



ANG

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CPP declares unilateral ceasefire

THE COMMUNIST Party of the Philippines declared on December 15 a 12-day unilateral ceasefire for the duration of the traditional holidays.

Upon the recommendation of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the ceasefire will take effect from 12:01 a.m. of December 23 to 11:59 p.m. of January 3, 2016. This will be implemented by all commands and units of the New People's Army, from the regular forces to the people's militia.

According to the CPP, the ceasefire was declared in solidarity with the Filipino people's traditional celebrations of Christmas and New Year holidays. This will also enable the revolutionary forces to hold mass assemblies and public demonstrations to mark the CPP's 47th anniversary and celebrate the past year's revolutionary victories.

According to the CPP, the ceasefire was declared "in support of efforts of peace advocates to foster the resumption of GPH-NDFP peace negotiations on the basis of The Hague Joint Declaration, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). The revolutionary movement calls for the release of all political prisoners including 17 NDFP consultants in accordance with the CARHRIHL and the JASIG."

All NPA units, including its mi-

"CPP declares..." continued at page 2

Editorial

Intensify mass struggles amid elections

The ruling political system is set to carry out on May 2016 the process of electing the next chief of the puppet regime. Although elections are still months away, the presidential candidates are already creating a din in an attempt to draw attention and win over the people's votes.

Five politicians are running as presidential candidates. One of them will head the reactionary state on 2016-2022. They invariably represent the ruling classes' interest to perpetuate and strengthen the ruling semicolonial and semifeudal system. As in previous presidential elections, the Communist Party of the Philippines neither supports nor endorses any of them.

On the other hand, the CPP is aware of the particularities and issues being espoused by the candidates

in order to attract votes. The Filipino people must take advantage of the situation by challenging these politicians to support the democratic mass struggles while exposing and denouncing their pro-imperialist, pro-landlord, pro-comprador and fascist policies.

The 2016 elections will be held amid the Filipino people's continuing struggle to put an end to the US-Aquino regime and oppose the ruling clique's attempts to prolong its hold to power.

The people must take advantage

"Intensify..." continued at page 2



litia, shall cease and desist from carrying out offensive military operations against the armed units of the AFP, PNP and other paramilitary personnel of the AFP and PNP who have no serious liabilities other than being soldiers or police officers shall not be subjected to arrest or punitive actions, and may be allowed to enter the territory of the people's democratic government to make personal visits to relatives and friends.

However, units of the people's army will maintain a high degree of militancy and vigilance against any hostile actions or movements of the enemy armed forces including encroachment on the territory of the people's democratic government, surveillance and other offensive operations including so-called "peace and development," "civil-military" or "peace and order" operations. Active-defense operations shall be undertaken only in the face of clear and imminent danger and actual armed attack by the enemy forces.

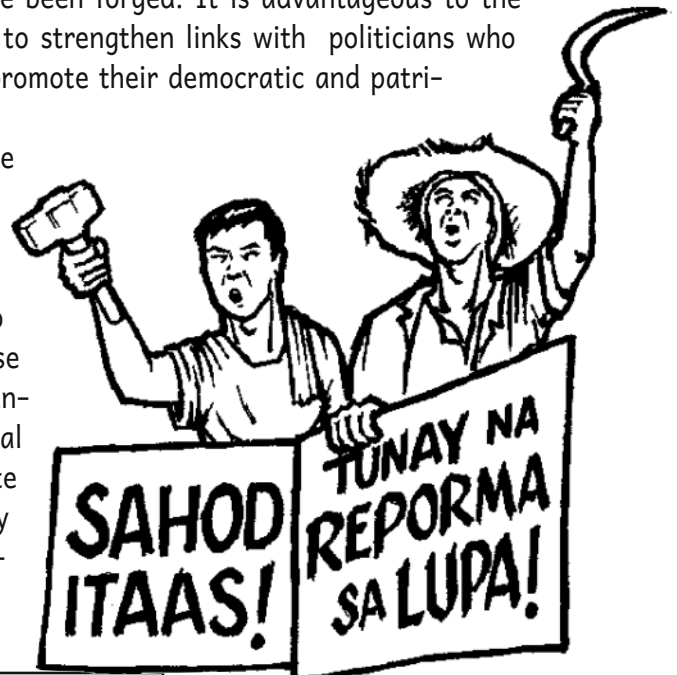
On December 18, the Aquino regime declared its own ceasefire to counterpoise the CPP's declaration. However, the Philippine National Police will continue operations. The regime's ceasefire falls on the same dates. AB

age of the election period and factional rivalries to painstakingly expose, denounce and oust Aquino and hold him and his cohorts responsible for corruption, plunder and human rights violations.

