



## EDITORIAL

# Stop terrorist aerial bombing

**D**ropping bombs using war planes and helicopters, coupled with the use of drones for surveillance in counterinsurgency operations, violate international humanitarian law governing the conduct of war. The use of these weapons must be ended and prohibited.

The amount of bombs dropped, rockets, bullets and artillery bombs fired by the military is excessive. These powerful weapons, typically used to destroy tanks and buildings, causes too much death and destruction of the environment. Even more heinous, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) attaches a "proximity fuse" to make the bomb detonate a few meters before hitting the ground to cause more widespread damage.

To increase its capability to aim its bombs, the AFP uses drones for aerial surveillance (to take pictures, thermal images and for electronic surveillance) over a large area. This is combined with the use of local spies and electronic gadgets to identify the exact locations of New

People's Army (NPA) units.

On several occasions, aerial bombs have hit NPA camps resulting in large numbers of casualties among Red fighters, including the killing of 20 in Dolores, Eastern Samar last August 16, 10 in Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental on May 10, 2020, and seven in Sta. Teresita, Cagayan Valley last September 21. Often, bombs are dropped on detected NPA camps in the early morning before the break of dawn.

The use of excessive force contravenes humanitarian law principles which provide that weapons used in warfare must be sufficient only to attain a particular military objective without causing superfluous injury to armed adversaries and should be consistent with what is

reasonable and humane.

The AFP exploits its military air ascendancy against the NPA by dropping bombs against adversaries who have no capability for defense and no opportunity to fight back. This killing in numbers is not an act of war, rather is a brutal and bloody act of mass murder. The principle of honor states that one has the right to kill one's enemy only in the battlefield. By dropping bombs from a few kilometers high, the AFP manifests its lack of honor and cowardice.

Despite the use of drones, more often, AFP bombs miss its target and hits, damages and spreads poison in fields in the plains near communities, in mountain farms and gardens, hunting grounds, and the masses' sources of water, food, medicine and livelihood. Recently, intensive bombing caused fires in large areas of a mountain range.

There are also times that the

AFP drops bombs and strafe in the proximity of communities without clear targets. They put the lives of civilians at risk and cause widespread trauma. Cases of people forced to evacuate are rising. There have been cases of civilians who were not hit directly but died as a result of accidents due to the bombing. The aggravating noise made by drones that fly over their communities for hours destroys the peace and causes fear among the people. The AFP drops bombs to terrorize the masses and make them kneel before the military's power. What else do you call this but terrorism from the skies.

The AFP squanders billions upon billions of pesos for flying their drones, war planes and helicopters on a daily bases. Billions of pesos are wasted for bombs, rockets, bullets and other weapons of terrorism. They waste such large amounts of funds while people suffer from joblessness, low wages and income, and incessant rise in the prices of

commodities.

The Filipino people must unite to fight the brutal and terrorist aerial bombardment of the AFP. Human rights and peace advocates, lawyers and legal experts and all democracy-loving people, must make a stand and exert efforts to expose, condemn and push for the prohibition of state weapons of terrorism. We must expose the malevolence of the terrorist bombing in the Philippines before the international community, and unite with those suffering the same violence such as the people of Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Kurdistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries. US imperialist support for the Duterte fascist regime's terrorist bombing must be exposed and condemned.

The NPA must continue to raise its capability in guerrilla warfare to frustrate the terrorist bombing of the AFP. All units of the NPA, big and small, should assiduously abide by the security policies. They must



be adept and creative in clandestine operations to keep the enemy blind and deaf and thus render ineffective the enemy's drones and other surveillance equipment.

All units of the NPA must maintain a high level of mobility and capability for rapid shifting to avoid being at the enemy's cross-hairs. All NPA units must continually expand their areas of operation. Avoid complacency or liberalism that typically arises with victories gained in either military or mass work.

The NPA must continually raise its capability to mount offensives against the enemy's air assets. Even if we have no anti-aircraft weapons, Red fighter snipers can use their rifles against the enemy helicopters when they fly low or land on mountains or in the guerrilla zones.

Because of the increasing use of air assets in counter guerrilla operations, enemy ground troops are bound to become reliant on these. Thus, the NPA must continue to use its advantage of terrain and mass support to target the detached and weaker units of the enemy with tactical offensives.

