

LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL

Publication of the International Information Office of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines

July - August 2009

Miserable state of the nation

By Bagani Dong-ilay

On 27 July 2009, while Philippine president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was delivering her traditional state of the nation address before the joint session of Congress, thousands of protesters outside were declaring to the world the true state of the nation.

In their own version of the state of the nation address (SONA), the protesters castigated Arroyo for aggravating the country's underdevelopment, her subservience to foreign vested interests, her shameless corruption, her thirst for power, her bloody human rights record and her undisguised puppetry to US imperialism.

Speaker after speaker, the protesters cited the ever rising growth of unemployment and worsening poverty in the country during the 9 years of Gloria Arroyo's presidency. In January 2001, unemployment was 8.34 million. In April 2009, it had nearly doubled to 15.6 million. Today, minimum wage for workers is around US\$ 7 per day. But the cost of living is US\$ 18 per day, which results in a shortfall of US\$ 11. Also in 2001, the shortfall between wages and cost of living was only US\$ 6.

When Arroyo came to power in 2001 after the ouster of Joseph Estrada, the country's foreign debt stood at US\$ 52.2 billion. In 2008, it had grown to US\$ 54.6 billion. According to statistics, Arroyo has borrowed three times more than the three previous presidents before her combined.

Every year, close to half of the government's annual national budget goes to paying its external debt. Another 30 percent of the public funds goes to the pockets of government officials, from the president down to the town officials. No wonder that public infrastructure is in great disrepair, public hospitals are run-down, salaries of teachers and other government employees do not come on time, and so on.

According to the United Nations Development Index, which ranks

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"Gloria (Arroyo) feasts while the people go hungry!" photo from Arkibong Bayan.

US increases intervention, joins combat operations in the Philippines

By Ed Ladera

US troops in Mindanao, southern Philippines, have been joining military forces of the Manila government in combat operations against local armed groups. Former Philippine Navy Lieutenant Senior Grade, Ms. Nancy Gadian made the revelation at a press conference at the University of the Philippines in Metro Manila on 25 August 2009, confirming the increased military intervention of the US government in the country.

Ms. Gadian was the liaison officer for the US-Philippine Joint War Exercises called Balikatan [Shoulder to Shoulder]. She was also the planning officer for the Balikatan 2002 conducted in former US air base, Clark Field in Pampanga, in northern Philippines, and of the Balikatan 2002-1 held in Mindanao island in the south. She also served as the media liaison officer for the Manila government for the same year.

Ms. Gadian had earlier exposed the misuse of the P46 million fund for the joint military exercises in 2007. Instead of submitting to the threats and demands of her military superiors, she resigned from the Philippine Navy and exposed the abuses of her superiors.

In a sworn statement, she declared that 500 US soldiers had been "embedded" with the Philippine troops and were engaged in actual combat operations in Mindanao. She revealed that the US forces were part of the Special Operations Command which were "highly capable and technically skilled individuals". Moreover, she stated that the "terms of reference" for the 2002-1 Balikatan detailed the participation of US forces on the "actual terrain". She

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countries by level of human development, the Philippines ranks 102 out of 179 countries, lower than such countries as Maldives and Samoa.

Arroyo gets richer as the country gets poorer

A recent report by the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) on the phenomenal increase in Gloria Arroyo's wealth has caused a big stir among the public. In her eight years in office, Arroyo's declared net worth more than doubled from P66.8 million in 2001 to P143.54 million in 2008. The increase of P76.74 million represents a growth rate of 114 percent. The president of the Republic of the Philippines is supposed to relinquish all private investments upon assuming office and only earns the equivalent of about US\$1,400 per month.

Compared to the three presidents before her, Arroyo's wealth grew faster than all the three presidents combined. The late former

President Corazon Aquino's declared net worth grew by 4.8 percent from 1989 to 1992. Fidel Ramos's declared net worth rose by 34.2 percent from 1992 to 1998, and Joseph Estrada's by 7.2 percent from 1998 to 1999.

