

NPA offensives in Luzon and Mindanao

AT LEAST 14 military offensives were reported by various New People's Army (NPA) units to *Ang Bayan* over the past weeks.

North Central Mindanao.

The NPA-NCMR under the Mt. Kitanglad Subregional Command ambushed a PNP vehicle traversing the highway in Kilometer 28, Tikalaan, Talakag, Bukidnon last November 9. A policeman was killed while four were wounded. Unfortunately, civilians riding a Toyota Fortuner following the police car were hit accidentally. A four-month old child died while her mother and another companion were wounded. The CPP and NPA took full responsibility for the accident and sincerely apologized to the victim's family.

After the ambush, the NPA unit harassed the police reinforcements in Kilometer 23 last November 10.

Last November 12, a team under the South Central Bukidnon Subregional Command blasted two KM450 trucks of the Division Reconnaissance Coy and 8th IB in Barangay Salawagan, Quezon, Bukidnon.

On the same day, at 11 a.m., a unit under Mt. Kitanglad Subregional Command set-up a checkpoint in Sitio Malagsim, Barangay Rogogon, Iligan City. Red fighters flagged down a mo-

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EDITORIAL

Vigorously thwart the threat of a martial law extension

It is all too obvious that the plan for martial law extension beyond December 31 is behind Duterte's threat to consider the NPA as terrorists and simple criminals, and to crack down on the open progressive mass movement. Mindanao martial law has long been running out of excuses, as the so-called Maute/ISIS threat has long disappeared, and he and his military war freaks could not drumbeat enough noise of a "spill over."

Duterte is too consistent in his fascist bluster, even his tired excuse of the progressive left "conspiring" with the NPA, to constantly kowtow to the wishes of the higher echelons of the US-controlled armed forces. He has resorted to name-calling and threats so many times, in so many

forms, that the people have grown weary of his constant harping. This time, he even invokes his US masters, in placing the NPA and CPP, "same as America, as terrorists." Emboldened by the recent Trump approval of his strongman rule, he is bent on eliminating all opposition,

legal and otherwise. The people recognize these threats against the revolutionary and progressive movement for what they are: to eliminate the strongest and most consistent opposition to his fascist rule, silence dissent against his anti-people and pro-imperialist policies and further perpetuate himself in power through one-man rule.

The fact is, he does not even need to issue this threat. Under his orders, the AFP has been carrying out an all-out war since February not only against the revolutionary movement but especially against civilian communities suspected of supporting the NPA. He followed this closely with an order for the AFP to “flatten the hills” of suspected NPA areas, and then proceeded to flatten Marawi City through his martial law declaration in Mindanao. He has, time and again, announced that he will unleash the AFP’s military might against the NPA as soon as he finishes with

Marawi. Since coming into power, he has beefed up the AFP arsenal with more guns, bombs and war-planes.

His wars of death and destruction have spurred aerial bombings, shelling, strafing, political and extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests and detention, resulting in thousands of people displaced, billions-worth of properties destroyed and massive human rights violations. These have roused an increasing number of people to join protests and pushed many activists into revolutionary struggle.

The reactionary state has also long intensified criminalization of political dissent, charging both revolutionaries and progressives with trumped-up criminal charges and detaining them for long periods of time. Illegal arrests of civilians and activists continue, even more after the formation of Duterte’s IACLA, and almost 500 political prisoners continue to languish in various jails across the country despite promises

of an amnesty.







Duterte is wrong in thinking that the revolutionary movement will just roll over and surrender in the face of his rants. He is wrong in thinking that the progressive movement will be cowed with his threats of a crackdown and mass arrests. The people shall oppose as strongly as they opposed his previous plan of imposing martial law nationwide.

In the face of martial law or any other form of open fascist rule, the democratic mass movement must continue to strengthen itself by arousing, organizing and militant mass mobilizations. Appropriate methods of work and revolutionary organizations in the urban underground must be strengthened to serve as backbone for the open mass movement. The guerrilla zones are always places of sanctuary for activists whom the state is targeting for political killing.

