations as terrorist, there should be the

resumption of peace talks to address the roots of the armed conflict."

"Resuming the peace talks for a just peace can result in political agreements that can resolve the armed conflict. There must be a stop to labeling revolutionaries and consultants as terrorist. Doing this only hinders the attainment of a just and lasting peace," Bayan added.

The group also said that the terrorist designation resulted in violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Red tagging continues unabated, as well as criminalization of legitimate organizations and criminalizing dissent, according to Bayan.

"History shows that the scorched earth policy is not the solution to the armed struggle. The solution is in resolving the roots of injustice," said Bayan.

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[... continued] At the same time, representatives of the Makabayan bloc in Congress submitted a resolution calling for the removal of the designation.

There are now more than 800 peasants, activists and revolutionaries who are in prison on trumped up charges as part of the counter-insurgency drive of the Manila government. Thousands of civilians have become targets of bombings and militarization. This has resulted in severe violations of human rights like the killing of civilians, illegal arrests economic and food blockades, intimidation and even the kidnapping of children who the security forces believe are children of NPA. **UP**

Walk the talk on paying taxes, Marcos urged

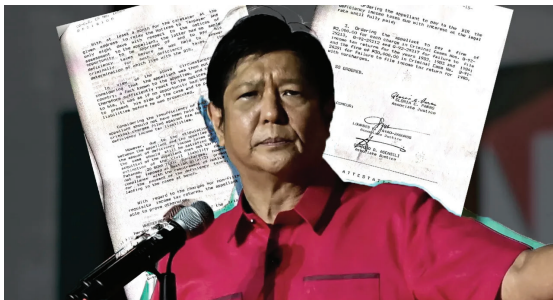


Image: Revolution.nu

ACT Teachers Partylist and House Deputy Minority Leader France Castro urged President Ferdinand “Bong Bong” Marcos Jr. to “walk the talk” on payment of taxes. Castro’s statement was in response to Marcos Jr’s call for the public “to pay the correct amount of taxes on time to support the country’s economic recovery” in a speech he delivered during the launch of the Bureau of Internal Revenue’s (BIR) national tax campaign in Pasay City, Philippines on 7 February 2023.

“President Marcos Jr. is right in saying people should pay taxes on time, but he should walk the talk,” Castro

responded.

“There has been a long-standing Supreme Court decision on the estate tax issues of the Marcos family, and they need to pay that. Otherwise, he does not have the moral ascendancy to call for the Filipino public to pay taxes,” she added.

In December 2021, the BIR sent a demand letter to Marcos to pay their estate tax dues amounting to Php203 billion from about Php23 billion in 1998. A Supreme Court ruling showed that the Marcoses’ estate tax assessment of Php23 billion became ‘final and executory’ in March 1999 after the latter failed to respond to the court.

Marcos Jr. and his mother, Imelda, are co-administrators of the estate left by the late dictator Marcos Sr who died in Hawaii on September 29, 1989.

“In reality, ordinary citizens are burdened by taxes all the time from paying basic consumer goods, utility bills, and income taxes among others. The people need immediate relief now. The government must suspend the excise tax and value added tax (VAT) on oil and basic commodities,” Castro said in a statement.

“Pres. Marcos Jr. should also certify as urgent the Wealth Tax Bill which we filed so as to let the richest 1% in the country to give back more to the country’s coffers,” ended Castro.

The call for a progressive wealth tax for the rich was revived as a recent report from Oxfam Pilipinas showed how nine of the richest Filipinos have more wealth than the bottom half (55 million) of the population.

The Makabayan bloc at the House of Representatives has refiled a Super-Rich Tax Bill which proposes a 1-3% tax on billionaires. They said it would raise around Php236.7 billion a year from the 50 most wealthy Filipinos alone. **UP**

CALL FOR SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE OF KURDISTAN

While much of the world has turned its attention to the tragedy in Turkey and Syria, most often described by the international media as the “Turkey-Syria earthquake”, we are concerned that international aid may not end up benefiting the peoples of the affected areas, which are home to a diverse population including Kurds, Turks, Arabs, and others. To ensure that assistance reaches those in need, we appeal to all Kurds and friends of Kurds worldwide to help the earthquake victims through the chapters of the Kurdish Red Moon. We thank you for your solidarity during this difficult time.

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