

## EDITORIAL

# Resist "local peace"

**T**he tyrant Rodrigo Duterte, the fascist officials of the NTF-Elcac, generals and even some presidential candidates have been prattling about "local peace" to conceal the all-out terrorist attacks against civilians and their communities. This is contained in Duterte's Executive Order 158 declaring "peace, reconciliation and unity" to deceptively counter the long-standing aspiration of the people for just and lasting peace. This is poised to be used over and over in the coming months to hide the heightening attacks against the people.

In reality, the US-Duterte regime's "local peace" is nothing but a new name and form for old tactics of counterinsurgency and pacification. Its tactics of psywar and repression targeting civilians are as old the history of Philippine counterrevolution on the distorted pretext that one must "drain the ocean the catch the fish."

The fascists declare that under "local peace," people have "surrendered in the thousands," when they are in fact victims of the relentless campaign of armed intimidation, suppression, arrests and killings. Rights have been violated

wholesale with people denied legal processes and the opportunity to defend themselves even under reactionary laws. This is also in violation of international humanitarian law as civilians are considered armed combatants and targets of armed suppression and surrender.

To the people, "local peace" promoted by the fascists and state terrorists is equivalent to the absence of peace in their communities which have been placed under siege, encircled and occupied by abusive military and police troops. The presence of fascists which subject their communities to the so-

called Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP) bring a permanent state of fear. Their every movement is surveilled, their homes and property are repeatedly subjected to search, commerce is restricted and the purchase of food items is limited. They are monitored when they work in the fields. They are prohibited from expanding their farms on the malicious claim that their produce goes to support the people's army.

Formerly quiet communities are now enveloped in fear and disquiet. Village people are forcibly made to work to construct military and police camps. Treated like slaves, children and women are made to fetch water. The youth are exposed to a rotten culture by troops of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) who engage in drinking sprees, and promote cockfighting, drug use and pornography in the

communities.

The old peace in the villages is shattered by drones that fly for hours overhead to observe their fields and mountains, and by helicopters and jet fighters that attack in the night or early morning to drop bombs and rain bullets. From their communities, vile soldiers fire their cannons to terrorize the masses and declare themselves supreme. Bombs are aimed at fields and nearby mountains endangering civilian lives and destroying their properties and livelihood.

Duterte's "local peace" is a thin camouflage to hide the psywar operations to attack and destroy the unity of the masses. This also conceals intelligence operations to locate relatives of Red fighters and Party cadres.

Local associations active in defending the rights and peasants' clamor for genuine land reform are targeted. Those identified as members are harassed and made to leave to destroy their organizations and deny them the strength to defend themselves. The military es-

tablishes fake organizations and force people to join to make it appear that the community favors land grabbing and projects of big plantations, mining companies, landlords and big capitalists.

The "local peace" signboard is used to conceal the malevolence and corruption of the fascist soldiers. Billions of pesos are squandered in corruption involving the "E-CLIP", the "Kalahi-Cidds", and the construction of roads, school buildings and other infrastructure under the "barangay development program." Indigenous peoples are offered "housing" to uproot the people from their ancestral land which is their source of wealth and livelihood. These projects are described as the "answer to the grievance" of the peasant masses, but which in fact aggravate their problem of landlessness and land grabbing.

The Filipino people must thoroughly expose and denounce the deceptive "local peace." The AFP and PNP's dirty war against the people must be tirelessly exposed

and condemned. Expose all forms of state terrorism and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. Measures and means must be devised so that the vile acts of state's fascist forces in the remote areas will be exposed to the general public through the media and social media. Rouse and guide the masses to stand firm and act to defend their rights and carry forward their struggle for land and livelihood.

The New People's Army must continue to strengthen and grow, and persevere in waging guerrilla warfare and agrarian revolution. Continue to strengthen the links and cooperation between the people's army and the masses. Mount all forms of tactical offensives to defend the masses, dismantle the enemy's network for intelligence and repression, attain revolutionary justice and punish the fascist criminals.