At the same time, the revolutionary forces must continue expanding and recovering guerrilla zones, setting up revolutionary mass organizations, committees and organs of political power in revolutionary bases, develop agrarian revolution and other forms of struggle for the people’s welfare. Revolutionary masses must be trained for organized response to aerial bombings and widespread militarization in the countryside. The New People’s Army must address the intensifying attacks of fascist forces by continuous and increasing recruitment and training, and carrying out an increasing number and bigger tactical offensives.

The people will not tire of opposing and fighting all schemes of the US-Duterte regime to place the whole country under open fascist rule.

AB

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torcycle with three soldiers. Instead of halting, the soldiers fired at the NPA, starting a fight that resulted in the death of a soldier and wounding of another.

Northeastern Mindanao. Last November 13, 1:30 p.m., Police Officer 2 (PO2) John Paul Dverte and PO2 Alfredo Degamon were arrested by members of the NPA-NEMR in Barangay Badas, Placer, Surigao del Norte on cases of extortion and peddling illegal drugs.

On November 9, the NPA ambushed a column of Special Forces Battalion (SFB) in Sitio Bakilawan, Bayugan City, Agusan del Sur. The SFB was ambushed again the next day and a two-hour firefight ensued. A Red fighter was martyred, while enemy casualties were innumerable.

On November 8, Red fighters attacked a team from the SFB operating in San Roque, Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte. 2Lt. Maurice Salavia Caballero and another soldier were killed in action.

Last November 7, the NPA harassed an SFB and Bagani Forces column. The AFP retaliated by sending aerial support. Some soldiers and paramilitary were killed, including Marcos Belandres, one of those who massacred the Lumad leaders in Alcadev last 2015. Several soldiers were wounded.

Last November 6, Red fighters ambushed CAFGU elements in Sitio

Logdeck, Brgy. San Isidro, Lianga, Surigao del Sur. They seized two M-16 rifles, one Garand, and one carbine. Three CAFGU members were killed and one was wounded.

Ilocos-Cordillera Region. Last November 18, an NPA unit under BHB-Abra (Saulo Lumadao Front) harassed the operating unit of 24th IB in Barangay Danac, Boliney, Abra.

A unit under BHB-Ilocos Sur (Benguet-Abra-Mountain Province -Ilocos Sur Command) harassed the 81st IB in Barangay Patiacaan last October 15. This resulted in the death of a soldier and injury of another. The AFP unit was harassed earlier in Barangay Patungcaleo on October 9. The joint forces of 81st IB, PNP-RPSB and CAFGU have been occupying the barangays of Lamag, Patungcaleo, Patiacaan and Legleg in Quirino, Ilocos Sur since September.

The assault on the Community Support Program Team in Patungcaleo and Patiacaan is part of the NPA's support for the struggles of the people of Quirino and Cervantes against the plunder of mining companies and of AFP and PNP fascist troops.

Last November 12, Red fighters under the NPA-Abra (Agustin Bengalen Command) assaulted soldiers from the 24th IB between Barangay Beew and Kili in Tubo, Abra. Three soldiers were wounded. The next

day, the NPA unit targeted two helicopters, hindering the military's supply support for the operating troops in the area.

These military actions serve as warning to plans of land grabbing and entry of foreign projects under Duterteonomics. The towns of Tubo, Manabo, Luba, Boliney, Bucloc, Daguioman, Sallapadan and Licuan-Baay are part of the Pan Pacific Renewable Power Philippine Corp. project for geothermal energy which covers at least 49,000 hectares of ancestral land of the Tingguian tribe.

Bicol. The NPA-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) ambushed a group of the Provincial Operation for Socio Economic Development Against Crime (POSDAC) last October 31, because of their anti-people activities. The Red fighters confiscated an M16 rifle, a caliber .357 pistol and ammunition.

