



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIAL

#NeverForget: Relive the spirit of the EDSA uprising!

On the occasion of the 37th year since the EDSA people power revolt, mass organizations of workers, peasants and the broadest sections of Philippine society in their thousands relive the spirit of a mass uprising that toppled a dictatorship. At the same time, the Filipino people remembers the horrors of martial law: a stark reminder of the current situation under the late dictator's son and sitting President Marcos Jr.

Indeed, the legacy of the EDSA people's uprising is an important occasion to remember not only in the context of rampant militarization and human rights abuses currently happening in the countryside, but also amid Marcos Jr.'s attempts to revise his father's sordid history.

Move on, forgive, and forget – the Marcoses and their ilk would often tell the Filipino people.

But move on to where? When the same dire economic conditions exist, and no genuine agricultural and industrial development is in sight; when inflation is at its highest and the toiling masses bear the brunt of rising prices of basic goods and services; when contractualization is rampant and wages severely depressed.

How can martial law victims forgive? When for more than five decades, no justice is served; when the same tactics of torture, enforced disappearances, and extra-judicial killings are employed by state forces; when the law is weaponized, and when repression and state terror is widespread.

How can the Filipino people forget? When blatant corruption pervades, and the Maharlika Investment Fund siphons the people's money to the pockets of corrupt politicians; When the threat of "cha-cha" (charter change) is alive, and political dynasties and Marcos cronies desperately cling to power; When Marcos Jr., same as his father, demonstrates once again their craven subservience to the interests of US imperialism.

Reliving the spirit of the EDSA people's uprising means building the broadest united front against the US-Marcos regime's state terrorism and bureaucrat capitalism. We enjoin all Filipinos at home and abroad, and our allies in the national democratic struggle to unite against the martial-law type of repression and oppression disguised as counterinsurgency and meant only to suppress the democratic struggles waged by the Filipino masses. **UP**

CPP urges 'peaceful dialogue' to resolve Ukraine war, condemns US-NATO for prolonging conflict



Image: philippineevolution.nu

On February 24, 2023, the world marked one year since the start of the war in Ukraine. Demonstrations around the world condemned "US imperialists" and its NATO allies for continuing to pour weapons and military equipment to Ukraine effectively prolonging the conflict.

In a statement issued Feb 24, 2023, the Communist Party of the Philippines stated, "Peaceful dialogue should be carried out in order to resolve the war in Ukraine consistent with the aspirations of the Ukrainian people for peace, freedom and democracy, as well as the aspiration of the Russian-speaking population of the Donbass region for their right to secession and national self-determination."

The statement also said, that ... "While the broad masses of working people in Ukraine suffer, the monopoly capitalists, especially the arms manufacturers and financial speculators continue to pocket huge amounts of profits." The CPP then referred to big corporations who are profiting through market speculation in key commodities such as oil and grain.

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“Disruptions in fuel supplies to Europe caused by US sanctions against Russian natural gas caused widespread suffering to people during winter,” the CPP added.

The war has resulted in thousands of deaths on both sides of the conflict. Civilian infrastructure has been bombed resulting in widespread destruction and hardships. Millions of Ukrainians have been driven away from their homes and have sought refuge in many European countries.

The statement also notes that “Even as the US pours billions of dollars into the war in Ukraine, it is busy increasing its military presence in Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and other Asian countries, as part of its preparations of the theater of war against China.”

The CPP statement also calls on the Filipino people to “stand firmly to defend its national sovereignty and pursue an independent and peace-loving foreign policy. They must militantly oppose attempts by imperialist powers to use the Philippines as part of their wars. They must carry forward their demand for the withdrawal of all foreign troops, nuclear-powered warships carrying nuclear weapons, missiles, and other military equipment in the country. They must amplify their call for the dismantling of all foreign military facilities, which invariably serve as magnets for attacks. **UP**

“RCEP will destroy local industries, deepen PH dependence on powerful countries,” warn PH groups



Image: philippinerevolution.nu

After the ratification by the Philippine Senate of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) on 23 February 2023, popular resistance against the treaty intensifies.

“The senators who voted for RCEP deliberately ignored the needs of farmers,” said Danilo Ramos, chairperson of the Kilusan ng Magbubukid ng Pilipinas or KMP (Peasant Movement of the Philippines), “It seems that they are oblivious of fate that we suffered as member of the WTO and other free trade agreements, now that the Marcos government joined the RCEP...”