Draw the support of various sectors and the international community to reject the fascist "local peace," amplify the demand to end the dirty war of the AFP and PNP, including the relentless aerial bombing campaign.

The broad masses of the people must unite and demand an end to the ideology of "anti-terrorism" which the US has imposed to serve as cover for their armed intervention. As long as this remains the policy of the reactionary state, the fascists will continue to gain power and leave no room for the people's aspiration for a just and lasting peace. AB



<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Vol. LIII No. 3   February 7, 2022</p> <hr/> <p>Ang Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray, English and Spanish. Ang Bayan welcomes contributions in the form of articles and news items. Readers are encouraged to send feedback and recommendations for improving our newspaper.</p> <p> @prwc_info</p> <p> fb.com/editorsOfAB</p> <p> cppinformationbureau@gmail.com</p> </div>	<h2 style="text-align: center; text-decoration: underline;">Contents</h2> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>Editorial: Oppose "local peace"</td><td style="text-align: right;">1</td></tr> <tr><td>Justice for murdered revolutionaries</td><td style="text-align: right;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>Makabayan Coalition supports Robredo</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>NPA mounts 23 offensives</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>3 Marcos Jr.'s disqualification</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr> <tr><td>Vote buying, rigging elections</td><td style="text-align: right;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>In short</td><td style="text-align: right;">6</td></tr> <tr><td>Declining agricultural production</td><td style="text-align: right;">7</td></tr> <tr><td>AFP bombs community in Cagayan</td><td style="text-align: right;">7</td></tr> <tr><td>State raises prices of basic goods</td><td style="text-align: right;">8</td></tr> <tr><td>Protests</td><td style="text-align: right;">8</td></tr> <tr><td>Destructive open-pit mining</td><td style="text-align: right;">9</td></tr> </table>	Editorial: Oppose "local peace"	1	Justice for murdered revolutionaries	3	Makabayan Coalition supports Robredo	4	NPA mounts 23 offensives	4	3 Marcos Jr.'s disqualification	4	Vote buying, rigging elections	5	In short	6	Declining agricultural production	7	AFP bombs community in Cagayan	7	State raises prices of basic goods	8	Protests	8	Destructive open-pit mining	9
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# Justice for murdered revolutionaries

**P**edro Codaste (Ka Gonyong), 72, was convalescing when he was abducted, tortured and killed by 4th ID soldiers. Since August 2021, he has been detached from a unit of the New People's Army (NPA) and has been living in a house in Bukidnon to recover. He was abducted along with Ka Sandro between January 19 and January 21. The military made it appear that the two were killed during an encounter on January 21 in Barangay Halagay, Impasug-Ong, Bukidnon. No such encounter took place in the area on that day.

The killing of Ka Gonyong is the latest incident in the Duterte regime's long list of crimes of murdering peace consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and revolutionary leaders.

## Liquidation operation

Duterte ordered the military and police to carry out liquidation operations and "take no prisoners" against peace consultants and revolutionary leaders, starting 2020.

From 2019, at least 20 were brutally killed by armed elements of the fascist regime. Victims include Julius Giron (Ka Nars), Jorge Madlos (Ka Oris), Menandro Villaneuva (Ka Bok), Antonio Cabanatan (Ka Manlimbasog), Randall Echanis, Eugenia Magpantay (Ka Fiel) and Agaton Topacio (Ka Boy), Florenda Yap (Ka Osang). Mario Caraig (Ka Jethro), Dennis Rodinas (Ka Mayen), Leonido Nabong (Ka Charo), Randy Malayao, Alvin Luque (Ka Joaquin), Reynaldo Bocala (Ka Minoy), Fr. Rustico Tan, Kerima Tariman (Ka Ella), Sandra Reyes (Ka

Kaye) and Jhon Niebres Peñaranda (Ka Parts Bagani). Majority of these killings were perpetrated in 2020 and 2021.

All of the victims were killed in cold-blood. Many were abducted or illegally arrested and tortured before being killed. Others were shot during "raid operations" in houses where they were staying. Other victims of liquidation were captured in battle and rendered hors de combat before being executed.