As Aquino's candidate, the people thoroughly loathe Mar Roxas. He must be exposed, opposed and firmly prevented from gaining power. At the same time, all other presidential candidates must be challenged to take a definite stand in holding Aquino responsible for his crimes against the people.

In the hope of gaining the people's broad support, political candidates have professed an openness to work with the national-democratic forces. Formal and informal alliances and cooperation between progressive parties and coalitions with certain political candidates have been forged. It is advantageous to the Filipino people to strengthen links with politicians who are willing to promote their democratic and patriotic interests.

Still, the democratic mass organizations are not bound to any of these politician candidates who deal and cooperate with them. They exercise independence and initiative,



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stand on the foundation of the national democratic program in order to measure and weigh, judge, unite with and criticize these politicians' programs for government.

Beyond the politicians' noise and attention-seeking, the people must be able to raise their voices in order to draw attention to their fundamental problems, challenge the candidates and expose the upcoming elections as a contest among the ruling classes.

The Filipino people must amplify their demand for genuine national freedom and social justice. During the elections, they must intensify their democratic struggles.

They must challenge the candidates to unite with the demand to end the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, the ro-

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tational presence of US warplanes and ships, the permanent presence of American troops and their intervention in the local civil war.

The national democratic forces must bring before the national stage and political debate the issues of widespread rural poverty and exploitation, landgrabbing, the entry of foreign agribusiness and mining companies and the aggressive promotion of agricultural crops for export. The peasant masses must assert their demand for genuine land reform.

The outstanding problem of widespread unemployment, extremely low wages, the prevalent oppressive system of contractualization and attacks against workers' union rights must be given national attention. The workers must assert their demand to restore and increase the national minimum wage and to end the various forms of contractualization.

The people must demand an end to the backward, agrarian and non-industrial state of the economy where production is geared towards export and relies on foreign capital and loans. They must castigate those candidates who are promoting neo-liberal and anti-industrialization policies and favor foreign big companies.

They must denounce those promoting the 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program) that serves to coverup the policy of cutting subsidies for education, health and other public services for all. They must call on all politician candidates to support a comprehensive economic program that is geared towards free distribution of land to peasants in the countryside, and national industrialization.

The Filipino people must advance their mass struggles to fight for their rights and welfare. They must sustain efforts to build, expand and consolidate their mass organizations, conduct education to expose the elections and make clear the need to wage revolutionary struggle to advance the cause of national and social liberation. **AB**



NPA harasses PAF camp in Batangas

A Philippine Air Force (PAF) trooper was killed while four others were wounded when Red fighters under the New People's Army-Batangas (Eduardo Dagli Command) launched harassment operations against the 730th Combat Group's camp in Barangay Calayo, Nasugbu, Batangas last December 19.

The unit, which is under the 733rd Squadron, serves as security force to Hacienda Looc, "to repress and intimidate the peasants who are struggling for genuine land reform," according to the NPA-Batangas spokesperson, Apolinario Matienza.

Hacienda Looc, which sprawls over five barangays including Barangay Calayo, is owned by Henry Sy's SM Development Corporation.

Meanwhile, eight soldiers were killed in a clash between a platoon-size formation under the NPA-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) and attacking 9th IB troops last December 10, around 12 noon, in the island of Ticao, Masbate.

The Red fighters were resting in Sitio Palopino, Barangay Bartolabac, San Jacinto town when they were attacked by a 9th IB platoon which was then launching Peace and Development (PDT) operations in the area. The comrades promptly defended their position using a command-detonated explosive.

A Red fighter, "Ka Cyrus," was killed when the NPA troops encountered another 9th IB platoon upon withdrawal. Two civilian minors were wounded with M203 shrapnels from the military.

Last November 29, Red fighters harassed a composite column of 9th IB and PNP Regional Public Safety Battalion troops in Barangay Mabiton, Claveria,

Burias island. Two soldiers were killed on the spot while another died in the hospital after sustaining severe wounds.

The Philippine Army continues to launch PDT operations in Masbate to suppress the people's struggle against the destructive gold mining operations of Filminera Resources Corporation, a foreign company, as well as local comprador-bourgeois business interests.

