The Filipino people seethe with anger and discontent.

The protest actions that followed the exposé on the PhP10-billion pork barrel scam sent the Aquino government scampering for ways to dissipate the people’s anger, but only in ways that Benigno Simeon Aquino III and the bureaucrats in his government can continue to feast on the pork and drown themselves in pork fat.

The people’s anger is not only directed at the 10 billion-peso scam but also against the corruption that goes on with impunity under BS Aquino, who ironically won under an anti-corruption slogan “kung walang kurap, walang mahirap”.

The Aquino government could no longer pretend to be clean before the Filipino people. Neither can it boast of improving the poor people’s lives.

The reluctance of Aquino and his allies to do away with the PhP25-billion congressional and the PhP1.3 to PhP 1.5 trillion presidential pork barrel is obvious. BS Aquino’s stake on the pork barrel is not only the stability of his rule but also the preservation of the same rotten system that coddles him and his real bosses – the hacienderos, the bureaucrats and big business, and his US imperialist masters.

The scam bared the gap between those in power and the powerless. As BS Aquino, his cronies, and conduits like Janet Napoles fill up their pockets, bath tubs, and bed mattresses with billions from the nation’s coffers and out of people’s labor, the country remains backward; the ordinary wage earner on a daily PhP 446.00 wage plus the recent paltry increase of PhP22 a day; the farmers remain landless, the urban poor homeless.

It is appalling that the BS Aquino-led bureaucrats in the government rob the people, in the guise of serving the people; the same people that they terrorize, arrest, detain, torture, and kill.

Abuses against communities

On August 29, members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Abra Reconnaissance Group, Regional Police Security Battalion, and Benguet Police Provincial Security Company allegedly had an encounter with an undetermined number of New People's Army (NPA) members at Bandong Hill, Aguid, Sagada province.

On August 29, two M520 and Huey helicopters of the Philippine Air Force hovered around northern Sagada and upland Bontoc areas the whole day, while the Sagada PNP conducted foot patrol in the outskirts of Sagada.

A truckload of camouflaged and fully armed men also arrived at around 7 p.m. Residents of Aguid reported seeing several men in battle gear near the elementary school and covered court.

The following morning, on August 30, residents reported bombs were dropped on the Demang mountain ranges, affecting the
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3

Evacuees, accompanied by a support group from the EJP, elements of the 26th IBPA from their homes because of combat operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) against members of the NPA who were allegedly in the villages of Sabud and Kauswagan in Loreto town, Agusan del Sur.

Almost 500 individuals evacuated to the elementary school in Brgy. Kauswagan, while some sought refuge in other communities. The military prevented a number of villagers from the interior sitios (sub-villages) to go to the evacuation center. The military’s presence inside and around the evacuation center caused anguish among the evacuees. Some evacuees reported they were interrogated by soldiers.

prior to the evacuation, the 26th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army (IBPA) occupied the barangay hall, gym, and health center of the community. The soldiers conducted surveys and profiling of households, and took photos of residents who, they said, were on a military list.

Karapatan-Southern Mindanao, Hustiya, Barug Katulahan, United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) and Exodus for Justice and Peace (EJP) assisted the evacuees. On July 30, when evacuees from other Loreto villages were about to be transported via the two trucks provided by the EJP, elements of the 26th IBPA blocked them.

On August 1, 245 Lumad evacuees, accompanied by a support group, biked for almost a day from their village in Loreto to the town of Laak, Compostela Valley province. They then took a bus to Tagum City, Davao del Norte and stayed at the UCCP chapel.

On August 2, the evacuees travelled to the Provincial Capitol of Agusan del Sur to inform the provincial government of the military operation in their community and to seek its assistance. The evacuees reported several incidents of human rights abuses by the military and paramilitary group Bagani, and demanded the immediate pull-out of the 26th IBPA from their communities.

In a dialogue between the evacuees, led by Kahugpong alang sa Kalamboan (Kasaka) and the provincial government officials, social welfare and development regional coordinator Mr. Ubane said their office did not receive any report on the evacuation and human rights violations. Ubane demanded the evacuees to return to Loreto and use instead the municipality’s covered court as evacuation center. Ubane said the evacuees can avail of services from the Municipal Social Work and Development Office when they return to Loreto.