RCEP, now the world’s largest trade agreement, entered into force on 1 January 2022 for ten original parties: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Japan, Laos, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. RCEP then entered into force for the Republic of Korea on 1 February 2022, for Malaysia on 18 March 2022 and for Indonesia on 2 January 2023. Critics state that RCEP benefits China’s belt and road initiative. The deal does not include the US.

“RCEP will further flood our local market with cheap imports at the expense of our farmers and fisherfolk,” PAMALAKAYA (militant fisherfolk alliance) national chairperson Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

Hicap stressed that with RCEP’s ratification, a deluge of imported agricultural goods is anticipated to hit the nation, which will “threaten the local industry that has been neglected of significant government support, and which will be outcompeted by imports.”

Meanwhile, independent think-tank IBON Foundation’s Sonny Africa remarked, “Senators and economic managers are congratulating themselves on ratifying RCEP, bizarrely oblivious to what 30 years of free trade agreements have wrought.”

Philippines is the third worst poverty, fourth worst human development index, and fourth smallest manufacturing sector in ASEAN. Manufacturing down to smallest share of GDP in 70 years, agriculture to its smallest in history,” Africa added.

PAMALAKAYA noted that RCEP will also intensify conversion projects in fishing grounds and coastal areas by Chinese investors and developers, as well as the expansion of private aquaculture in municipal fishing grounds funded by Chinese firms for export.

Policies of import liberalization should end, and the government should focus on strengthening the local industry instead, the group said.

“[B]y breaking free from foreign policies that favor powerful countries such as China, the Philippine government effectively asserts national sovereignty,” Hicap concluded. **UP**

Increased NPA tactical operations answer to massive deployment of AFP troops in Samar



Image: philippineevolution.nu

Since December 2022, more than 1000 army soldiers have been deployed to Samar province to augment the 21 battalions under the 8th Infantry Division already operating in the region. According to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the aim of this massive deployment is to “crush the four remaining guerilla fronts” of the New People’s Army (NPA), specifically in Northern Samar.

The newly arrived troops were the 74th Infantry Battalion (IB) pulled out from Basilan in Mindanao, Southern Philippines, the 42nd IB from the Quezon-Bicol area and the 4th Scout Ranger Battalion. In addition, the AFP also deployed 550 new combat troops who completed their

training in Camp Daza in Samar.

In December 24 last year, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said in a statement that these units of the AFP are notorious for attacking civilian communities and perpetuating rampant rights violations in Agusan del Norte, Misamis Oriental, Bicol, Samar and Negros where they came from. In particular, the 42nd IB was part of the AFP’s rampage of killings in Bicol, murdering one victim every week since 2018.

Based on reports, villages and civilians particularly members of mass organizations fighting for land and peasant rights, even children, were placed under military hamlet control. Some were killed or subjected to terrorist waves of aerial bombardment.

But these terroristic attacks have been met by increased NPA tactical operations in areas where the enemy is relatively weak.

A team of the NPA-Albay Santos Binamera Command ambushed using command-detonated explosives troops of the AFP’s 49th IB last February 15 in Ramay, Oas, Albay. A lieutenant was among the three soldiers killed.

The same NPA command successfully launched a partisan operation February 20 in Cotmon, Oas, also in Albay, killing two soldiers of the 31st IB. According to NPA-Albay, the 31st IB was the unit behind the massacre of five peasants in 2020 in Bulan, Sorsogon.

Meanwhile, in the province of Negros Occidental, the NPA Mount Cansermon Command launched a sniping operation against the troops of the AFP 94th IB, killing one and wounding several. NPA-Negros argues that the 94th IB was responsible for the brutal killing of four Red fighters last July 2022 in Santol, Binalbagan.

In the adjoining province of Negros Oriental, the NPA Leonardo Panaligan Command launched operations last February 12-21 in Bucala, Canlaon City and Guba, Vallehermoso. A notorious criminal rapist convicted by the people’s court was killed and an arms smuggler was divested of two firearms and ammunition.

Last February 23, Marco Valbuena, Chief Information Officer of the CPP, responding to media inquiries about the NPA’s successful tactical operations in Bicol, said, the operations in Bicol “shows the ability of the NPA to deploy teams anywhere in order to strike at enemy military targets.” **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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