Criminal cases were filed against POSDAC in the people's court, including extortion of small fishermen. If the fishermen fail to give the amount set by POSDAC, their boats are confiscated. If they cannot put up the amount for recovering their boats, these are torched by the POSDAC. There was an incident when even a reserve propeller, 870 liters of crude oil, 14 tubs of fish, P8,000 in cash and cellphones were taken forcibly by the POSDAC. AB



Series of protests greet Trump

A series of protests greeted US president and chief imperialist Donald Trump on his Philippine visit for the ASEAN Summit last November 12.

These rallies conveyed the Filipino people's anger over ASEAN's neoliberal agenda and the US militarist presence in the region. The rallies were led by national-democratic organizations under the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan).

On the day of the ASEAN Summit, the rallyists marched to the Philippine International Convention Center where the summit was being held. They were still a long way from the area when they were blocked by the police and dispersed. They were bombed with water cannons and an LRAD (Long Range Acoustic Device), a machine which emits a noise destructive to human hearing, was deployed against them. Around 50 activists were hurt but the rallyists stood their ground. At the end of their program, they burned a large effigy symbolizing the Duterte regime's puppetry and fascism.

The next day, they marched to Mendiola to condemn the ongoing East Asia Summit. Despite Trump calling this meeting as the "most important day" of his visit, he did not attend the summit and flew out of the country by 3 p.m.

Prior to this, from November 9-12, different sectors marched to the US embassy. They were blocked everytime by thousands of police personnel and fire trucks to prevent them from getting near the embassy. On November 11, Anakbayan members managed to slip through the police cordon and were able to get close to the CCP Complex. The following day, police violently dispersed the rallyists, using truncheons and water cannons,

hurting around 20 activists.

On November 8, the rallyists marched to Mendiola to denounce the P15.5 billion expenses for the ASEAN party. Led by Kadamay, they were joined by urban poor residents from Manggahan Floodway in Pasig who have encamped in the area after their community was demolished last October.

On November 7, KADAMAY members discussed the effects of ASEAN on their sector and on the country on the occasion of their 19th founding anniversary. Around 10,000 Kadamay members gathered in Pandi, Bulacan for the occasion.

On the said dates, various activist groups also launched other protests. These included pickets in front of the Trump Tower in Makati and in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform on November 10. On November 11, Migrante members picketed in front of the Department of Labor and Employment office to condemn the lack of jobs inside the country and the state's labor export policy.

In Central Luzon, hundreds of Bayan members rallied at the Clark International Airport in Pampanga to greet arriving ASEAN visitors on November 12. Another rally was held in the University of the Philippines-Los Baños.

In Mindanao, members of the League of Filipino Students led a picket

inside the Mindanao State University-Marawi on November 11. On November 14, another rally was held by Bayan-SMR in Davao City.

Yolanda survivors protests.

Led by People Surge, more than 9,000 survivors of typhoon Yolanda rallied in Tacloban City, and in the cities of Catbalogan and Catarman in Samar on November 8. That day, soldiers blocked the rallyists in Catarman. Soldiers also blocked some rallyists at their checkpoint in Palapag. The previous day, elements of the 87th IB gathered residents in Calbiga and ordered them not to join the rallies.

Thousands of Panayanon also rallied in Estancia, Iloilo on November 9 to condemn the US-Duterte regime's inutility to resolve the lack of housing and decent jobs in the province.

Protests on the 13th anniversary of the Hacienda Luisita massacre. Hundreds of farm workers under the AMBALA joined protests in front of the hacienda gates on November 16. Before this, police arrested AMBALA president Florida Sibayan and detained her for two days on trumped-up criminal charges. She was released on November 16 evening after members of Bayan and KMP-Central Luzon picketed in front of Camp Gen.

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The state of Metro Manila workers

During the recently-concluded ASEAN Summit, workers from Metro Manila (National Capital Region or NCR) were among the thousands who protested against the capitalist shindig and US imperialist chief Donald Trump's visit. For decades, Filipino workers have suffered the effects of neo-liberal policies instituted in unequal agreements which the ASEAN and other trade formations have pushed. The workers in the national capital bear the brunt of these policies, as they work in the commercial, financial and industrial center of foreign companies and the local bourgeoisie.