Most of these crimes were brazenly carried out by uniform soldiers and policemen. To cover up the crime, state forces make it appear that the victims were killed in encounters. Military and police officers peddle lies that the victims fought back and died in battle. Some of the victims were killed by state agents. There has been no thorough investigation into any of these cases and cadavers have not been autopsied to determine the actual circumstances of the victims' death. In many cases, the AFP and PNP deliberately denied family access to

lawyers and information.

Among the 20 victims recorded by Ang Bayan, 12 were aged 60 years old and had no capacity to fight back. Others were recovering from illnesses.

## Violation of CARHRIHL, JASIG and laws of war

The killing of NDFP peace consultants violates the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) which guarantees the rights and safety of individuals involved in peace negotiations. It also violates the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) which ensures the rights and humane treatment of those not taking part in the armed conflict.

This includes protection of their "life, dignity, human rights, political beliefs and their moral and physical integrity." Likewise, "all persons deprived of their liberty for reasons related to the armed conflict shall be treated humanely," and "should be considered for safe release on humanitarian or other reasonable grounds."

Laws on the armed conflict also uphold the rights of persons hors de combat. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols strictly prohibit "torture, assaults upon personal dignity" of persons hors de combat. In combat situations, the injured or sick should be spared and given medical aid by enemy forces who take custody of them.

The US-Duterte's relentless campaign of killing revolutionaries is part of its perverted belief that it could crush the revolution by killing revolutionaries. Contrary to this aim, the spilling of blood of revolutionaries only strengthens the people's determination to advance the struggle for justice and social change.



# Makabayan Coalition declares support for Leni-Kiko tandem

The Makabayan Coalition declared its support for the Leni Robredo-Francis “Kiko” Pangilinan presidential and vice-presidential tandem in the upcoming May 2022 elections. This was after the formal endorsement by 1Sambayan on January 28 of the senatorial run of Atty. Neri Colmenares of Makabayan.

1Sambayan was formed in March 2021 as a coalition of organizations and individuals opposing Rodrigo Duterte's rule, and united with the aim of defeating the Duterte clique in the 2022 elections. The 1Sambayan supports the presidential candidacy of Vice Pres. Robredo.

The Makabayan's endorsement of the Leni-Kiko tandem is an "important development in unifying all democratic forces to defeat Marcos and Duterte," said Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes.

This symbolizes the united struggle of various groups and sectors to oppose attempts of the Marcoses and Duterte to return to Malacañang. Makabayan sees that Robredo has the highest chance to defeat the Marcos-Duterte tandem.

## Common stand on issues

In a press release on January 29, the Makabayan Coalitions stated the grounds and conditions for endorsing the Leni-Kiko tandem. It said these include, "common stand on issues, track record of candidates, and the very important struggle to oppose defeat the Marcos-Duterte tandem."

Among the common points is the plan to implement a scientific and humanitarian pandemic response, promotion of the rights of workers and fighting contractualization, and upholding the rights of farmers to land. Both parties have the same stand with regards to opposing human rights violations, and upholding the sovereignty of the country and its rights in West Philippine Sea.

It supports the plan of the tan-

dem to review the cases of elderly and sick political prisoners and consider their release based on humanitarian grounds. Both parties support the call to renew the franchise of ABS-CBN. They have the same stand on defending the environment, national minorities, Filipino farmers and fisherfolk by reviewing and revising laws and policies on mining. There are similarities on their stand to review the closure and re-accredit Lumad schools. Robredo pledged to review the structure and practices of the NTF-Elcac in the face of Makabayan's stance for its abolition.

Both parties agree to continue peace negotiations and hold accountable government officials involved in human rights violations, and allow the International Criminal Court to subject Duterte and his cohorts to trial. Robredo is pushing for electoral and political reforms to oppose abuse of power, promote people's participation, and give them a voice. AB

## NPA mounts 23 offensives in 2 months

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (BHB) mounted a series of armed actions in Bicol, Samar and Northeastern Mindanao from December 2021 until the first week of February.