Vice Governor Santiago Cane, Major Loyonzon and Major Kasahiro of the 401st Infantry Brigade visited the evacuation center on the same day. The evacuees reiterated their demand for the military and paramilitary groups to immediately pullout of Loreto.

On August 4, the local PNP prevented a support group from bringing medicines to the evacuees. The police barricaded all points to the capitol. This prompted the evacuees and human rights workers to march in protest of the PNP action.

On August 6, the evacuees decided to transfer to Davao City where they stayed at the Bankerohan gym. After two weeks, they decided to return to their communities. They were assisted by Karapatan-Southern Mindanao and other human rights advocates. But, as of this writing, soldiers from the 26th IBPA are still in the villages.

Six days earlier, on July 22, four male Lumad teenagers were on their way to register for the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections at the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) office at Brgy. Poblacion, in Loreto. They were Roland Sanglid, 19; Rico Basilsico, 18; “John,” 17; and, “Allan,” 16.

On the same day, the teenagers were stopped by members of the paramilitary Bagani Force, led by a certain Jun Hozon of the 26th IBPA. The four teenagers were forced to get off from the motorcycle and to line up. Maril Dioganon, a Bagani member, accused John, Allan and Rico of being members of the NPA.

The youths explained that they were on their way to the voters’ registration at the local COMELEC office. Dioganon is the son of Brgy. Captain Ramon Dioganon who was killed on July 19 allegedly by the NPA.

However, the hands of John, Allan and Rico behind their backs and forced them into a dump truck. Roland, the motorcycle driver, was also ordered to board the truck.

While on travel, several Bagani members beat up John, Allan and Rico. Roland was asked if the three were members of the NPA. Roland said no.

When the truck carrying the teenagers reached Brgy. Datu Piang, Maguindanao, the two minors and Dioganon family filed attempted murder charges against the two minors.

Ruel immediately claimed Rico and brought him home. John and Allan were interrogated and tortured by soldiers and Bagani members.

John was repeatedly beaten up; his upper lip burned with a cigarette and bullets were inserted into his fingers. The barrel of a gun was put in Allan’s mouth while he was forced to admit they were members of the NPA allegedly involved in the killing of barangay captain Dioganon. The minors collapsed from suffocation after the military covered their heads with plastic bags.

The next day, July 23, the two boys were turned over to the police in Loreto town. The Bagani Force and Dioganon family filed attempted murder charges against the two minors. Allan and John are now in the custody of the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth of the Department of Social Work and Development in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur.

In the afternoon of July 7, some residents who evacuated in the morning went back to Damabalas village, Datu Piang, Maguindanao to gather their belongings. When they arrived in the village, bombs were dropped near them.

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TABLE 1: Violation of Civil & Political Rights under the Noynoy Aquino Government (July 2010 to August 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violation</th>
<th>No. of victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extrajudicial Killing</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforced Disappearance</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torture</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>3*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated Extrajudicial Killing</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Arrest without Detention</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Arrest and Detention</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Search and Seizure</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Assault and Injury</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>12,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Domicile</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destruction of Property</td>
<td>11,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divestment of Property</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced Evacuation</td>
<td>31,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat/Harassment/Intimidation</td>
<td>34,901**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiscriminate Firing</td>
<td>7,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced/Fake Surrender</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced Labor/Involuntary Servitude</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Civilians in Police and/or Military Operations as Guides and/or Shield</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Schools, Medical, Religious and Other Public Places for Military Purpose</td>
<td>29,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restriction or Violent Dispersal of Mass Actions, Public Assemblies and Gatherings</td>
<td>3,231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Mostly communities in militarized areas

TABLE 2: Victims of Extrajudicial Killing & Enforced Disappearance under Noynoy Aquino Gov’t by Region (July 2010 to August 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Extrajudicial Killing</th>
<th>Enforced Disappearance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARMM</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luzon</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visayas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindanao</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCR</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Mindanao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Mindanao</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Tagalog</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Visayas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Visayas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Visayas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Mindanao</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caraga</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccsksargen</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Mindanao</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Mindanao</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total | 152 | 18

Women | 18 | 0

Organized | 73 | 10
A howitzer bomb fell near village councilor Omar who was injured when shrapnel hit his chest. Another bomb fell near Nasser Kamid, Alimu, Dona Alon, Fatima Balivid and her two-year-old daughter. Nasser was hit by shrapnel on his back, while Fatima and her daughter were hit on their legs.