The 4th IB also suffered two successive blows in Mindoro. Last October 31, seven soldiers were killed while many others were wounded in a harassment operation launched by Red fighters under the Lucio de Guzman Command against Bravo Company troops in Sitio Lucban, Barangay Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro.

In Occidental Mindoro, Red fighters launched a sniping operation against operating troops of the Alpha Company in Sitio Dayaga, Barangay Batasan, San Jose last October 25. The Alpha company commander and acting civil military operations battalion commander of the 4th IB, 1Lt. Mike Nollora, was killed.

In Palawan, Red fighters under the Bienvenido Valleber Command employed a command-detonated explosive against a vehicle full of troops of the PNP Public Safety Maneuver Company in Barangay Tarusan, Bataraza last November 11. Three policemen were severely wounded. **AB**

Groups hold International Human Rights Day protests

Progressive groups commemorated the 67th International Human Rights Day last December 10 by holding various protest actions across the archipelago.

In Manila, thousands marched to Mendiola to hold the US-Aquino regime accountable for committing human rights violations. Among these crimes were 304 cases of extrajudicial killings and the forced evacuation of thousands of people, especially Lumads. The demonstrators burned an effigy depicting Aquino inside a prison cell to illustrate their call to jail Aquino for his crimes.

The group Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (SELDA) condemned the continued incarceration of more than 400 political detainees who are held on the basis of trumped-up charges. The political detainees, including 17 consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines to the peace process, have been launching a hunger strike for more than two weeks. In Cagayan de Oro City and other places, SELDA members and political detainees also launched hunger strikes.

The Bahaghari alliance condemned the regime's oppression against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders (LGBT), especially in its failure to mete out appropriate punishment to Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton, who was convicted for killing Jennifer Laude.

More than 5,000 people launched a two-day caravan in Davao City and a rally in front of the Eastern Mindanao Command headquarters in Barangay Pan-

acan. Another 3,000 marched from the Pelaez Sports Center to the Capitol Grounds in Cagayan de Oro.

In Tuguegarao, the Cagayan Alliance of Human Rights Advocates launched its second general assembly. More than 100 human rights defenders vowed to continue upholding the people's right to land, life and social services amidst widespread political repression and human rights abuses. After the activity, the participants held a torch rally in the plaza.

In Bacolod, 3,000 marched under the leadership of the local office of Karapatan. Similar rallies were held in Baguio, Naga, Butuan and other cities.

The Lumad's continuing exodus

Lumad representatives from Mindanao traveled to Cebu City this December. The Lumads visited the city's universities to enlighten students of their struggle to defend their ancestral lands and right to

self-determination against the state's policy of widespread militarization of communities and of Lumad killings. In December 10, the Lumads held a rally inside the University of the Philippines-Cebu campus.

In Butuan, datus (chieftains) of the Manobo, Mamanwa and Banaoan tribes in Caraga region held a meeting last December 10 to condemn the massacre in Lianga, Surigao del Sur and the most recent cases of forced evacuations in Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Norte and other areas. They asserted that the regime must order the immediate pull-out of military troops from Lumad communities, whose presence is the reason why evacuees in Tandag, Davao and other areas still cannot return to their homes.

War against the Bangsamoro

Meanwhile, Moro people also commemorated International Human Rights Day. According to Suara Bangsamoro, 32 Moro civilians have been killed during Aquino's presidency while more than 180 political detainees, including those who have been cleared of charges by the Department of Justice, remain incarcerated in Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig. The group condemned the state's continuing war against the Moro people, especially after the battle in Mamasapano.

According to Jerome Succor Aba, Suara Bangsamoro spokesperson, "[Aquino] allows militarization in the hinterlands as foreign corporations plunder our land."

In Maguindanao, Suara Bangsamoro and other organizations held a rally in front of the 6th ID headquarters in Datu Odin Sinsuat last December 10. AB





Human rights violations escalate in Cavite

Five people became victims of human rights violations in Cavite within the last week of November. One was killed extrajudicially while four were illegally arrested and tortured.

Rico Asim was shot at close range by two motorcycle-riding men on November 27, at around 7:00 p.m. in front of his house in Long Beach, Barangay San Rafael IV, Noveleta, Cavite. He was hit between the eyes and died on the spot. Asim is the coordinator of Bayan Muna-Noveleta and Vice Chairperson of Long Beach Neighborhood Association (LBNA) which led the residents' protest actions against landgrabbing by Global Training Systems Phil. Inc. in the name of Dalahican Agro-marine Corporation.