NCR is the smallest but the densest of all regions in the country. Around 12 million Filipinos reside here, where density is at 19,000 people per square kilometer. In the past year, it has overtaken Mumbai as the densest city in Asia. In Manila City alone, density is at 66,000 people per square kilometer.

As the center, NCR provides a third (36%) of the country's GDP. The bulk of its GRDP (gross regional domestic product) is from the service sector (83%). Though lower than the service sector, industrial products from the region is still the highest in value added compared to other regions. NCR factories produce electronics, as well as clothing, food and beverages and various chemicals.

More than 22% or 212,000 businesses and industries in the country

are based in Metro Manila. Thirty-five percent of industries and 38% service companies are in NCR and Calabarzon. A large number (44%) of big companies (with 20 and up workers) are found in the region. In the past decade, most of these were in sales and services, followed by manufacturing, hotel and restaurants and support services.

For now, the region has the second highest working population (9.1 million), second to Calabarzon (9.8 million). But the labor force participation rate here is only at 60% or about 5.4 million residents. Employment rate is supposedly at 92% while the unemployment rate is at 8% and underemployment at 7.4%. Around 60% of those unemployed are men. Like in other parts of the country, around half of the

employed are in the informal sector.

Compared to the national average, unemployment rates in Metro Manila are almost always higher. More than half of those out of work here are young workers. Urban poor communities have the largest number of the unemployed (40%). In the past two decades, about half of the thousands of retrenched workers came from NCR. Their numbers were highest during the time when factories relocated to export processing zones outside Metro Manila.

By 2016, most NCR workers (24%) work in wholesale and retail trade where almost all workers are never regularized. Next are in administrative and other support services, manufacturing, construction and transportation and storage at 9% each. On types of work, 20% are in sales and services, and 18% are managers, but there remains a large number of industrial workers in the region (17%) who work as machine operators and assemblers.

NCR workers' rights to unionize, collectively bargain for wages and

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Macabulos where she was jailed.

Lumad, Tumandok and Moro actions. On November 16, Lumad children under the Save Our Schools Network set up camp in front of the Department of Education in Pasig to condemn the department's inutility against the military's destruction and encampments in their schools.

In Panay, Tumandoks protested in front of the National Irrigation Administration office on November 18 to reject the construction of a mega dam in the hinterlands of Tapaz, Capiz. The project, worth P25 billion, falls under the Panay River Basin Integrated Development Project and is part of the regime's "Build, Build, Build" program.

Kalinaw Mindanao, together

with the Interfaith Humanitarian Mission held a picket in Iligan City on November 17 to condemn the continuing imposition of martial law in Mindanao and the plan to extend it up to next year.

Workers actions. Workers of Sumifru and Musahamat Farms picketed in front of the company office on November 20 to condemn its use of the poisonous chemical Flouzinam which has caused illness among the workers.

On the same day, workers from Wyeth (Sama-Ako KMU) picketed in front of the Court of Appeals in Manila City to condemn the court's decision favoring the company against regularizing its contractuels. Wyeth is a producer of infant formula and

medicines.

On November 16, residents from Purok 24, Talisay, Barangay Bucana in Davao City launched a protest, together with Kadamay, to resist moves by DM Consunji Incorporated to drive them away. Around 300 families have been living in the area for more than 30 years and they have twice received notices to vacate the area.