Another scandal broke out soon after Arroyo's trip to the US for a much sought-after photo session with President Barack Obama on 30 July. A New York newspaper reported on the spending spree of the Arroyo entourage, composed of senators, congressmen, cabinet and other government officials, and their families. The whole country was scandalized when they heard that Arroyo's entourage spent 1 million pesos for a dinner at Le Cirque, a posh New York restaurant, while millions of Filipinos were starving, some of them condemned to making do with two meals a day. Such callousness is unforgivable, in a country where an 11-year old girl had committed suicide due to poverty.

Bloody human rights record

Under Gloria Arroyo, government security forces have been responsible for at least

1,013 extrajudicial killings, 202 enforced disappearances and 1,036 cases of torture. There are also currently 223 political prisoners languishing in jail on trumped up charges.

The victims of these human rights violations are labor leaders, peasant leaders, journalists, lawyers and judges, teachers, religious leaders, youth and students, and members of mass organizations accused by the government of being "communist fronts". It springs from the total-war policy of the Arroyo government against the revolutionary movement with the specific aim of destroying what it presumes as the civilian infrastructure of the armed revolutionary movement.

One of the government's reactionary ideologues, the clerico-fascist Fr. Romeo Intengan, even goes to the extent of propagating the idea of doing away with the distinction between the "non-armed and armed combatants of the communist movement", thus providing the ideological justification for the torture, killing and enforced disappearance of unarmed activists by government security forces.

"Enough of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo!" Thousands of protesters hit the streets in major parts of the country to proclaim the real state of the nation. photo from Arkibong Bayan.

SONA, page 3, col 1 ...



The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines. Its goal is to build a society that enjoys national sovereignty, genuine democracy, social justice, progress and peace. It seeks to unite with all forces willing to achieve these goals.

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Liberation International is a publication of the NDFP International Information Office

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from Ang Bayan

Ka Mian and Ka Chad were busy working on their computers inside their office in a New People's Army (NPA) encampment in a mountainous area in Southern Mindanao. They were preparing their annual reports on their unit's medical work. Ka Mian is the medical officer of an NPA company while Ka Chad is her assistant. All in all, there were 26 medics assembled in the camp.

They reported servicing 3,730 patients from July 2007 to October 2008, including Red fighters and thousands of residents of villages in their areas of operation. They were able to provide medical services to the masses by conducting mass clinics. During times when conditions permitted, they were able to give individual consultations. Among the usual ailments they treated were influenza, dysentery, sinusitis, tonsillitis, malaria, amoebiasis, hyperacidity, pneumonia, urinary tract infections and ulcers. They were also able to perform minor surgery such as circumcision and removal of cysts and ingrown toenails.

The medical staff systematically took care of their fellow Red fighters' health. They appointed a "medic of the day" (MD) who made sure that rules on sanitation were being followed in every hut and in the kitchen and latrines. For instance, the MD ensured that the Red fighters' lunch boxes were sterilized in the kitchen, especially if there was an epidemic. He or she also made sure that every team or squad had dug up a hole for proper garbage disposal. It is the MD who also monitored the sick and reported on their condition to the central command.

There was a medic assigned to every team or squad. It was these medics who were

NPA medical work in Southern Mindanao a resounding success



A medical officer of the New People's Army prepares materials for the camp's clinic. Medics are trained to administer first-aid, medical treatment, dental care and minor surgery. photo from www.philippinerevolution.net

mainly responsible for monitoring patients. They made sure that the latter took their prescribed medications and regularly monitored the patients' blood pressure and other vital signs.

Individuals who entered the camp and others who requested specific medical assistance were also given proper medical attention. This often happens especially after villagers learn that there is an NPA unit encamped near their barrio. Villagers would seek out the Red fighters just for this purpose.

Based on the experience of comrades in the Southern Mindanao Region, medical work contributes immensely to organizing work, especially in recovery areas.