Earlier that morning, Asim and other LBNA leaders were brought to court in Imus on trumped-up charges. Malou Samartino, chairperson of Gabriela-Noveleta, and Antonio Lelis, were similarly charged.

In the adjacent town on November 23, about 12:30 in the early morning, elements of the Philippine National Police arrested without warrant and tortured four civilians in Manggahan, General Trias. Jose Nayve, Armando Matres, George Bruce and Rommel Nuñez were in a local carnival in Barangay Manggahan when they were separately picked up by police as suspects in the bombing of a telecommunications facility in Barangay Javalera of the same town.

Nayve is provincial coordinator of PISTON, an organization of drivers. He was kicked while being shoved into a police mobile. Bruce, a driver of a passenger van, was

shoved to the ground, his hands tied behind his back and beaten, as were Nuñez and Matres before they were brought to the Manggahan police station where they were further tortured by policemen in uniform and plainclothes.

Nayve and Bruce were subjected to electric shock during interrogation, their heads covered with cloth and plastic until they almost suffocated. For four days, they were moved through four jails before they were brought to the BJMP Malabon in General Trias where they underwent further interrogation and torture. They were denied legal counsel while under interrogation before being indicted for illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

Initial victory for the Lumads

The Lumads won an initial victory in their struggle against the militarization of their ancestral lands. More than 130 Lumad evacuees started to return to Side 4, Barangay Mangayon, Compostela on December 14 after learning that soldiers of the Philippine Army have left their community.

The evacuees have been staying for two weeks in Barangay Matina Crossing's gym since elements of the 66th IB, under a certain Lt. Danjo Lagula, encamped in their village. The soldiers set up camp some 50 meters from the Salugpungan Learning Center, a Lumad school tagged by the regime as NPA-run.

According to Bello Tindasan,

chairperson of Compostela Farmers Association, the soldiers are being used by Agusan Petroleum and Mineral Corporation (Aget) to harass and terrorize the people who are against the entry of the said mining corporation into their ancestral land. They therefore expect the military to return because Aget has not withdrawn its mining plans.

Around the same time, on December 13, 120 Bukidnon Manobo evacuees have started to return to their homes as the soldiers left their community. According to Jimboy Mandaguit, leader of the Lumad organization Kasilo, their return is a small victory gained by more than five months of evacuation and protests in the city.

“We bear no illusion that the military has changed. We know that they will return and commit atrocities again,” he said. “We bear in mind that there are thousands more evacuees all over Mindanao. As long as the military has not left other Lumad communities in the countryside, then we Lumads will continue to protest and struggle against them,” he added. Over 600 Manobos from Talaingod and Kapalong from Davao del Norte remain in the UCCP Haran Compound in Davao City, while 3,000 Manobos remain in Tandag City Sports Complex, Surigao del Sur due to attacks by the paramilitary group Magahat-Bagani in their community.

Meanwhile on December 8, Ola Almgren, United Nations Resident Coordinator in the Philippines called for the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators of violence against the Lumad. In discussions with Malacañang officials, Almgren called for the resumption of peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the disbanding of all local armed groups, and “full protection” of civilians and non-combatants in accordance with international humanitarian laws.

AB

Mindoreños oppose National Greening Program

Indigenous Mangyans, poor peasants, and settlers in Mindoro island have united under the National Democratic Front-Mindoro in opposing the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) National Greening Program (NGP).

This grandiose tree-planting program purports to alleviate poverty, ensure food security, conserve and protect biodiversity, and mitigate climate change. However, the indigenous people and peasant masses regard this as a large-scale landgrabbing scheme.

Aquino ratified the NGP on February 2011, and had allocated P7.2 billion from public funds for the program. The NGP aims to plant 1.5 billion trees covering 1.5 million hectares in a period of six years from 2011 to 2016. It covers declared public lands with a minimum of 100 hectares and a maximum of 1,000 hectares.

For the people of Mindoro, the program has undoubtedly resulted in worsening cases of landgrabbing and other forms of oppression. More than 37,300 hectares have already been covered by the program in 2014, even as the DENR plans to include an additional 6,500 hectares for the current year.