On February 1, the NPA-Catanduanes (Nerissa San Juan Command) ambushed an operating police unit at Sitio Tucao, Barangay J.M. Alberto, San Miguel. Three pistols and other military equipment were seized during the operation. Team leader Police Sr. MSgt. Johnny Tiston was killed in the ambush.

Three were killed and five were wounded in an ambush by the NPA-Masbate (Jose Rapsing Command) against AFP troops operating in Barangay Recodo, Cawayan on January 28. On January 23, two soldiers were wounded in an ambush by the NPA-East Camarines Sur (Tomas Pilapil Command) against a unit of the 83rd IB in Barangay Pinamihagan, Lagonoy.

Eight other offensives were mounted by the NPA in Pilar in Sorsogon, Esperanza in Masbate, and Daraga, Camalig and Legazpi City in Albay in December 2021.

In Agusan Del Norte, a soldier was wounded in a sniping operation mounted by the NPA against a detachment of the 65th IB in P-5, Barangay Tagungabangan, Remedios T. Romualdez on February 1. Another soldier was wounded in an NPA ambush against a unit of the 29th IB on January 25 at Sitio Maranahao, Barangay Puting Bato, Cabadbaran City. On January 15, the NPA-Agusan del Sur ambushed a CAFGU element in Barangay San Isidro, Sibagat.

*Continued on page 6*

## Scheme to delay the Marcos Jr. disqualification case

THE COMMISSION ON Elections (Comelec) officially disclosed the opinion of Commissioner Commissioner Rowena Guanzon on January 30 on the disqualification case against Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. Guanzon favored the petition to prohibit the son of the former dictator to run for office as it has been proven that he was convicted by a Quezon City court for tax evasion.

According her written decision, Marcos Jr. "repeatedly violated" the law, which manifests moral turpitude which is a basis for a lifetime disqualification to run for public office. Guanzon accused her fellow commissioner Aimee Ferolino of delaying the decision to disregard Guanzon's position. Guanzon retired as Comelec commissioner on February 3 without the Comelec issuing a final decision. On February 2, democratic groups rallied in front of the Comelec office to support Guanzon and urge the agency to nullify the candidacy of Marcos Jr.

# Vote buying and rigging in a privatized election

With the 2022 elections approaching, there is a growing apprehension in various parts of the country regarding vote buying using Smartmatic vote machines. According to some candidates running for local positions, there are Smartmatic agents who charge ₱60 million in exchange for assuring victory of a candidate.

"In the previous election, agents only charged ₱7 million to secure a win," according to a candidate. "It's likely higher now as they have proved they can rig the elections. Buyers won and nothing happened to electoral protests at the local level."

It can be recalled that majority of the winners of the 2019 elections are candidates who received huge amounts of funding from Rodrigo Duterte's party and allied parties. This is the election where a "60-30-10" pattern or distribution of votes was observed across the country, where 60% went to pro-administration candidates, 30% to opposition candidates; and 10% for other candidates.

This is also the election where the practice of vote-shaving was exposed, or reducing votes for progressive groups running as party-lists. An investigation conducted by Anakpawis party-list in a cluster of precincts during the previous election revealed that votes counted by Smartmatic was way below the number of members who voted in the area. The votes for the party was systematically and calculatedly decreased to ensure that it will not meet the requisite votes to secure a seat in Congress.

"It's just like magic," according to a candidate who was interviewed by Ang Bayan. The machines are already programmed to whom votes will go to even before the polls." This belies the Commission on Elections claim that Smartmatic machines are "99% accurate."

## Unreliable system

On January 28, an official of the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordination Center (CICC) under the Department of Information and Communications Technology, dis-

closed in a hearing of a joint Congress and Senate committee that the automated vote counting system of the Smartmatic company is "compromised" and unreliable. The official revealed this after it was reported that hackers were able to penetrate Comelec servers and gain confidential voters' information. Comelec officials denied this, a claim which the CICC averred. Instead, the CICC pointed to the Smartmatic servers as the ones that were "compromised" due to a weak security system.