Guided by Mao's dictum: "people, not things, are decisive," all Red fighters must further raise their courage, determination, readiness to sacrifice and erudition to continue advancing the people's war. Raise the political and ideological firmness of all NPA units while advancing the Filipino people's protracted people's war for national freedom and democracy. **AB**

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# Killing of Ka Oris and lies peddled by the AFP regarding his death

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) strongly condemned the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), particularly the 4th ID, for the cowardly and dishonorable murder of Ka Oris (Jorge Madlos) and his medical aide, Ka Pika. The Party also condemned the lies peddled by military officers to the media to cover up their crimes.

Ka Oris, 72, was an elected member of the Central Committee, Political Bureau and Executive Committee of the CPP. He played a key role in the National Operational Command (NOC) of the New People's Army (NPA) and served as its spokesperson. He was among the first Party cadres who established the NPA in Mindanao. In tribute, the CPP declared November 7 as the International Day of Remembrance of Ka Oris. (*Read the CPP Central Committee's full tribute in the special issue of Ang Bayan, November 2, 2021.*)

Contrary to lies peddled by the military, Ka Oris and Ka Pika were not killed in an encounter. They were aboard a motorcycle and traversing the road from the center of Impasug-ong town in Bukidnon province going to the national highway when they were ambushed by soldiers belonging to the 403rd Infantry Brigade. They were en route for his regular health checkup and

to seek medical treatment. Both were unarmed and were in no position to give battle.

Four hours after they were slain, the military swarmed the forested areas of Sitio Gabunan, Barangay Dumalaguing, in the same town with FA-50 fighter jets and helicopters. The following day, October 30, the military reported that military units supposedly cleared the area. The AFP made it appear that its units "encountered" Ka Oris and Ka Pika's unit at around 11 a.m. They claimed that they "recovered" the cadavers of the victims on site.

The AFP could not produce photographs of the encounter site. All photographs of Ka Oris' remains were tight shots. It can also be noticed that Ka Oris's goatee and moustache were shaved off which he only does when he has to travel outside an NPA area and need to alter his appearance.

To make it appear that that an



"encounter" took place, the AFP repeatedly bombed the mountainous area of Barangay Dumalaguing on November 2.

The military even concocted a lie that Ka Oris frequented Cagayan de Oro City to undergo regular dialysis. Ka Oris did not suffer from kidney failure, but from a damaged urinary bladder which he endured for more than three decades.

On November 3, the AFP burned all evidences of their crime by unilaterally having the remains of Ka Oris cremated under the pretext of "complying with Covid-19 protocols." This was after his cadaver supposedly tested positive for Covid-19 (which was not subject to verification by independent health workers.) The AFP carried out the cremation despite the fact that Ka Oris' brother was already on his way to retrieve his remains.

In doing so, the AFP closed all possibility to have his remains autopsied by independent pathologists. The cremation also defied the wishes of his relatives and the revolutionary movement to bring his remains to Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte where it can be viewed for the last time. He left behind his wife Maria Malaya, and their two children.

## NPA offensive in Iloilo

A UNIT OF the New People's Army (NPA)-Panay blasted a patrolling counterinsurgency unit of the 606th Mobile Company in Barangay Jolason, Tubungan, Iloilo on October 24. Two policemen were wounded during the offensive. Earlier that day, the NPA fired at a detachment of the said unit in the adjacent barangay of Mayang.

In Masbate, three policemen of the 2nd Police Mobile Force Company were killed and two others were wounded in an offensive action mounted by the NPA-Masbate in Barangay Badiang, Catangian on October 9.

On September 20, the NPA-Western Samar (Arnulfo Ortiz Command) fired at the operating troops of the 46th IB in Barangay Bugho, Pinabacdao. One soldier was confirmed dead, and others were wounded. Meanwhile, Red fighters of the NPA-Northern Samar (Rodante Urtal Command) burned down the abandoned camp of the 20th IB in Barangay San Miguel, Las Navas on September 1.

# When it rains terror

Residents of Sitio Damugnay, Los Angeles, Butuan City were filled with terror last November 3 when Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) helicopters relentlessly bombed their community.