US protests. While Trump was in Asia, Filipino-Americans launched a series of protests in the US. Members of Bayan-USA held pickets in the cities of Boston, New York and Philadelphia against Trump's anti-immigrant policies, including his plan to build a wall at the Mexican border. AB

benefits and security of tenure are continually attacked. From the 1990s up to the 2000s, capitalists maneuvered relentlessly to break up the biggest unions of country's most strategic companies which are based in the region. These include San Miguel Corporation, Philippine Airlines, PLDT, Nestle, SM and other big factories. This was done in tandem with widespread lay-offs of regular and unionized workers, replacing them with contractuels and signing into law anti-union and anti-strike policies to ensure that the workers will not be able to reorganize. Thus, the number of unionized workers shrank by the year, from 2,778,000 union members in 1998, to only 1,068,000 by 2012.

NCR's minimum wages have always been bandied as the highest in all of the regions. This October, wages for large companies were at P512 after the state granted a P21-increase while wages in micro companies remained at P475. However, less than a million workers will actually benefit from the wage increase as most establishments here are categorized as micro. Addition-

ally, almost half (44%) of the companies do not pay their workers the minimum.

In the past decade, real wages remained static, or even fell, despite the small increases in the nominal wage (an average of P15/year since 2007). Nominal wages in June stood at P491 but real wages were only at P354 due to high inflation rates. This is even far lower compared to the family living wage which is pegged at P1,141 this year.

Worse, the region is now under the two-tier wage system. NCR wages are now based on the "floor wage" which is set by a poverty threshold arbitrarily decided on by the state. In 2016, floor wages in Metro Manila were at P10,276/month per family of five, or P68.51/day per individual. This amount is supposedly enough to pay for food, education, transportation, communication and other needs of a family of five.

An estimated 40% of all wage workers live in urban poor communities where sanitation, water and electricity services are in bad shape. According to a study by the



Metro Manila Urban Service for the Poor, there are around four million people living in these communities in 2015. This number is estimated to increase to six million in 2020. These communities are always in danger of demolition to give way to buildings of big compradors and public infrastructure projects.

In the face of these attacks and hardships, NCR workers have never stopped in their struggles to demand decent jobs and just wages, humane working conditions and their right to a union and CBA. Their involvement in the anti-ASEAN protests is just a part of their continuing struggle. **AB**

The progressive alternative media and fake news in the time of Duterte

During the ASEAN Summit and even earlier, paid pro-Duterte bloggers multiplied and went full-scale in attacking political enemies of the regime. These include bloggers Sass Sasot and RJ Nieto, as well as Mocha Uson, the regime's appointee to the Office of Presidential Communications. Sasot even grabbed the scene last November 13 when she confronted a reporter of the British Broadcasting Corporation after the channel aired an interview with an anti-Duterte blogger.

Even during the last campaign for the presidential elections, Duterte's camp had already been actively employing such types of bloggers and thousands of other paid trolls to make Duterte popular and attack his rivals.

Coming from the statement of no less than a troll from the Duterte-Cayetano social media campaign team, part of their job was to create fake websites and

social media accounts for this purpose. They produce tons of accounts in sites such as Facebook whereupon they generate discussions regarding primary social issues. Most of those managing these are professional public relations consultants. Since the campaign period till the present, they function as political operators whose main task is to divert public attention away from the regime's un-

pleasant actions, and influence and convince the people on Duterte's "effective leadership." Aside from Uson, they are formally employed as "consultants" of government agencies and receive salaries of up to P60,000/month.

These operators slyly manipulate information and legitimate news. In so many occasions, they resort to cursing and threats, carrying out hate campaigns in order to call attention and underscore their untruths. Whenever confronted by legitimate arguments, their responses are oftentimes rude and pointless. They claim victory whenever their opinions and fake news appear on traditional media.

22 activists arrested illegally

At least 22 activists were arrested by state forces within this past few weeks only.

On the evening of November 20, nine members of a fact-finding mission to Barangay Utod, Nasugbu, Batangas were stopped and illegally arrested by elements of the 730th Combat Group and the Batangas police upon allegations that they were members of the NPA. They were identified as Leonardo delos Reyes, Josefino Castellano, Carlos Sanoza, Peping Sacdalan, Robert Hernandez, Jocelyn Cabadin, Jenelyn Bayani, Orlan Cabadin and Anthony Banaga. The arrested were all members of the peasant organiz-

ations Habagat and the Samahan ng Pinagkaisang Damdamin ng Barangay Quisumbing. They were on their way to Barangay Utod to monitor the AFP's human rights violations on civilians after an encounter between the NPA and AFP in the area.