Up to ₱3.1 billion worth of contracts for the 2022 election were awarded by the Comelec to Smartmatic USA Corp., and its local subsidiary SMMT-TMI (Smartmatic Philippines). This includes payment for the automated election software, vote transmission services, repairing vote counting machines used in previous elections, and purchase procurement of 10,000 additional machines and spare batteries. In short, the Smartmatic will receive the votes, count and consolidate

votes in different precincts, and transmit the results to the Comelec. The whole process is done away from the public eye, and voters, observers and even the Comelec have no mechanisms to ensure that votes are counted or counted correctly.

Smartmatic has bagged four fat contracts in previous automated elections. Since 2010, the Philippines paid the company a total of ₱20.85 billion. The awarding of contracts to Smartmatic are highly anomalous and involved high Comelec officials.

Automated counting systems have long been abolished in many countries which reimplemented manual counting in precincts, while maintaining automated vote canvassing.

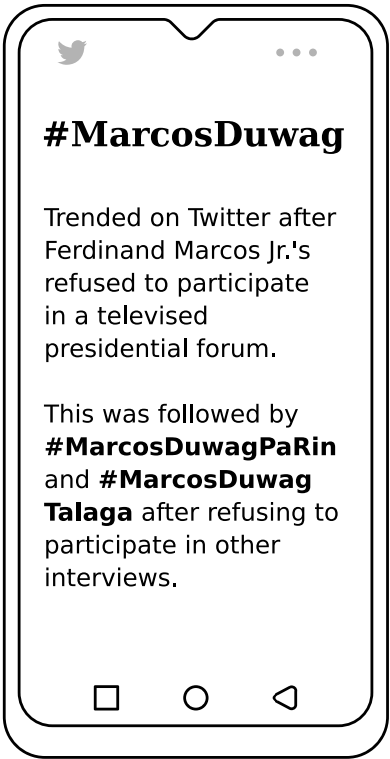
The automated voting and vote counting system worsened the private sectors' control over the elections as well as massive electoral fraud. Since a foreign company, and its engineers, control the machines and software used for voting, counting and transmission, they can easily intervene in and manipulate the elections from the local to national level. Combined with traditional vote buying which is prevalent in barrios and communities, it is certain that those with the biggest funds will be able to steal the election. **AB**

*From page 5*

In December 2021, units of the NPA-Agusan del Norte mounted five harassment operations against AFP elements operating in Barangay Putting Bato, Cabadbaran City. This was after the deployment of 29th IB and 65th IB soldiers aboard 23 vehicles in the barangay, from December 12 to December 23, 2021. A soldier was killed during one of the offensives.

In Northern Samar, three 20th IB and police elements were killed, and another was wounded during an NPA offensive in Barangay San Isidro, Las Navas on January 4. In Western Samar, two 46th IB elements were killed and another was wounded in an NPA offensive at Sitio Guinpondoan, Basey on January 12. The NPA also conducted harassment operations in Barangay Pelaon, Pinabacdao, Western Samar on January 25. Three 46th IB and CAFGU elements were killed.

Meanwhile, the people's army meted revolutionary justice against Police Staff Sergeant Jorel D. Pajac in Barangay Calingnan, Catubig, Northern Samar on January 10. Pajac was a police intelligence officer involved in the establishment of intelligence networks in the barrios of Catubig and Las Navas.



## FEBRUARY 2, 1902

Day when 140 unions coalesced under the **Union Obrera Democratica de Filipinas**, the first labor federation in the country.

The UODF initiated militant unionism and served as a center for anti-imperialist struggles of workers.