A video recorded by a resident shows how residents were enveloped by fear and panic. The sound of loud explosions and machinegun fire can be heard, followed by screams and cries. Towards the video's end, people are seen leaving their homes.

Ka Diwa Habagat of the New People's Army (NPA)-Agusan del Norte attested to the experience of residents. She said that at around 1:45 p.m., not less than four large bombs were dropped by Black Hawk helicopters, as it spewed hundreds of .50 caliber bullets over the fields and farms.

The Butuan City incident is the third incident of bombing in Mindanao in a span of only five days. On October 30, Sitio Gabunan, Barangay Dumalaguig, Impasugong, Bukidnon was bombed and strafed from 12:40 a.m. to past 2 a.m. At least six large bombs and dozens of rockets were fired by the AFP during that incident.

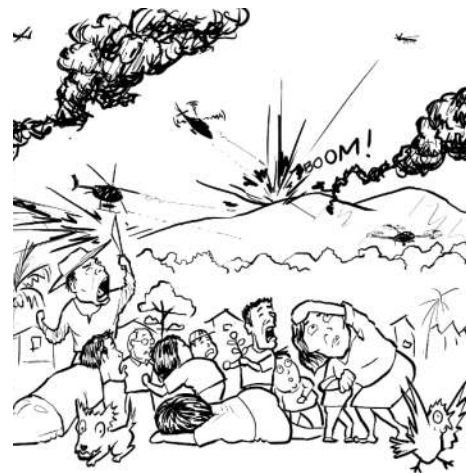
The same place was bombed on November 2 at 9 p.m. At least three tons of bombs were dropped by four

OV-10 bomber planes. These include four each of 250-lb and 500-lb bombs. The excessive explosives shook the ground and razed a large section of the mountains. This was condemned even by scientists who said that the burning of a large part of the forests add to the warming of the atmosphere.

In the span of 12 weeks since the middle of August to the first week of November, six similar aerial strikes were recorded. This is equivalent to one bombing operation every two weeks. Two incidents were recorded in Eastern Visayas and one in Cagayan Valley.

Not less than two civilians were reported to have died as a result of the bombings, while others were wounded. Ruben Darasin, a resident of Barangay Balang-balang in Remedios T. Romualdez, died as he jumped into the river in panic after the bombing in Sitio Damugnay. People working in their farms suffered injuries as they scampered for safety as bombs were dropped nearby.

In Bobon, Northern Samar, a



pregnant woman suffered a miscarriage and died after she was stricken by fear by the the bombing and shelling. The military fired two 105mm artillery shells and at least 11 rockets in the said area from 3 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Five peasants suffered injuries in separate incidents of strafing by the 20th IB and police in Barangay Epaw, Las Navas last October 14 and in Barangay San Vicente, Catubig in Samar the following day. Two of the victims were wounded and one was illegally arrested.

Hundreds were also engulfed in fear due to the bombings. In the Butuan City incident, residents of four other barangays were afraid of getting hit by the bombs. In various video recordings of the Dumalaguig bombing, residents expressed fears of their families being put in danger.

Because of the terroristic effect of the bombing, the military concocts lies to make it acceptable to the public. It claims that the dropping of 500-lb (230 kilogram) bombs are "surgical strikes" when, in fact, these damages areas up to 90-183 meter from the center, or even wider if one considers the damage caused by bomb shrapnels.

On November 5, an additional six Black Hawk helicopters were reported to have arrived in Mindanao, which would bring more terror to communities and farms. However, NPA-Agusan del Sur said the people must expose the terror in order to transform their fear to collective courage.

## Terror in Abra-Apayao

SOLDIERS OF THE 7th ID committed human rights violations from July to August. Several cases were reported in the towns of Tineg, Lacub and Malibcong in Abra; and in the towns of Kabugao and Conner in Apayao. Infections spread in the community due to the presence of soldiers.

**Arrest.** Soldiers arrested farmer Jerome Cudiyen at Sitio Talipugo, Buneg, Lacub. They stole his cellphone and food supplies, and forced him to serve as guide in a military operation. Afterwards, he was detained at the 24th IB camp and subjected to torture for several days. He was injected with an unknown medicine. Three other villagers were arrested in Barangay Poblacion, Lacub.