The wounded were brought to a hospital in Cotabato City at around 10 p.m.

Earlier in the morning, the residents reported that a soldier had gone to school and an attack on Barangay Dullulao, Barangay Aligan and Barangay Lay, Malibcong, Abra.

A howitzer bomb fell near the village of Casilagan, a training center as temporary camp. Village officials and residents objected the military’s presence, for fear of their safety.

A platoon-sized group of soldiers arrived at Brgy. Lat-ey, it exploded approximately 40 meters from the two minors who were near the ricefield of Rommel Teneza. Teneza was tilling his land at that time. The area where the bomb exploded is 170 meters from the micro-hydroelectric power plant, the community’s main source of power. Elders immediately rushed to secure the two children, who were nearly hit by shrapnel. The airstrike caused profound stress on the community.

The mother of the 17-year-old girl lamented that her child did not go back to school anymore because of fear of soldiers. A military detachment of the 43rd IBPA is near her school. The elders were also apprehensive of the military’s presence and the military operations.

Elders and children in the community said they were easily alarmed and frightened. Some could not eat and sleep well after the incident. Their mobility, especially in going to the pastureroads, grazing fields, and swidden farms (uma) are now limited.

The community held meetings regarding the incident and came up with a statement calling for the strict implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) and the resumption of the peace talks. They also decided to file complaints against the 503rd IBPA.

The statement released by the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process Teresita “GING” Deles on the incident backed up the earlier statement of Malibcong mayor Benito Baracayu iniminating the existence of two minors “child soldiers.”

The Cordillera Human Rights Alliance-Karapatan deemed this statement irresponsible and insensitive, especially coming from the executive office working on the peace process. The children are not child soldiers. Deles should have called for an immediate investigation and refrained from issuing baseless statements that made the situation more difficult for the terrorized communities.

Extrajudicial killings

On August 23, Datu Anting Freay, 60 years old, was killed by elements of the 99th IBPA and the military composite group Task Force Kitako at sitio Bulol Kalon, Bong Mal, Dumlawan, Kiblawan, Davao del Sur. At around 4 a.m., Freay was greeted by the loud sounds. Some could not eat and sleep well after the incident. Their mobility, especially in going to the pastureroads, grazing fields, and swidden farms (uma) are now limited.

Kiit shouted at the soldiers, “why did you kill my husband?” One of the members of the Civilian Auxiliary Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) responded, “it is our revenge for the death of our two colleagues.”

Victor, who was hit right away. Victor sustained 18 gunshot wounds. His abdomen was ripped open and his intestines ruptured.

As they were running away, Kiit went back inside the house to wake up her two children. She embraced them when the military and CAFGU members sprayed bullets again at their house. Kiit and her sons later found their way out of their house. As they were running away, Kiit met Victor Freay, 16, Datu Freay’s son. Victor was on his way to his father’s house. Kiit warned Victor not to proceed. But, a few minutes later, another group of soldiers fired at Victor, who was hit right away. Victor was hit right away. Victor sustained 18 gunshot wounds. His abdomen was ripped open and his intestines ruptured.

Victor, his wife Lynlyn Freay, 17, and their two-year-old son Makmak lived at Datu Freay’s house. The three left the house a few minutes before the incident to tend to their newly harvested corn. Some 200 meters away from Datu Freay’s house.

Meanwhile, Kiit proceeded to Sitio Atbol, a village next to Bulol Kalon, to seek help from the community. At 6:00 a.m., Kiit with relatives of Datu Anting’s family and other community members went back to Sitio Bulol Kalon. But, they were shot at by the military, apparently to block them from getting the bodies of Datu Freay and Victor. They went back to Sitio Atbol.

It was only the following day when the families of Datu Anting and Victor were able to retrieve the bodies at a funeral parlor in Tampakan, South Cotabato. It turned out that the remains were first brought to the headquarters of the 10th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army (IDPA) before it was brought to the funeral parlor.

On May 26, farmer and fish vendor Ricky Naye, 36, was on his way to sell fish in a nearby village Del Rosario, in Camalig, Albay. When Nate reached Paruk 3 (sub-village), he saw two men who looked like they were repairing a motorcycle on the road side.