The Philippines ranked

# 5th

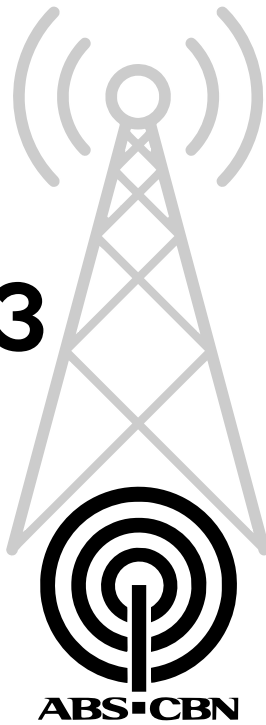
among countries having experienced the worst natural disasters in more than 100 years.



Source: Uswitch

## Channel 2, 16, 23 and 43

former **ABS-CBN channel frequencies** which were given to **Manny Villar, Antonio Cabangon Chua and Apollo Quibolloy**, known cronies and supporters of **Rodrigo Duterte**.



# 1,526

**individuals or more than 4 per day fell victim to extrajudicial killings and assassinations in the Philippines in 2021.**

24 victims were killed during the first two weeks of January 2022.



Source: Institute for Nationalist Studies

## Lorenzana, Esperon, Año, Parlade, Sinas

**demand to be sanctioned by 24 US lawmakers for their record of human rights violations.**

they will not be allowed entry into the US. Their assets can also be blocked, and be banned from conducting financial transactions in the US.

## “Bloody Sunday”

**massacre of 13 Irish civilians**

gunned down by British soldiers on January 30, 1972 during a peaceful rally at Derry, North Ireland.

# How can jobs increase if production is declining?

Job growth is one of the fantasies being conjured by Rodrigo Duterte's economic officials to hide the destruction brought about by the lockdowns imposed without stimulus aid and the regime's failed response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Duterte regime boasts of an additional 1.5 million jobs in the agricultural sector in 2021 despite the sector plunging by 1.7%, even lower than 2020's contraction of 1.2%. In fact, this year's agricultural growth is lowest in the past two decades.

According to Ibon Foundation's research, agricultural production declined by 0.5% in the 2019-2021 period. But during the same period, the sector's employment rate rose by 15.1%. If this were true, this means the average output of each farmer and farm worker declined by 13.5% during this period.

In 2021 alone, all agricultural subsectors except crops declined. The biggest contraction is in live-stock (17% in 2021 compared to

7.4% in 2020). Poultry and fishing have yet to rebound.

According to peasant organizations, agriculture contracted due to restrictions imposed in the name of the pandemic, declining demand due to wage and income loss, and unrestricted importation which has pushed down farmgate prices. In September 2021, agriculture lost almost a million jobs. It is questionable that the lost jobs were recovered, and moreover, that employment even increased during the last quarter despite typhoon Odette's destruction in December 2021. Damage to agriculture due to the typhoon is estimated at ₱11.7 billion.

Increased employment in the wholesale and retail sector is also



doubtful. According to state data, 1.4 million jobs were created although the sector grew by a mere 4.3%. This means that output of each worker declined, and as such, also their wages.

In the manufacturing sector, the claimed 3.4 million jobs is still 266,000 lower than prepandemic levels. Current employment in the transportation and storage, accommodation and food service sectors is still lower compared to 2019.

"The number of unemployed persons is still higher by 3.2 million on November 2021 compared to January 2020 before the pandemic hit," according to Ibon. In addition, jobs generated in the last two years have been informal and low paying and low income.

Employment figures were released in relation to the Philippine gross domestic product which rose to 5.6% in 2021, up from -9.6% in 2020. In reality, this is still far below the claimed average of 6.4% GDP growth in the last 10 years before the pandemic.

"The economy is still smaller by 4.5% in 2021 compared to 2019," according to Ibon. This is a direct result of the restrictive lockdowns that were not accompanied by financial aid which would have increased households' purchasing power of their basic needs and would have mitigated the crisis," according to the group. There was also no subsidy for small and medium enterprises which would have helped them survive.

The rapid growth at the end of 2021 will be temporary, according to the group. "It will probably be reversed by the first quarter of 2022."