These lands are put under commercial tree-planting contracts. In the main, local politicians coming from the big landlord class, or their partners in the agro-forestry business, are awarded these contracts.

The rampant sale of public lands through NGP contracts violates the poor peasants' rights over frontier lands that they have long occupied and cultivated. Likewise, this violates the Mangyan people's right to their ancestral lands. As such, the people of Mindoro face serious hunger brought about by land-use conversion. Rather than prioritizing food production for local consumption, lands are al-

lotted for planting export crops.

National Democratic Front-Mindoro spokesperson, Ka Maria Patricia Andal, stated that the NGP employs various ploys so that thousands of hectares are subsumed to the program, despite resistance from the settlers and indigenous people. To cover the targeted areas, peasants and Mangyan people are coerced into putting their lands under the NGP. Corrupt village officials, some co-opted Mangyan leaders, and contractors are employed to put pressure on the people. The program exploits the people's poverty in order to make them accept low wages for planting and growing commercial trees.

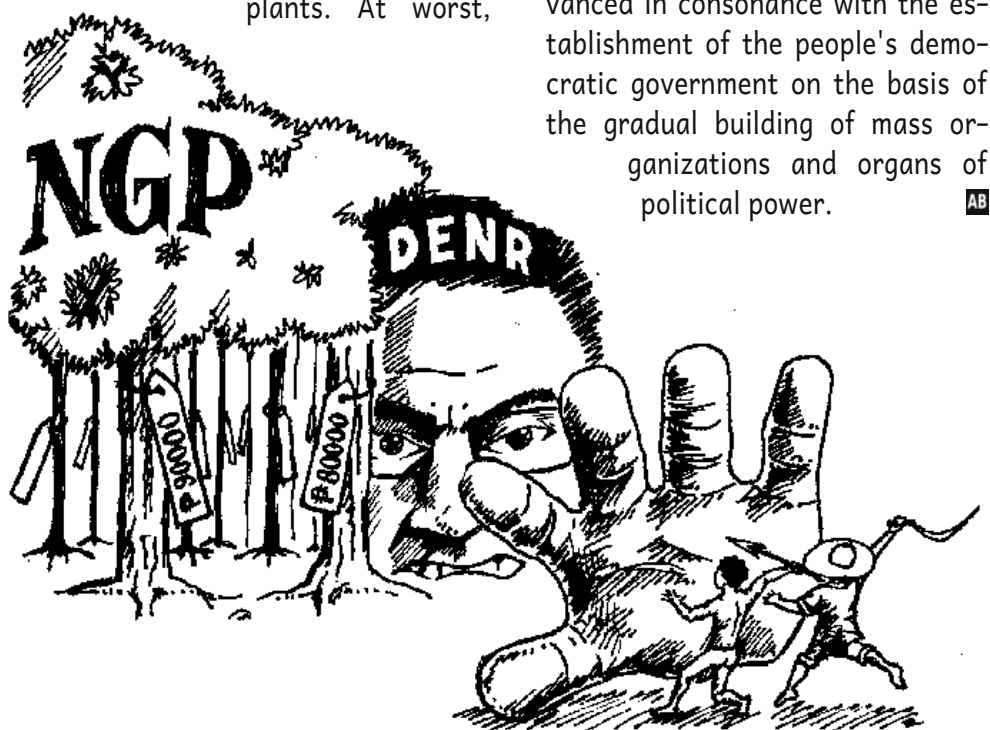
Likewise, the DENR invents fake organizations as "partners" registered in the tree-plantings. As a result, lands are entered into the program without the peasants and Mangyans' consent. They are also subjected to unjust policies regarding the maintenance of the plants. At worst,

they lose their rights over their lands when the trees mature.

The anti-people NGP of the Aquino regime must be opposed. In Mindoro as well as in other provinces covered by NGP, the mass movement could prohibit NGP's entry to the barrios and frontier lands. The mass movement could likewise campaign for the just payment to the peasants and indigenous people for their labor, and for low prices of commodities. The ruling government must also be obligated to deliver adequate and proper services to the public, instead of selling public lands to private businesses.

To struggle against NGP is to struggle against landgrabbing and the seizure of ancestral lands. This will be effectively fought within the framework of advancing struggles for genuine land reform and the indigenous peoples' struggle for self-determination.