On November 13, soldiers of the 86th IB illegally arrested civilians Oliver Molina and Robert Dalupang in Barangay Diasan, Echague, Isabela after an encounter between the NPA and AFP at an adjacent barangay. They were detained at

the 86th IB camp and their relatives and members of Dagami and Karapatan-Cagayan Valley were not allowed to visit them.

In Eastern Samar, the 87th IB arrested leader of the Tag-alag Farmers and Fisherfolk Association Carlito Badillo, 41, in front of Osmeña National High School in Tag-alag, Marabut on November 10. He was charged with rebellion and illegal possession of explosives. According to Badillo, he was dragged by the military and tortured while being accused of being NPA member. They tried forcing him to sign papers which he did

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In a University of Oxford study by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, low-quality reporting is considered fake news: baseless; deficient in data or standing on shallow analysis; if these originate from politicians and their avid supporters and come in the form of advertisements; if the content is paid.

Duterte's propagandists are experts at this kind of journalism. In a senate hearing on fake news, Uson even took pride that they are purportedly an alternative to information being released by the traditional media.

Genuine alternative media

Contrary to Uson's claims, genuine alternative media does not spread fake news or serve the ruling clique. Instead, real events and conditions of the people are reported. Alternative media is not obstructed by commercial interests unlike traditional media which is owned by big bourgeois compradors and rely on profits from advertisements by the biggest corporations.

In the Philippines, alternative media has a long history of struggle against the oppression and exploit-

ation by the Spanish colonialists and their cohorts, by US imperialism and its puppets in the neo-colonial state, up to the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. Among the most prominent alternative newspapers were *Diariong Tagalog* and *Kalayaan* during the Spanish colonialism, *El Renacimiento* and *Muling Pagsilang* at the time of US colonialism, and *Malaya*, *We Forum* and other mosquito press during the dictatorship. These newspapers ran news and analyses regarding the state of the people, highlighting violations of human rights, environmental destruction, state of the economy and other people's issues not published by big media which are controlled by, or afraid of, the dictatorship. The underground press such as *Ang Bayan* and *Liberation* also played important roles, challenging the Marcos regime's statements and calling for the advancement of armed and unarmed struggle.

With the development of social media, using the label "alternative" has become commonplace to include all forms of media outside traditional media. Nonetheless, its pillar remains to be the progressive media which has a well-defined partiality

towards the people.

Contrary to claims by some members of the dominant and traditional media that the progressive media conceals data and real events because of its advocacy, the core of the alternative press and media's tradition is accurate and correct reporting. Big media outfits regard their own advocacies as "activism" while waving the slogan "partial to no one, defending nobody," but this same reasoning restricts their capacity to expose, analyze and comprehend the primary concerns of the people.

Foremost audience of the progressive or pro-people media are the vulnerable and oppressed sectors of society such as the workers, peasants, indigenous peoples, women and children. This means that news is derived from the narrative and direct experiences of their sectors. Being mainly involved in news making, issues concerning their sectors get attention from the public. News is also centered on economic issues, politics, culture and developments which advance the struggle of the oppressed people such as militarization, contractualization, widespread dislocations and killings. AB

not understand.

In Oriental Mindoro on the same day, operatives of the 203rd IBde arrested health worker Emelia Marquez, 29, at the Medical Mission Group Hospital in Calapan City while she was attending to her sick infant. Marquez was one of the “Morong 43” who were illegally detained from February to December, 2010.

Also on November 10, four members of the Lumad organization KASILO were illegally arrested by 58th IB troops in Sitio Gamot, Barangay Sta. Filomena, Quezon, Bukidnon. Asilan Batao, Dodong Lampasan, Henry Lacubay and Leo Pangcat were arrested and accused of being NPA supporters. The soldiers were not able to take them to the camp because the villagers massed up and insisted they will all accompany the four where they may be taken.