## Military bombs community in Cagayan

A bombing incident near a civilian community in Cagayan, as well as cases of illegal arrests and harassment against farmers and other civilians are among Ang Bayan's reports in the past two weeks.

The AFP dropped 30 bombs in four rounds from 3 a.m. on January 29 in Barangay Sta. Clara, Gonzaga, Cagayan, even though there was no NPA unit in the area. Several hours of strafing followed. As a result, 66 families, majority of whom are Agta families, were forced to evacuate.

In Sorsogon, the 31st IB and police arrested Ruben Estremadura in Barangay Sta. Barbara, Bulusan on January 12. State forces also arrested Renaldo Gaan on January 28 in P4, Barangay Mahaba, Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte. Both were accused of being members of the people's army.

In Quezon, Gabriela-Southern Tagalog disclosed on January 21 information about "Belle," a 15-year old girl raped by a soldier. Belle was abducted by soldiers of the 59th IB and was detained from June 27 to August 13, 2020. She was forced to admit that her mother, who is an activist fighting for the return of the coco levy funds to farmers, is a member of the NPA. The family of the victim decided to report the case to Gabriela due to relentless attacks by the AFP against them.

On January 28, armed goons of Gregorio Araneta III, Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s brother-in-law, fired at members of peasant organizations conducting a fact-finding mission on the illegal demolition in Lupang Teresa, Barangay San Roque, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. The goons also seized the belongings and relief goods brought by the fact-finding team. Four houses and farmlands were demolished in the area on January 26.

AB



# State raises prices of commodities

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) effectively raised the prices of basic goods after approving on January 27 proposals to implement higher suggested retail price (SRP) of 73 basic and essential commodities.

Compared to the last SRP list issued by the DTI on August 29, 2021, the prices of commodities are expected to increase by 1-10%, including canned sardines and meat products, milk, bread, noodles, salt, toilet and laundry soap, bottled water, candles and batteries.

In sum, the price of canned sardines increased by up to ₱1.25; ₱2.25 for milk products; ₱3.5 for a pack of bread; ₱0.25 for instant noodles; ₱1.45 for salt; ₱2.25 for laundry soap; ₱4 for bottled water; ₱15 for a pack of candles; ₱1.5 for meat loaf; ₱3 for corned beef; ₱1.5 for beef loaf; ₱1.25 for toilet soap; and ₱17.25 for batteries.

The impact of the price increases will primarily be felt by the 18.6 million poorest Filipino families or equivalent to 81.8 million individuals who earn meagre incomes. These include 2.9 million families earning ₱11,000 and below monthly. This will also be shouldered by 8.4 million families earning ₱11,000-₱22,000, and 7.6 million families earning ₱22,000-₱44,000 monthly. Approximately ₱10,071 is

spent by families for food and other basic expenses every month. Their income is insufficient to meet the most basic needs of a family of five.

The regime announced the price increase after bragging that inflation rate has been steadily decreasing in recent months. However, this decrease is only caused by a drop in demand due to unemployment, dropping income, depletion of savings, and lower consumption of families. In general, Filipino household consumption spending has decreased by 5% during the last quarter of 2021, compared to the third quarter.

With incessant price increases, it is expected that families with the lowest incomes will find it more difficult to meet nutrition standards. According to a research by Foodlink Advocacy Cooperative, a family of five needs at least ₱14,368 per month to eat nutritious foods, based on standards of Pinggang Pinoy. Pinggang Pinoy is a food guide set by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute to meet the body's energy and nutrient needs of Filipinos. **AB**



## Protest against Kaliwa Dam.

National minorities and environmental groups affected by the Kaliwa Dam project protested in front of the office of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System in Quezon City on January 31. They condemned the railroading of the said project despite widespread opposition by residents. They denounced the bogus consultation held on January 25 where indigenous leaders were deceived by the company to sign a memorandum of agreement for the project.

## Vendors mount 2-day strike.

Vendors in the Carbon Market in Cebu City mounted a 2-day strike on January 24 and 25 to demand that the local government to stop the privatization of the market.