Through the Red fighters' medical work, it becomes even clearer to the masses that it is the NPA that is their real army. Ka Chad, on the other hand, had much to say about the unethical behavior of soldiers of the mercenary Armed Forces of the Philippines, who conduct so-called civic action operations in a village in Compostela Valley in 2008.

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... SONA, page 2, col 3

Undisguised puppetry to US imperialism

The protesters during the 27 July SONA also chided Arroyo for slavishly currying favor to US imperialism and foreign multinationals at the expense of the people. A broad front has developed to oppose her plan to mangle the Philippine constitution through a Constituent Assembly (ConAss) composed of Arroyo boot-lickers in Congress, in order to give foreign monopoly capitalists equal rights with Filipino citizens to own land and exploit the country's natural resources.

Through the ConAss, Arroyo also plans to remove the provision in the current

Philippine Constitution banning the basing of US and other foreign troops in the country.

And to cement her commitment to the US-led "global war on terror", she intends to remove the civil rights provisions in the current constitution, which were the fruits of the anti-fascist struggle against the US-Marcos dictatorship.

Thirst for power and fear of prosecution

The Philippine Republic's Constitution doesn't allow a second term for the President. Arroyo must step down on 30 June 2010, because she is ineligible to run for another term as president. But having had a taste of power, she plans to have the

ConAss amend the constitution to shift from the presidential to the parliamentary system, in order to allow her to run in parliament and become prime minister.

According to sources, Arroyo plans to declare Martial Law, eliminate the opposition and prolong her stay in power ala Marcos. "Mysterious" bombings carried out by special government army units in Manila and some cities in southern Philippines were made to "test the waters" for the eventual imposition of Martial Law.

Apart from her apparent greed and unquenchable thirst for power, Arroyo has another strong motive to stay in power: a great fear of being prosecuted after she leaves office, for the many corruption scandals and human rights violations. ■

... NPA medics, page 3, col 3

“We needed to conduct a mass clinic in our guerrilla front in June 2008. The enemy, along with local barangay officials and health workers had earlier provided medical services in May. The villagers had so many complaints because the patients who were supposed to have been treated by the enemy suffered infections instead. Those who were circumcised complained of swelling in their penis and those who had tooth extractions suffered inflamed gums.

They were given some syrup to take. We looked at the labels. “Oh my, shame on the enemy for giving out expired medicines!”

Said one villager, “If you had come earlier, we would have asked you to perform the operations instead.”

The enemy wasn’t able to perform all the needed tooth extractions and circumcisions, so the NPA medics attended to these cases. After a few days, the comrades asked how the patients were doing.

None of those who had circumcisions or had their teeth extracted was suffering from infection, and their wounds were all healing nicely.

“The NPA is unlike any other,” said the villagers. “It is without equal.” ■

... Lalgargh, page 7, col 1

of Orissa, against large-scale mining and special economic zones. These so-called development projects have uprooted hundreds of thousands of peasant families from their lands and their livelihood.

Women in the struggle

From the very start, women have been in the forefront of the struggle. They are performing various tasks in the struggle. They are involved in fighting, in defending the villages from attacks by the security forces and armed goons of the CPM, in setting up health programs, and so on.

On 25 July, CPM security forces on the hunt for Maoist guerrillas entered the villages of Pathardanga, Amlia and Birkunri, and picked up peasants who were working in the fields during the harvesting season. Angry womenfolk from different villages assembled and marched towards the Lalgargh police station to set the peasants free. The police were forced to release the peasants just before the big procession reached the police station.

In every village, women are conducting meetings and making plans of how to resist

... Peace talks, page 8, col 3

Regarding the NDFP proposal to meet in Oslo this September, Mr. Agcaoili stated: “The vicious and arrogant response of the GRP has been to inform the NDFP that there can be no meeting of the negotiating panels to focus on compliance with the JASIG, unless the NDFP agrees first of all to set aside the negotiation of social, economic and political reforms and give highest priority to the discussion of ‘disarmament, demobilization and re-integration’ through the premature formation of a working group on the end of hostilities and disposition of forces (EHDF).”