In Mindoro and the rest of the country, the revolutionary movement implements programs for agrarian revolution which includes minimum and maximum programs for land reform. This is being advanced in consonance with the establishment of the people's democratic government on the basis of the gradual building of mass organizations and organs of political power. AB



The NGP is a fake environmental program

THE National Greening Program (NGP) is empty and rotten. Its claim of reforestation in order to mitigate climate change is a lie.

The NGP is a program for planting commercial trees such as mahogany and gmelina, as well as other marketable products such as coffee, cacao, and bamboo, from which contractors profit.

The program is not aimed at reforestation. According to global definitions, urban parks, orchards and other agricultural tree crops are not considered as forests. Forests are those with a minimum area of

half a hectare, growing various types of trees with a height threshold of five meters, and have crown cover that block 90 % of the sun's rays.

The NGP does not promote biodiversity. Some types of birds do not make nests on trees such as gmelina and mahogany, and there is almost no undergrowth where such trees are planted. Neither are they resistant against pests nor effective against typhoons. Also, trees planted by the NGP are unlike forest trees which are natural barriers against floods and other calamities.

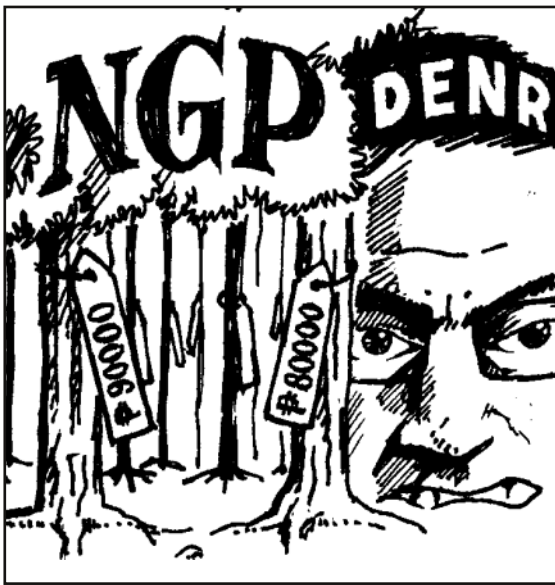
Because the trees are harvested after a few years, they lose their capability as huge carbon reservoirs. Carbon, when released to the atmosphere, increases global temperatures. Aquino's pro-environment posturing has long been exposed as a sham. His "total log ban" order in 2011 is superficial. In truth,

logging permits covering thousands upon thousands of hectares of forests were not canceled, and mining companies proceed with their plunder.

The protection and restoration of the environment is included in the program for the people's democratic revolution. Even environmental organizations acknowledge that forests are able to thrive in areas where the revolutionary movement is strong.

In areas where the revolutionary forces wield political authority, large-scale and destructive mining, as well as commercial logging are prohibited. Programs for the restoration of forests using indigenous tree and plant species are likewise implemented.

Through the administration of the revolutionary authorities, the protection of the environment is weighed up with the utilization of forests for agriculture or consumption of timber for non-commercial needs of families and the community. Mass organizations participate in identifying which forests are available for timber or agriculture, and those requiring preservation. **AB**



Aquino awashes 4Ps with funds

THE LARGEST budget ever for the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps or Filipino Family Alleviation Program), reaching P62.67 billion out of the P3 trillion national budget for 2016, was approved this December.

The 4Ps is a program designed and promoted by the World Bank and funded mainly by loans from the Asian Development Bank. Up to P300 billion was allocated for the 4Ps from 2008 to 2016. From 2010, some P42.5 billion was borrowed by the US-Aquino regime for the program. This debt is scheduled to be paid starting 2020.

Alongside this, a bill has been put forward in Congress to institutionalize the 4Ps through automatic appropriation of its funds in the national budget. Clearly, the direction is to perpetuate and push further the scope of the program, despite successive exposés proving that it is inept, anomalous and deceptive.

Early on, the widespread corruption in the imple-

mentation of the 4Ps was revealed. In November 2011, some 171,947 beneficiary families (or 7.5 % of the program's scope) were removed from the list after they were arbitrarily declared to be non-poor.

In many places, the Aquino regime and its allies utilize the funds to seize the bailiwicks of the opposition at the local level. Allied politicians are given authority to influence the selection and approval of the 4Ps for families who are being courted or whose loyalty are being maintained to build or consolidate the machinery to serve as advantage in upcoming elections.