**Harassment.** Six residents of Sitio Talipugo were arrested and interrogated for several hours. Two of the victims were forced to serve as guides in a military operation. At Sitio Baliwan, Katablangan, Conner, soldiers arrested Romeo Sabaway along with his two children.

## Police massacres 5 farmers in Masbate

FIVE FARMERS WERE massacred by the police on October 24, in Barangay Bugtong, Mandaon, Masbate. The police falsely claimed the victims were members of the New People's Army (NPA) who were killed after fighting back while being arrested. The NPA-Masbate belied this claim. The NPA is still determining the identities of the victims.

In Barangay Poblacion, Ninoy Aquino, Sultan Kudarat, elements of the 7th IB killed anti-mining activist Filimon Agsim on Oktubre 22. The military made it appear that victim committed suicide. His family, however, attested that his cadaver was covered in bruises and bore marks of torture.

**Illegal arrest.** In Bulacan, 40 farmers, including six children, were arrested by soldiers and CAFGU men in Barangay Pamarawan, Malolos on October 29. They were brought to the detachment in Barangay Tal-iptip in the adjacent town of Bulakan. They were forced to work there. Seven other residents, including a child, were also forced to work there on the same day.

## Farmers and national minorities demand "land, aid and justice"

HUNDRES OF FARMERS from Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon marched to Mendiola, Manila on October 21. They demanded genuine land reform, a ₱15,000-subsidy and justice for victims of human rights violations. They also called for the repeal of the Rice Tariffication Law.

Similar protest actions were mounted in Bacolod City in Negros, Iloilo City, Naga City in Bicol and in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform office in Central Visayas in Cebu City.

On October 29, national minorities and progressive groups protested in front of the headquarters of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to mark the 24th anniversary of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA). They demanded the junking of the said law and the dismantling of the NCIP. They said that these only serve as instruments used by the reactionary state to facilitate massive grabbing of ancestral lands and deny them their right to self-determination.



## Israel harasses Palestinian groups

SIX PALESTINIAN human rights organizations were "designated" by the government of Israel as "terrorist organizations" on October 22.

These groups are the Al-Haq, Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, Defence for Children International Palestine, Bisan Center for Research and Development, Union of Palestinian Women's Committees and Union of Agricultural Work Committee. Israel first tagged the group Samiduon Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network as "terrorist" in February.

According to Samiduon, they were designated as "terrorists" because they are able to effectively expose the crimes of Israel against Palestinians. It added that the terror-tag will certainly be used to arrest its members, dismantle organizations and close down their offices, and declare these as "illegal" even within the occupied territory.



**#AcademicBreakNow in Baguio.** Four universities in Baguio City implemented an academic break in line with students' demand. According to the students, they need a break due to the amount and heavy load of school requirements. The campaign culminated in a protest of 400 students and teachers of Saint Louis University on November 1. The academic break was scheduled on November 2 to 8.

**Duterte's spokesman heckled in the US.** Patrons of a restaurant and activists based in the US heckled Harry Roque, spokesman of Rodrigo Duterte, on October 30. Roque was in New York to lobby for his nomination to a seat in the International Law Commission, a formation which helps develop international laws. He was called a "war criminal" and "ostentatious" by the activists.

**Anti-privatization campaign in Cebu.** The People's Coalition against Privatization-Cebu protested in front of the city hall on October 27 to oppose the impending privatization of the Metropolitan Cebu Water District. The coalition called for the defense of the right to water, sanitation and social services.

**Health workers protest in Manila.** Health workers of the Tondo Medical Center (TMC) in Manila protested on October 27 to demand the release of their delayed benefits. More than 10 health workers have resigned from the hospital due to the lack of protection, while being overworked and underpaid. The hospital did not receive additional budget despite the drastic increase in the number of its patients.

# Military-established organizations only serve the interest of mining companies, plantations

The "federation of people's organizations" formed by the military will not address the longstanding problem of landlessness faced by peasants and Lumads. The Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid-Southern Mindanao Region (PKM-SMR) stated this during the third week of October after the 10th ID announced the establishment of the a so-called federation of mass organizations in the region.