Earlier on November 9 at Barangay Palamina, Oslob, Cebu, combined PNP and AFP troops arrested Rustico Tan, a former priest of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC). In his advanced age of 76, Tan is practicing organic farming in Oslob. He was a National Democratic Front of the Philippines negotiator in the 1986-1987 peace talks. Prior to this, Lopito Paquigbao and Eddie Culamat, farmers who worked on his farm, were also arrested. They

were brought to the AFP Central Command in Camp Lapu-Lapu, Cebu City. Tan was brought to face the court on November 20 on trumped-up murder charges.

On October 19, joint PNP-CIDG and ISAFP personnel arrested Jeremy Ang, convenor and senior consultant of Assert Socio-economic Initiatives Network of the Philippines (ASCENT), and his colleague Rita Espinoza in Kabankalan, Negros Occidental. There was no warrant of arrest and their lawyers were not allowed to see them for two days. At present, they are illegally detained in Camp Crame in Quezon City.

In Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental, Webby Argabio, member of Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, was shot dead on November 8 by four hooded gunmen while he was watching a game in Purok Mahogani Abtao, Barangay Tapi, of the said city.

Meanwhile, on November 18, military agents killed Dondon Bartolaba, resident of Sitio Palo 7, Barangay Tomanding, Arakan, Cotabato. Earlier on October 29 in Boston, Davao del Norte, relatives and neighbors found the body of Arnel Otacan, 33, former member of peasant organization Nagkasinabot Koy Maguuma Tu Boston. His body was riddled with bullets and his knees and arms were broken. He

had been visited and interrogated several times before by intelligence agents of the 67th IB.

In Capiz, military troops interrogated and threatened two farmers and their companion, a minor, between barangays Tacayan and Lahug, in Tapaz town on November 5. Mario Aguirre, his brother-in-law, and son, were returning home from delivering their banana product when they were accosted by a squad of soldiers in civilian clothes. The harassment was related to the Tumandok struggle against the planned megadam in Pan-ay River that will submerge 12 villages. There has been a similar incident the week before in the village of Lahug.

In Samar, members of the Alyansa san mga Paraguma Kontrakagutom san Las Navasnon (APK-LAS), together with Katungod-Northern Samar, held a confrontation with the 20th IB unit on November 6 to demand the withdrawal of the latter from their village. The soldiers have been encamping in Barangay San Miguel and other Las Navas villages, in violation of International Humanitarian Law.

Meanwhile, soldiers of the 22nd IB shelled the mountain in Daguio-man, Abra on November 10. A mortar shell hit a hut of an Itneg farmer in Barangay Ableg. AB

PLA-India launches tactical offensives

IN INDIA, in the morning of November 3, members of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) under the Communist Party of India-Maoist, blasted the pipelines of Essar Steel in its cut off area near the forest of Gunthabeda in Odisha.

The pipeline is used to transport iron ore (in slurry form) from the Baladila iron ore mines to its pelletisation plant in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Essar Steel India Ltd. is a multinational mining, mineral processing and iron exporting corporation. Essar Steel has been known for environmental destruction, land grabbing and worker exploitation.

Last November 9, exchanges of gunfire between Red fighters and patrolling police followed after the latter was blasted in the Chattisgarh-Jharkhand border at around 2 p.m., in Balrampur District, Chattisgarh. Five police from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and two from the Jharkhand Police were wounded.

On November 10, ten PLA members raided a construction camp in Narengtola, Kalyansinghpur in Odisha. Ten company vehicles were also torched. The punitive action was served to show opposition to the anti-people Narengtola-Lakhapadar road project.

In the same day, four CRPF troops were wounded after the PLA set off explosives in the Baresandh District, Latehar, Jharkhand.

Red fighters in India have been waging a people's war similar to that of the NPA in the Philippines.