He added, “The GRP has the temerity to suggest that there can be no compliance

with JASIG of any kind and no formal talks in the peace negotiations unless the NDFP makes a commitment first of all to form the working group on EHDF as the key to the destruction and pacification of the armed revolutionary movement of the people.”

Agcaoili concluded: “The GRP is showing that it has no interest in peace negotiations as a way of addressing the roots of the civil war through agreements on social, economic and political reforms. It continues to violate the JASIG and seeks to impose the framework of disarmament, demobilization and re-integration on the NDFP. It is challenging the revolutionary forces of the Filipino people to intensify their armed revolution for national liberation and democracy.” ■

Until now, the Arroyo government has failed to release any of the detained NDFP consultants and to quash charges against those with warrants of arrest.

-- Luis G. Jalandoni

daily army operations and raids in the villages. Men and women fight side-by-side. In every village committee, there is an equal number of men and women members.

Involvement of US Intelligence and the Indian Army in “high-tech” war

On 27 June, an article in the Bengali daily Sanbad Pratidin titled “Chemical Dyes and Foreign Technology Used to Locate Maoists” proves that US intelligence agencies and the Indian Space Research Centre (ISRO), along with the Indian army, are involved in “Operation Lalgargh”.

The article says that in order to trace Maoist guerrillas who are known to mix with villagers, the Indian air force has dropped special chemical dyes into forest areas which are suspected Maoist strongholds. When the dye falls on the body of Maoist guerrillas, it is supposed to stick on for one year. If the guerrillas are driven out of the forest, they would not be able to take shelter in the villages because they can be easily identified.

The ISRO and US intelligence units are reportedly using satellites to pinpoint forest areas where Maoist guerrillas are active. For example, the ISRO and US intelligence were reportedly able to track the movement of a big formation of Maoist guerrillas in Kadashol and of armed squads in the Ramgarh-Narcha region. The information was then relayed to the troops in the field

to assist them in their conduct of military operations in these areas.

Security forces demoralized

There is growing demoralization and discontent among the West Bengal security forces engaged in “counter-insurgency operations”. They face the hostility of the masses in the villages. And there is resentment among the security forces themselves because of government failure to provide them with basic amenities such as food, toilets and a place to sleep in while in the field.

On 23 June, a unit deployed in Lalgargh was relieved after it threatened to rebel after four days of constant duty. In another area, troops complained of faulty planning. They felt that the plan was done in haste, without having a back-up of doctors and paramedics, while they were operating in hostile terrain, facing the undisguised enmity of the masses in the villages.

The hit-and-run tactics employed by the Maoist guerrillas are taking a heavy toll on the nerves of the reactionary troops as they do not know when or where the guerrillas will strike next.

Policemen manning the Lalgargh police station are afraid to venture out of the station for fear of being ambushed or killed by land mines. Many of them have asked to be transferred elsewhere. ■

By Pingkian

Filipino-American activist hits back vs abductors, torturers

Melissa Roxas is a citizen of the United States of America. Though born in the Philippines, she grew up in the US and became a naturalized American citizen. Like many other Filipino-Americans struggling with their dual identities and the racism of American society, Melissa sought answers in the progressive movement. She became a member of the US chapter of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN, New Patriotic Movement) and began immersing herself in issues about US domination of the Philippines and the raging grassroots movement for its people's national and social liberation.

She eventually returned to the Philippines not only to involve herself on those issues, but also to practice her profession as a social researcher and community health worker among the country's poor and oppressed.

On 19 May, while performing her duties in La Paz town in Tarlac province, northern Philippines, fifteen men armed with high-powered rifles abducted her and two other Filipino companions. She was brought to a place believed to be an army barracks and was subjected to intense interrogation and physical and psychological torture for the next five days. She was eventually released to her relatives in Quezon City on 25 May, on condition that she and her companions would not talk about their abduction and torture.