PKM-SMR spokesman Restituto Baguer said that these organization do not address the issue of landlessness and other forms exploitation faced by farmers and Lumads. In fact, he said that "these will only intensify under the Duterte government's policy of land-use conversion to favor capitalist monocrop plantations, massive mining operations, agrotourism and infrastructure projects."

Baguer noted that thousands of farmers are being displaced in at least 18 towns and cities across the region to pave way for the expansion of plantations. In these areas, these organizations are established by the military to expedite the grabbing of rice, corn, vegetable and other crop farms.

Baguer cited the experience of peasants and farm workers in

Maragusan, Davao de Oro, who became powerless after being coerced by the military to surrender as members of the New People's Army (NPA). This allowed capitalist plantations to grab farmlands using the oppressive agricultural ventures agreement scheme. He explained that companies favor landgrabbing over spending for the rehabilitation of lands which have been damaged by decades of monocrop farming by plantations.

At least 37,000 hectares of land have already been approved as mining concessions. On top of this, there are also pending mining applications covering around one million hectares of land since 2017. "These guarantee the operations of mining and agrotourism companies in Talaingod, Davao del Norte and the Pantaron Mountain Range, which is



why a relentless war is being mounted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) against Lumads in the area," Baguer explained. "These organizations only rubber stamp the entry of these destructive projects," he added.

The PKM clarified that these organizations do not have programs to dismantle the rule of landlords, distribute land, and give comprehensive aid to improve production. "They do not campaign to increase farmgate prices, or to lower the cost of drying and milling. They do not ban usury," stated Baguer.

He said these organizations and their activities designed by the 10th ID only serve to make it appear that its counterinsurgency campaign is succeeding. "Worse, these are used by the military as milking cow," he added.

In Southern Leyte, the 8th ID is also organizing similar "federations" for the same purpose.

This practice by the AFP of forming organizations to counter mass organizations in barrios and communities is not new at all. Under the US-Aquino III regime's Oplan Bayahnihan, "peace and development teams" which occupied communities formed "counter organizations" of farmers, youth and women. These failed to sow disunity among barrio residents. Chapters of the PKM remained intact in these barrios.

The PKM is a revolutionary organization of peasants which works closely with the NPA to advance the agrarian revolution. AB

## Villagers mob soldier who went amok

VILLAGES MOBBED A soldier who went amok in Barangay Calapaton, Kitaotao, Bukidnon on October 17. The said soldier was drunk and indiscriminately fired his gun, wounding seven civilians. According to residents, the soldier fired his gun after an argument while playing "hantak," an illegal gambling activity.

The said soldier is a member of the 72nd IB encamped at the adjacent barangay of Calapaton.

According to the New People's Army in Southern Mindanao, the indiscriminate shooting exposes corruption in the AFP's Retooled Community Support Program (RCSP). "The RCSP is only a pretext to conduct a joint campaign of psywar against the masses in order to control their movement, suppress them, and stifle their struggles for land, and economic and political rights."

Several farmers also exposed that they are being summoned by soldiers regularly to "report." According to them, RCSP disrupts their livelihood. On one occasion, soldier made them wait the whole day just to ask them if they monitored a movement of the NPA in the area.

# —IN—SHORT

## 22 activists have been released

after **courts junked search warrants** and **criminal charges** slapped against them.



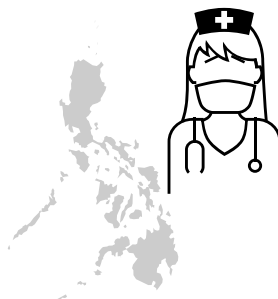
The most recent was **Erlindo "Lino" Baez**, spokesperson of **Bayan-Batangas** who was released on October 25.



## "NO JAB, NO PAY"

illegal scheme **pushed by capitalists** to **deny unvaccinated workers of wages**. They are also pushing for the implementation of the **"no vaccine, no work"** policy where unvaccinated workers will not be allowed to work.

## 5-10%



of the **total number of nurses** in the country **resigned**

from various hospitals during the first **three weeks of October** due to **low wages**.

Source: Private Hospitals Association of the Philippines



## #HandsOffOurLibraries

call of academics to oppose **"book purging"** or the removal from libraries of **books which classified as subversive** by the **NTF-ELCAC** and **AFP**.