## Commemoration of the 35th anniversary of Mendiola Massacre.

Progressive groups mounted protests last January 22 in Cavite, Iloilo City and Bacolod City to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Mendiola Massacre, where protesting farmers were gunned down by state forces. In Cavite, rallyists traveled to Patungan, Maragondon.

## Commemoration of Guinyangan Massacre.

Groups from Southern Tagalog rallied in front of the office of the Commission on Human Rights in Quezon City on February 2 to commemorate the attack of state forces against 6,000 rallyists in Guinyangan, Quezon on February 1, 1981. Two were killed and more than 100 were wounded in this incident.



# Open-pit mining brings destruction

The Mapagba River and the coastal areas of Barangay Maputi, Banaybanay, Davao Oriental turned orange last January 14 after chemicals and waste overflowed from a mine dam. People in the area rely on the river and sea as their source of livelihood, and before the incident, bathed and washed their clothes along the river. In media reports, they expressed fears of getting sick, and lamented that the destruction of the environment will end their fishing.

A few kilometers upstream is the Riverbend Consolidated Mining Corporation that is responsible for the incident. This Chinese company operates a 6,363-hectare open-pit nickel mining. It was granted a concession to operate in 2016 in Barangay Maputi and adjacent barangays.

Earlier, there were also reports of rivers in Mt. Bulanjao in Palawan poisoned by chemicals which overflowed from the Rio Tuba mine. Rio Tuba, now owned by Nickel Asia, which also operates nickel mines in Taganito, Surigao del Norte. In both areas, rivers and seas were also destroyed.

The gross environmental destruction is a slap on the face of the Duterte regime's officials especially since they lifted prohibitions against open-pit mining last December 23, 2021 despite opposition by environmentalists. As a result, fears abound that such mining methods banned in 2017 will again bring disasters.

## Digging and exporting

After enactment of the Mining Act of 1995, open-pit mines in the country have proliferated. Such operations have turned former lush and rich forests into hectares upon hectares of wasteland. Peasant and minority people's communities are driven away. Mining companies also abandon their poisonous chemicals

used for initial purification of minerals before exporting.

The reactionary government reports that in December 2020 alone, more than 729,000 hectares were covered by different types of mining contracts. The biggest mining area is in Caraga region which covers 140,000 hectares. This does not yet cover the millions of hectares that will be covered by mining applications by giant companies.

The Banaybanay incident is the most recent in the history of grave disasters brought by open-pit mining. This includes the tragedy in Itogon, Benguet in August 2012 when 20 million metric tons of mine tailings from the Philex Mining dam overflowed into the rivers.

In October 2005, stored poisonous chemicals and heavy metals leaked from the mine tailings dam of the Australian Lafayette Mining Limited to the river and sea in Rapu-Rapu, Albay. This resulted in fish kills and destruction of crops, and the loss of livelihood in several barangays in Albay and Sorsogon.

One of the worst disasters was in March 1996 in Boac and Mogpog, Marinduque. More than 1.6 million cubic meters of mine tailings from the Marcopper Mines leaked into the rivers and coasts. This killed the Boac River, crops and domesticated animals. A number of residents died,



while several thousands from 20 barangays were forced to flee. It was discovered that 16 years prior to the incident, Marcopper had been dumping poisonous waste amounting to 200 million tons to the seas.

## Illusion of "responsible mining"

Open-pit mines typically result in the poisoning of bodies of water. This is because foreign companies are interested only in pocketing maximum profit.

The call for "responsible mining" is a sham. This is being promoted by the imperialists only to favor foreign capitalists as against local investors.

For several decades, the Philippine economy has been stunted because almost 100% of the country's mineral resources are taken out of the country. Among the leading capitalist markets are China, Japan, Canada and Australia. The country's mineral resources are bought at dirt cheap prices by companies producing steel and other commodities from which they earn huge amounts when sold back to the Philippines.

Thus, the most fundamental evil of mining in the country is how it is foreign-controlled and serves the interests of big foreign capitalists, and not local industrial production. **AB**