Traumatized by the ordeal, Melissa flew back to the US. But before she did, she filed a case of abduction and torture against John Does she believes to be soldiers, and included in her suit – under the principle of command responsibility – de facto President Gloria Arroyo, and several of her top military generals.

She bravely returned to the Philippines on 21 July to pursue her case. She testified about her abduction and torture before the Philippine Congress and the government's human rights commission.

She also filed for a writ of amparo at the Court of Appeals to seek judicial protection. Early on, Arroyo's political and military stooges tried to debunk Melissa's testimony by claiming it was "staged-managed" to embarrass Gloria Arroyo, who was scheduled to visit the US at that time.

The Court of Appeals upheld Melissa's testimony that she was indeed abducted and tortured, saying that she did not just make up the story or had "stage-managed" her

abduction and torture, as claimed by Arroyo government officials.

But it held back judgment against Gloria Arroyo, because it said that she is immune from suit as president. The court also got the military officials off the hook by saying that there is not enough proof to support the allegations of abduction and torture, and that Melissa only "believed" that Arroyo soldiers were responsible for her horrible experience.

In one interview, Melissa said that she is aware the issue (of her abduction and torture) goes beyond what was done to her. Keeping silent, she said, "is like silencing forever all the voices that have already been silenced." ■

Melissa Roxas testified on 29 July in Philippine parliament, "just like the story of many other Filipinos who were abducted and tortured by the military."
photo courtesy of Vincent Borneo.



... US intervention, page 1, col 3

explained, "When we say actual terrain, it's in the engagement area."

US Military Structures

Ms. Gadian further declared that she had seen US military structures within Philippine military camps.

US forces had established the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines in Camp Navarro. She also exposed the presence of a US military "forward unit" of 500 men in Edwin Andrews Air Force Base in Sta. Maria, Zamboanga City, also in Mindanao.

"In military parlance, a 'forward unit' is an advanced command unit that is installed to serve as the first line of defense against the enemy."

In Camp Malagutay, in Zamboanga City, Ms. Gadian revealed that US troops maintain structures which they use as offices. Similar structures have been set up in other camps like the Philippine Naval station in Batu-bato, Panglima Sugala, Tawi-tawi, complete with an advanced satellite communications equipment, manned by seven US navy personnel 365 days a year. The US also has military structures in Camp General Bautista of the Task Force Comet in Busbus, Jolo, Sulu.

Philippine military officials are not allowed to enter these US military establishments. They may enter only "by invitation", according to her.

The exposé has sparked renewed demands for the abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement between the governments of the US and the Republic of the Philippines.

CPP condemns US military presence and intervention

In a public statement released on 22 August, the Communist Party of the Philippines charged Gloria Arroyo with treason "for conspiring with the US to continue and make even more permanent US military presence in the Philippines – in violation of Philippine sovereignty and the puppet government's own constitution."

In the 30 July meeting between Gloria Arroyo and US President Barack Obama, he appointed the Arroyo government to serve as the "point man" for promoting and coordinating US relations in the region.

The CPP further pointed out that in the past years, US troops have participated in counterrevolutionary military operations in Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Panay, Southern Mindanao against the NPA and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The CPP declared: "The permanent presence and actual participation of US troops in combat operations in the Philippines constitute foreign military intervention and trampling on Philippine sovereignty. The patriotic and freedom-loving Filipino people will never cease in their fight to end foreign intervention and domination in the country." ■

Condolences on the death of Comrade Soedirdjo Harsono

By Luis G. Jalandoni
NDFP Chief International Representative

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is deeply saddened by the death of Indonesian comrade Soedirdjo Harsono. We convey our heartfelt condolences to his comrade wife, Darmini Diran H., his family, numerous comrades and friends. Comrade Harsono died on 21 August 2009 after a lingering illness at the age of 88. His burial was held on 27 August 2009, attended by hundreds of comrades and friends from Indonesia, The Netherlands, the Philippines, Germany and other countries.