To make the funds seem substantial, "subsidies" for the beneficiaries are not regularly given out, so that the miniscule P300 monthly allocation for each child under the 4Ps will appear bigger at P3,000 if it is collected every two months by a family with three grade school children. **AB**

US crimes in Syria

A ruthless war against civilians—this has been the response of US imperialism and its allies to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS, also known as ISIL, IS or Daesh) since last year.

Bombings and destruction of civilian infrastructure, and extrajudicial killings are carried out relentlessly, victimizing hundreds of thousands of civilians. These are war crimes and violations of the Geneva Conventions due to the damages these inflict on civilians. Raqqa, supposed ISIS capital in Syria, is the bombings' main target.

The US intensified this “war” after terrorist attacks in Paris, France and San Bernardino, California in the US in the previous weeks.

In his December 14 speech, US President Barack Obama threatened alleged ISIS leaders that “you are next” and promised to hunt them down “wherever you are in the world.” Obama boasts of his “kill list,” a secret list of suspected terrorists targeted for assassination through drone and air strikes. This list is arbitrary and unsanctioned by the US congress, senate and courts. ISIS emerged from groups the US has used to oust “unfriendly” regimes in the Middle East. Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, all close US allies, supply its weapons. It spun out of US control and is now sowing terror in different parts of the world.

In his speech, Obama flaunted the killing of Mohammed Emwazi aka “Jihadi John,” an ISIS member originally from the United Kingdom (UK). Emwazi was killed in a series of

air strikes and bombings in Raqqa on November 12.

On November 13, the US sent two warplanes to Libya to bomb the location of Abu Nabil, which it suspects as Libya's ISIS leader.

Since September 2014, the US has been bombing what it claims to be ISIS strongholds under “Operation Inherent Resolve.” Operations started in Iraq, purportedly upon its puppet state's request, but rapidly expanded to Syrian territories. In more than a year, the US carried out 7,000 air strikes — 4,000 in Iraq and almost 3,000 in Syria.

Up to November, the US has spent \$5.2 billion (or \$11 million a day) for the campaign. Due to the sheer volume of bullets, bombs and missiles used, American war planes have been depleting their stockpiles, compelling the US Congress to allocate \$400 million for the production of new bombs and missiles.

Concurrently, US allies have launched 2,000 air strikes, including France's retaliatory attacks in Raqqa on November 17. The French prime minister declared “war” against the ISIS after anger boiled over ISIS attacks in Paris. But according to Raqqa residents, France targeted bases long abandoned by ISIS, and thus inflicting minimum damage

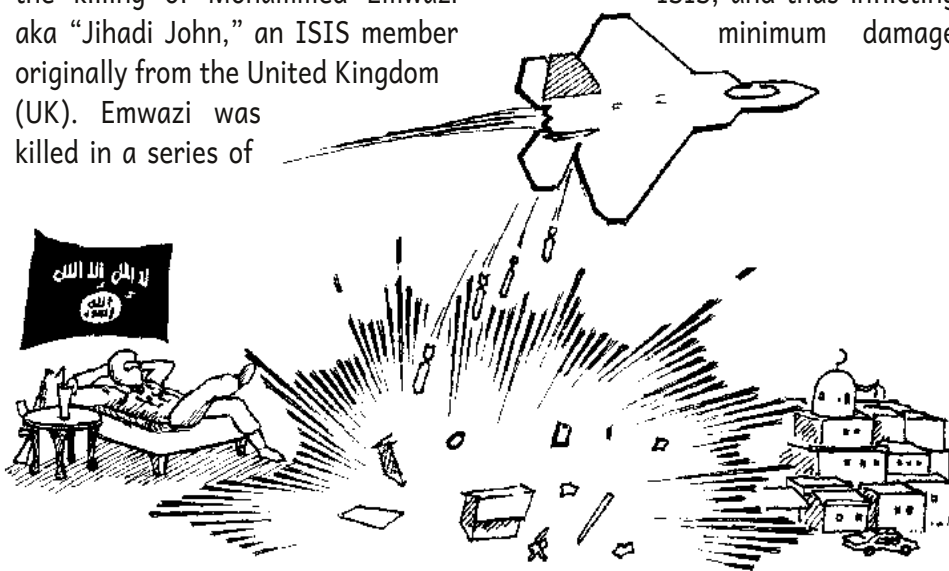
to their troops. Seven civilians died, according to a secret activist group based in the city. Electricity lines were hit, adding to the residents' misery. Most of the destroyed facilities “used by the ISIS” are also facilities used by civilians, such as bridges and roads. Worse, there are facilities hit by “stray” bombs or “unintended” targets including hospitals, museums and playgrounds. There have been reports of houses being leveled down due to their proximity to the air strikes' original targets.