## 33 activists red tagged by NTF-ELCAC have been killed



in the country since July 2016. They are among the **421 victims of extrajudicial killings** documented by Karapatan during the same period.

## 180

**operating soldiers were surrounded and "arrested" by 600 farmers**

in Colombia on October 22. The **soldiers** were **deployed to destroy their farms**. They were released after the **government promised to stop the forcible destruction of the farms** and come up with **other reforms**.

## 60,000 MT



**of round scad (galunggong) were imported**

by the government last October. Because of this, **farmgate price** of the fish **dropped** resulting in **huge losses** among **fisherfolk**.

## Striketober

series of **worker strikes** across the **US**

in October to **demand wage increase** and **humane working conditions**. More than **100,000** participated in **45 strikes**. **Workers** in the **US** have mounted a total of **255 strikes** this year alone.

# March onward, workers of Southern Tagalog!

**A**ng Bayan interviewed Andres Obrero, organizer of the Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions (RCTU) in Southern Tagalog. He was a former worker in the manufacturing industry (semiconductor) and has been in the labor movement for decades.

## 1) What are the various issues currently faced by the labor movement in the region?

Even before the pandemic, the enemy's fascist attacks against the labor movement in the region were already rampant. These are characterized by widespread red-tagging of labor leaders, including factory leaders and leaders of a center of militant unions, and arrests of workers falsely presented as "sur-rendered" members of the New People's Army (NPA).

In addition, state forces conduct house visits to harass labor organizers and leaders, and subject them to surveillance. Some of them were forced to seek asylum and hide due to the relentless suppression and red-tagging campaign.

Undeniably, such intense repression has had negative effect among leaders and even ordinary workers, albeit temporary. These attacks were carried out while movement restrictions were imposed under the militarist pandemic protocols of the regime.

Despite this, many organizers and workers carried on with their

revolutionary tasks with added precaution. They mastered the art of operating clandestinely in order to safely coordinate with workers, especially unions conducting mass struggles.

## 2) How has the labor movement adapted to the restrictions and suppression under the pandemic?

Under the pandemic, workers methods of mobilization changed but their anger and discontent has not waned. Through the perseverance and dedication of organizers and labor leaders to oppose suppression, the movement was able to gradually overcome their fear to act. They studied and applied various strategies in mobilizing and coordinating with workers, while taking into consideration the safety and security of organizers and labor leaders.

They successfully employed various strategies to conduct studies, consultations, and online and face-to-face meetings, and carry out organizing and expansion work. The success is proven by an increase in the number of workers participating in mobilizations even amid the pan-

demie.

Several unions won favorable collective bargaining agreements (CBA) amid the Covid-19 pandemic and terroristic state attacks against the labor movement. They were able to mount collective actions to denounce the failure of the government to provide aid and implement appropriate protocols to help workers avoid Covid-19 infections.

The big victories won by workers through struggles serve as examples and inspiration to other unions.

## 3) What currently are the biggest issues faced by workers in the region?

The biggest issues faced and campaigns mounted by workers are related to wages, jobs, and labor rights. They campaign against slave wages, unemployment, mass layoffs, contractualization, and violation of labor rights and relentless state repression.

The grave wage situation in the country can be seen in the region. Various schemes to bring down wage levels are implemented here using different wage laws and policies such as the two-tiered wage system; the Barangay Micro-Business Employment Act which exempts employers with a capitalization of less than ₱3 milyon from the implementation of legislated minimum wage rates; and a scheme wherein labor agencies are allowed to get 10% of their employee's wages. (The current minimum wage in Region 4-A is only ₱400.)

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, 70%-80% of factory workers across the region are contractual. Many unions and associations campaigned for regularization which pushed the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Region 4-A to issue decisions favoring workers. They

*"March..." continued on page 9*

### What is the RCTU?

IT IS A COUNCIL composed of revolutionary union leaders and unionists both members and non-members of the Communist Party of the Philippines. It is part of the broad network of the underground revolutionary workers' movement.