Comrade Harsono was an exemplary Indonesian comrade, a proletarian revolutionary and internationalist. He was active as a trade union leader in Indonesia and was assigned in 1964 as Labor Attaché of the Sukarno government to the Republic of Cuba. In the 1970s he lived and worked in The Netherlands, participating regularly in internationalist activities in support of the Indonesian, Filipino, Cuban, Palestinian, Iranian peoples, and other oppressed and struggling peoples.

The NDFP has fond memories of Comrades Harsono and Darmini, actively participating in solidarity activities for the Filipino people, holding up high the banners of the



Filipino struggle, pasting solidarity posters, attending forums, and, despite their meagre income, regularly contributing to the revolutionary struggle for so many years.

Comrades Harsono and Darmini were also regular participants in international conferences, marches and rallies, forums and other solidarity activities which condemned imperialism and declared militant support for the revolutionary, anti-imperialist and progressive struggles of the peoples of the world.

The NDFP cherishes the memory of Comrade Harsono. He is a shining example of revolutionary dedication and selfless

On 2 September, Palestinian economy minister Basem Khoury met with Israel deputy prime minister and regional development minister Silvan Shalom. According to Shalom's spokesperson, the goal of the meeting was to try and remove bureaucratic red tape – that would help the economy in the West Bank. The two ministers agreed to meet regularly every four to six weeks.

The PFLP also denounced the meeting, saying that “such meetings, marketed under the banner of ‘resumption of negotiations’ or ‘economic peace’ serve only the interest of the occupying state and its plans on the ground.”

The PFLP statement said that “these initiatives pose a qualitatively new threat to the national struggle and the achievements and rights of the Palestinian people, threatening to consume decades of sacrifices and achievements of the people and thousands of martyrs, wounded and prisoners, and cause great disruption, loss and even liquidation of our national cause.” ■

service to the Indonesian people, the Filipino people and other struggling peoples. He was a model of humility and simplicity. He had a very gentle and acceptable method of conveying comradely criticism. In whatever way possible, he would help in solidarity work.

He and Comrade Darmini would work tirelessly preparing food at international conferences and they could also be representatives of the revolutionary organization.

Whatever task Comrade Harsono carried out, he exuded, in his own quiet manner, the true spirit of proletarian internationalism.

Comrade Harsono will be an abiding source of inspiration for the Filipino people, the Indonesian people and other struggling peoples!

Long live the noble and inspiring memory of Comrade Soedirdjo Harsono!

... Reject Israel, page 7, col 3

The PFLP spokesperson asserted, “The European Union should be taking up the question of sanctions and isolation of Israel, not addressing the concerns of the occupier.”

Meanwhile, Palestinian National Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh objected to a recent meeting between economic officials of Palestine and Israel, saying that it could be the prelude to a new but premature round of peace negotiations.

Haniyeh, speaking to families of prisoners and those killed in actions against Israel, said he considered such meetings as giving legal weight and justification to Israeli policies of occupation, segregation, and settlement constructions. Haniyeh wondered out loud how the Palestinian Authority could say it would not negotiate with Israel until it puts a stop to settlements construction, while their minister of economy met with an Israeli minister.



Lalgarh adivasis continue resistance vs oppression, brutal repression

By Bagani Dong-ilay

In November 2008, the tribal people (or adivasis) of the Lalgarh-Jangalmahal area in West Bengal, India, rose up in revolt against decades of oppression and abuse by the Indian ruling classes and their reactionary government, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the state of West Bengal.

The tribal people have suffered from the exploitation and oppression of the Indian ruling classes since colonial times. They have been repeatedly dispossessed of their lands and their livelihood. And now they are being brutally displaced to give way to a Special Economic Zone for big multinational corporations by the police and armed thugs of the ruling party, known by its initials CPM.