It is becoming apparent that more than the ISIS, the real target of the US' bombing of Syria is the government of Bashar al-Assad, a staunch anti-US leader and Russian ally. On December 8, it was reported that US air strikes hit a Syrian camp, killing four soldiers. On November 23, Obama confirmed that the US is sending additional troops from the Joint Special Operations Command to organize and train so-called moderate anti-ISIS Islamic groups. These groups were originally organized, armed and funded to overthrow al-Assad.

Civilian casualties continue to mount. According to Airwars, a group of independent journalists based in the UK, civilians killed in Syria and Iraq number from 757 to 1,073. These numbers go higher if incidents — unconfirmed due to the lack of independent reports—are taken into account.

Entire families are killed due to US bombings of suspected ISIS arms factories or depots, detachments and offices. The US itself admits it has “relaxed” its rules in relation to the presence of civilians inside or near targeted facilities or vehicles. Presently, the US only confirms two of these incidents.

The relentless bombings create intense fear among civilians. These have brought about massive evacuations which created one of Europe and the Middle East's worst refugee crisis. From 2011, more than half of



Syria's population have evacuated their communities. About 4.1 million have left Syria while 7.6 million remain in the country. This 2015, half of the almost one million refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea comes from Syria. More than 3,600 of these refugees have died or gone missing at sea.

Fueling anti-Islam sentiments

As ISIS terrorism rages, the US is not above using it to fuel anti-Islam sentiments and justify its military aggression in Syria. Within the US, leaders have made use of the intensifying discrimination against Muslims to justify their war crimes and call for worse crimes against the people of Syria.

These included calls to carpet-bomb entire communities, intensify

surveillance, close down media outlets and even kill families of suspected terrorists in order to be "firm" with them. To a certain extent, these steps are already being carried out.

In the US and Europe, there is growing demand to deny Middle East refugees entry to their countries solely because of their race and religion. **AB**

Peasants rally against WTO

THE Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) held a rally in front of the Department of Agriculture in Quezon City last December 15 to denounce high prices of rice and other food products. The demonstration was made to coincide with the 10th Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) which was then being held in Nairobi, Kenya. According to the KMP, the WTO's liberalization policy is to be blamed for rice and other food products' high prices.

Since the Philippines became a WTO member in 1994, rice prices in the country have risen by more than 300%. What was previously P12,180 per metric ton (MT) has now become P39,670/MT. Also, all-out agricultural liberalization opened the sector to unfettered rice importation. From 2007 to 2014 alone, rice imports rose from 1.8 to 2.5 MT, disproving the US-Aquino regime's rice self-sufficiency program. Because of this, local palay (unhusked rice) prices fell to as low as P14/kilo.

Worse, liberalization has resulted in large-scale land-grabbing, land conversion and overdependence on food imports. This is bound to intensify as efforts to revive previous WTO agreements are on the way. Chief among the 10th Ministerial Meeting's agenda is the removal of subsidies on exported products, in accordance with 2005 agreements. Implementation was deferred after the US and other capitalist countries refused to honor the agreements. **AB**

Muntinlupa residents protest demolitions

MUNTINLUPA residents, under the Alyansa ng Nagkakaisang Maralita sa Muntinlupa, rallied in front of their city hall last December 14 to protest imminent demolitions under "Oplan Likas" or the "Estero Declaration." The Estero Declaration, which supposedly aims to clear floodways in Metro Manila, will dislocate more than 100,000 families in 16 cities. In Muntinlupa, about 3,000 families will be affected.

Muntinlupa's local government is using the Estero Declaration to pave the way for the implementation of the Road Dike Reclamation and Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike Project, all under the US-Aquino regime's Public Private Partnership program. These projects will displace 3.9 million residents around the lake. In Muntinlupa, around 20,000 families are set to lose their homes and livelihoods.

The rallyists also denounced the local government's relocation site in Southville 3 due to the lack of employment and facilities in the area. Because most do not have jobs, residents have failed to pay their house rents. As of now, more than 1,000 families are set to be turned out of their homes because of their failure to pay the current rent. **AB**