The RCTU represents labor unions and its members in the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

It is a council and not a formal revolutionary mass organization because based on the perspective of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, there are only two types of workers' organizations—their union which serve as a machinery of their struggle against capital, and their political party, the Communist Party.



## Rollback oil prices!

Local oil companies are raking in profits as oil prices skyrocketed during the past two months. Since January this year, diesel prices have risen by more than ₱18 per liter and gasoline by more than ₱20 per liter. An 11-kilo LPG tank is now worth ₱100 more. As companies accumulate profits, the Duterte regime's revenue collection also increased due to layers of taxes it has imposed on oil.

All these are shouldered by the Filipino people who are already burdened by high prices of goods and reduced wages and income due to the pandemic. In Ibon Foundation's estimates, since September, jeepney drivers need to shell out an additional ₱97.50 for 11 liters of diesel per day. Farmers consuming 190 liters of diesel per hectare per crop season now need to spend ₱1,653 more.

According to Pamalakaya, a total of ₱720 per week for gasoline was added to the fisherfolk's expenses. To save money, they are forced to cut down their hours at sea to four to six from the usual eight hours.

Prices of basic commodities and services are bound to rise in the next months. There will be addi-

tional costs for transportation, food, fuel and others. People are forced to take on this burden amid nonexistent subsidies and aid for people with insufficient incomes and are jobless. (Last September, the rate of unemployment once again rose to 8.9%, mainly due to losses in agriculture. The rate of inflation is expected to rise above 5% in the next months. Food and beverage prices rose fastest, with rates already up 5.6% in September.)

Meanwhile, multibillionaire owners of Petron, Shell Philippines, Chevron, Phoenix and other oil companies are celebrating. They have been able to accumulate profits due to the oil industry deregulation law.

For the first half of the year alone, big bureaucrat Ramon Ang-owned Petron reported a net profit

of ₱3.87 billion. Shell Philippines reported ₱2.2 billion. The smaller company Phoenix, owned by crony Dennis Uy, profited ₱252 million during the same period.

The bureaucrat-capitalist regime also earned higher revenues from the price increases. According to Ibon's studies, the government earns ₱6.72 per liter of diesel, ₱6.33 per liter of gasoline and ₱33 from each 11-kilo LPG tank in the form of excise tax alone. If all taxes on oil products were suspended, the price of diesel can be reduced up to ₱17.50 or 25% per liter while gasoline prices can be reduced up to ₱11.35 or 22.7% per liter. (The calculations were based on ₱50/liter for diesel and ₱70/liter for gasoline.)

Continuing oil price increases were met with various protests since the last week of October in Metro Manila, Cebu, Panay and other places. The protesters called for the immediate lowering of oil prices, junking of the oil deregulation law and renationalization of Petron. AB

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*"March..." from page 8*

succeeded in organizing various groups which spontaneously and actively struggled to demand implementation of these decisions. However, majority of these decisions were reversed by the secretary of the DOLE.

State terrorism continues to rage against the workers across the region. State forces continue to visit the homes of labor leaders and advocates of genuine unionism. Justice remains elusive to victims of killings, including those killed in the "Bloody Sunday," the bloodiest day in the region under the Duterte regime.

#### 4) What are the challenges currently faced by the RCTU amid

#### intensified attacks against the national democratic movement?

Members of the RCTU are challenged to firmly hold on to their tasks of strengthening the revolutionary mass movement in their areas of responsibility, and of supporting the development of the revolutionary movement in the countryside.

We must continuously advance the revolutionary mass movement in the cities, arouse, organize and mobilize the working class and other democratic forces in a broad united front. We can work hand in hand with them in waging anti-fascist and anti-imperialist struggles supportive of antifeudal struggles in the countryside.

Workers are well aware of the

favorable situation with the rapid disintegration of the US-Duterte regime, and widening rifts among the ruling classes resulting from the regime's inclination to favor a section of capitalists, politicians and military. We must comprehensively strengthen the revolutionary forces and gather a bigger force. We must reach the broadest number of workers and bring them closer to the people's democratic revolution.

The RCTU is primarily tasked to help the NPA in recruiting workers. On top of this, it is tasked to provide material support, including important personal items, medicine, and other needs of the people's army. The RCTU also has a program for the integration of workers into the NPA. AB