The CPM has held state political power in West Bengal for decades. It has been criticized of late for advancing foreign and local monopoly capitalist interests to the detriment of the basic rights of poor workers, peasants and the adivasis.

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) has been active in the area for over a decade. And in recent years, hundreds of adivasis in the Lalgarh-Jangalmahal area have been arrested, jailed and murdered on suspicion of having ties with the Maoists. This sparked the uprising in late 2008.

To quash the people's resistance, the West Bengal government launched "Operation Lalgarh", deploying thousands of police and paramilitary forces. The purported aim of the operation is to destroy the "Maoist insurgency". The area has been turned into a war zone with schools being closed while troops use school buildings as barracks. The troops use terror tactics and commit atrocities, but the people are not cowed to submission and continue their resistance.

People's committees

The adivasis in Lalgarh have a long and proud tradition of fighting against oppression. But the decade-long political work of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) among the adivasis has brought the people's resistance to a higher level. The CPI (Maoist) has been helping the adivasis set up people's committees which have empowered the people and strengthened their unity and fighting capacity.

People's committees have been set up in more than 1,000 villages in the Lalgarh-Jangalmahal area. Aside from serving to defend the village communities from attacks by the police and the armed thugs of the revisionist CPM, the people's committees carry out development projects that benefit the people. They distribute land abandoned by landlords afraid of the rising flames of people's war, set up health centers and build schools.

The resistance by the adivasis in Lalgarh-Jangalmahal is similar to the struggles in Singur and Nandigram in West Bengal and in Kalinganagar, Kashipur, Jagatsinghpura, Niyamgarh and other regions in the state

Lalgarh, page 4, col 1 ...



13 demands of the People's Committee Against Police Oppression, demanding among others that government officials apologize to the people and compensate victims of police brutality. photo from Revolution in South Asia.

Reject Israeli attempts to suppress press freedom – PFLP

By Roselle Valerio

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) recently called on Europeans to reject attempts to suppress freedom of expression and freedom of the press, in the wake of Israel's demand for the Swedish government to condemn a journalist and a newspaper for publishing reports of organ theft allegedly perpetrated by Israeli occupation forces.

On 17 August, major Swedish tabloid Aftonbladet published an article by Donald Bostrom implying that the Israel Defense Force, which is illegally occupying Palestinian territories, are stealing internal organs from dead Palestinians. Without refuting the report, officials of Israel charged anti-Semitism and demanded that the government of Sweden condemn the newspaper article.

Echoing Israel, Italy's foreign minister Franco Frattini on 30 August demanded that the European Union condemn the article, claiming that, "there are limits to freedom of the press," and that "the Aftonbladet article was a flagrant example of Anti-Semitism."

A spokesperson for the PFLP stressed that, "rather than refute the article, the Zionist regime has attempted to muddy the waters and create a chilling precedent that could silence journalists and activists for Palestinian human rights in Sweden and throughout Europe." The PFLP spokesperson demanded that "the Zionist movement cease its seemingly endless attempts to silence the exposure of its repeated violation of Palestinian human and national rights."

Responding to the statements of foreign minister Frattini, the PFLP spokesperson said that opposing the occupying state of Israel "has nothing to do with Jews, Judaism or hatred against them. On the contrary," the spokesperson continued, "it is Israel itself that is the racist state, based on Zionism, as racist ideology that supports the theft of Palestinian and Arab lands, and the ethnic cleaning of Palestinians and Arabs."

"Any attempt to divert attention from Israeli crimes or label investigation of them as 'anti-Semitism' is nothing more than an attempt to distract from the real issue – the crimes of the occupation state, for which it must be held accountable."

Reject Israel, page 6, col 1 ...

Arroyo government violates peace deals, blocks peace talks

By Ed Ladera

Peace negotiations between the revolutionary National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the reactionary Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) appeared to be back on track after representatives of the two negotiating panels met on 15 June in The Hague, The Netherlands.