Isabela farmers gain victories against usury

Farmers in San Mariano, Isabela reaped victories as a result of a confrontation initiated by Dagami (Danggayán dagiti Mannalon ti Isabela or Unity of Farmers in Isabela) with trader-usurers and the local government against merchant exploitation.

Last November 11, more than 400 farmers from different barangays of San Mariano gathered at Barangay Minanga and marched towards San Mariano Community Center where the confrontation was to be held and also attended by 11 traders. The farmers brought along with them cardboards and sacks painted with their demands. At the conclusion of the confrontation, they successfully demanded the following:

1. Increase the corn farmgate price from P10 to P12 per kilo, and cassava from P7 to P10 per kilo;

2. Reduce interest rates from 15% to 13% and extend the grace period of five months to six months before imposing interest;

3. Cancel all interests on loans during calamities, as well as on all previous loans.

4. Return sacks used by farmers for their produce since these are paid for by the farmers;

5. Commissions for the traders' drivers should not be shouldered by the farmers.

These will be contained in an agreement to be signed by the traders. Likewise, the farmers were able to press for the local government officials to spearhead the enactment at the municipal and provincial levels of the gains from the confrontation. The successful confrontation is the culmination of months-long preparations by the farmers. In a conference on genuine

agrarian reform held in September, Dagami members identified the leading burdens on farmers as the extremely low prices of their produce, unfair classification and fraudulent weighing scales, high prices of seeds, pesticides and other farm inputs, high interest rates on loans, and shouldering the traders' expenses.

After such identification, the farmers organized a group to lead the confrontation to demand the abolition of the said exploitative practices. They underwent trainings in public speaking and on facing the exploitative traders militantly. Public support for their just demands was likewise gathered through publication of their standpoint and radio interviews. At the confrontation, Dagami's most effective weapon was their united ranks and their solid and broad unity. AB

Panay martyrs given honors

A HEROES' BURIAL was held for three NPA-Panay martyrs Federico Diaz (Ka Val), Felizardo Cerilo (Ka Bong) and Remy Beraye (Ka Lito) who were killed in action while battling with the 61st IB on November 7 at Sitio Tigpaka, San Antonio, Cuartero, Capiz. Hundreds of people, many on vehicles and more on foot, accompanied the three coffins draped with red flags to the cemetery. The funeral hearses had tarpaulins declaring their heroism. Wreaths of flowers designed with the hammer and sickle abounded and the funeral procession was filled with revolutionary melodies. Several groups of farmers lined up at the roadsides and raised their clenched fists in tribute at the passing hearses.

In a message of tribute, Concha Araneta, NDF-Panay spokesperson, said that in more than an hour of battle against a platoon of enemy troops, the three, although obviously outnumbered, did not raise their hands but held on to their guns and used these against the enemy till their last breath. Three soldiers were also killed and four were wounded.

Ka Val and Ka Bong were peasant youth leaders of the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) before they joined the people's army. They were well-known and respected by peasant masses in Cuartero, Dumarao, Maayon and Pontevedra in Capiz, and in Lemery, Iloilo. They gave the best time of their lives in more than three decades of revolutionary action and service to the people. As Red commanders, they were always approached by comrades and village people for advice on their problems, and they were able to help much because of their deep knowledge of the masses and area of operation.

Ka Lito, 43, has been serving the masses for almost 25 years, first as a student leader of the League of Filipino Students in West Visayas State University, and after graduation as trade union organizer of the Kilusang Mayo Uno. He also worked as urban poor organizer in Roxas City, till he headed Bayan-Capiz. His extensive contribution to the resurgence of the democratic movement in Capiz made him a target of enemy persecution, one of the reasons that pushed him to join the NPA last month.

While condoling with their family and loved ones, the NDF also called upon comrades to turn their grief into revolutionary courage. "We cannot but feel the heaviness in hearts. But it is only fitting for any revolutionary to follow their example of dedication and wholehearted service to the people," Araneta added. AB