In the presence of officials of the Royal Norwegian Government led by Ambassador Vegar Brynildsen, both parties agreed to announce the resumption of formal talks in August in Oslo, Norway. It was agreed that the GRP would declare its respect for and compliance with the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), signed in 1995, and would expeditiously remove impediments to the release of NDFP consultants held in GRP prisons, and to quash all charges against those with warrants of arrest.

The GRP also agreed to release political prisoners whose release had already been ordered by GRP president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo since 2001 but until now remains detained, and those whose release had been agreed upon in peace talks in Oslo in 2004.

Furthermore, the Arroyo government agreed to dismiss politically-motivated and unfounded criminal cases filed against members of the NDFP Peace Negotiating Panel, the NDFP Chief Political Consultant, Prof. Jose Maria Sison, and other NDFP personalities.

The NDFP also called for the withdrawal of the cash rewards offered by the GRP for the capture of Prof. Sison and NDFP Consultant Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal.

By 11 August however, the Arroyo government, while claiming they were "bending backward" to "lift its suspension" of the JASIG, was in fact in violation of the 15 June agreement. NDFP Panel Chair Luis Jalandoni declared on 11 August: "Until now the GRP has failed to release any of the detained NDFP consultants and to quash charges against those with warrants of arrest."

On 29 August, Prof. Sison issued a statement: "Resumption of formal talks is still possible if GRP respects and complies with the JASIG." He declared, "As soon as possible, the GRP and NDFP negotiating

panels should meet in Oslo in order to put in writing the most expeditious methods of removing the impediments on NDFP consultants. This meeting, he said, had been proposed by the NDFP through the Norwegian government because the GRP had not fulfilled the commitments it made on 15 June.

Sison lambasted the militarist clique of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and General Avelino Razon for undermining and negating the JASIG. Randall Echanis, member of the NDFP Reciprocal Working Committee (RWC) on Social and Economic Reforms (SER), was arrested and falsely charged with multiple murder by the GRP in January 2008. Claiming that they are now complying with the JASIG, Manila officials on 12 August granted Echanis' release from detention, but only for a maximum of six months and only to participate in the peace negotiations. This makes Echanis a GRP-hostaged consultant.

In the cases of NDFP RWC-SER member Rafael Baylosis and NDFP Political Consultant Vicente Ladlad, both with warrants of arrest on the basis of trumped-up charges, the GRP issued safe conduct passes which were a judgment of conviction and a death warrant. These sham safe conduct passes are a violation of the JASIG and were strongly condemned by Baylosis and Ladlad.

They are set to file civil, criminal and administrative charges against Generals Ermita, Razon, and police Director-General Jesus Verzosa, and other GRP officials responsible for the issuance of said sham safe conduct passes.

NDFP Consultant Elizabeth Principe was actually released not because of the 15 June agreement but because of her legal victories over false charges against her in various courts. GRP officials were claiming credit for her release, when in fact they tried to prevent it and delayed it for two weeks until



"I owe no debt of gratitude to this government for my release. I owe my freedom to the mass movement and my lawyers." Elizabeth Principe beams and raises clenched fist after her release 21 July. At left is daughter Lorena Santos. photo by Raymund B. Villanueva / bulatlat.com

Ms. Principe and her fellow political prisoners started a protest hunger strike.

As late as 31 August and 2 September, the NDFP Negotiating Panel proposed that the two panels, together with their lawyers, meet in Oslo as soon as possible to come up with a written agreement on how to comply with the JASIG and remove the impediments imposed by the GRP on the NDFP consultants.

In a statement on 4 September 2009, Fidel V. Agcaoili, member and spokesperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel and Chairperson of the NDFP Human Rights Committee, declared that GRP top officials "are preventing the resumption of the formal talks by continuing to violate the JASIG and refusing to comply with it and remove the impediments that have been imposed on NDFP panelists, consultants and other persons protected by the JASIG."

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