Witnesses saw one of the men shoot Nate. Nate was able to run away but the assailant caught him and shot him three more times in the head. The assailant casually walked back to the parked motorcycle and drove away with his companion. The assailant wore a bonnet while his companion had a helmet on. The incident happened about a kilometer from the village center.

The witnesses said the soldiers based in a detachment in Abulo village, Daraga, Albay was first to arrive at the scene. The soldiers were led by a certain Lt. Sazon of the 22nd IBPA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Extrajudicial Killing</th>
<th>Enforced Disappearance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmentalist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherfolk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Employee</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous People</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peasant</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban poor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Student</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moro</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The witnesses said the military based in a detachment in Abulo village, Daraga, Albay was first to arrive at the scene. The soldiers were led by a certain Lt. Sazon of the 22nd IBPA.
Soldiers from the Del Rosario village military detachment arrived later. Nate’s wife narrated that on September 20, 2012 the same Lt. Sazon told Nate to “change” or “ittumba siya nito (he will kill Nate).” Lt. Sazon linked Nate with the NPA. Nate immediately reported the confrontation to the police. A few days later, a dialogue between Nate and Lt. Sazon was called. Camalig vice mayor Ging Nebres and acting police chief PCI Frande Echaluce attended the said dialogue where Lt. Sazon said he would stop threatening Nate.

Habal-habal (motorcycle) driver and Anakpawis Partylist municipal coordinator Eddie Cañon was found dead at around 8:00 a.m. on May 25 along the boundary of Sitio San Isidro and Sitio Sta. Monica, Brgy. Nuevo Iloco, Masbate, Compostela Valley. Eddie had nine gunshot wounds in different parts of his body, apparently from .45 caliber pistols. His motorcycle was dumped in a nearby rice field.

Cañon’s wife, Ruby, said Eddie left their house at around 7:30 a.m. to ply his usual route. She learned of Eddie’s death from two habal-habal drivers at past 8 a.m. Ruby immediately went to the site, which was only about two kilometers from their residence.

Cañon had been threatened and harassed by the military in the past months before his death.

In February, Dante Ramirez, a member of the Military Intelligence Group (MIG) of the Alpha Company of 66th IBPA, repeatedly asked Cañon about the presence of other armed groups in the community. Eddie said he was not aware of any armed group.

On March 22, Dante Ramirez went to Cañon’s residence at past midnight. Cañon did not open the door and ignored Ramirez who kept calling.

In April, the military called Eddie to their detachment to ask who was responsible for posting Anakpawis Partylist campaign posters. A certain Sgt. Dequilla also told Cañon not to vote for Anakpawis, “dilimino botay kay gisportahan kini sa mga rebelde (do not vote for Anakpawis because it is supported by the rebels).” Eddie explained the partylist group is a legal organization, accredited by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC).

Also in April, soldiers went to Cañon’s house after he failed to attend the community meeting called by the military. The soldiers instructed Cañon’s wife to have Eddie report to the military detachment as soon as he comes home. When Eddie showed up at the detachment in the evening, he was ordered to explain his whereabouts.

In May, the military accused Cañon of participation in an alleged NPA ambush of elements of the 66th IBPA, which the military claimed wounded a certain PFC Rey Santiago.

The site where Eddie Cañon was shot dead is the same place where Alvin Placencia, Anakpawis Municipal Coordinator, was shot dead in 2007.

Forced eviction, demolition and other related rights violations

On July 25, seven people were injured, including a pregnant woman and an elderly, when 15 members of ELITE Force, a private security agency, and members of COPRISS (Control Prevention and Removal of All Illegal Structures and Squatting) of the Quezon City government demolished around 100 houses at Phase 8, Brgy. North Fairview, Quezon City.

Among those hurt were Sarifa Patatol, 19, and her eight-months pregnant; Irene Dela Cruz, 64; Conchita Jopia, 58; Joselyn Mata, 52; Wilma Mantilla, 38; Jessica Yangcas, 43; Kelsey Yangcas, 19, who was punched by a certain Noel Orpiada, a leader of the TF COPRISS.

According to the residents, a certain Ramon Cabile, Chief Inspector of Station 5 of the QC Police Department fired an M16 rifle, amid the presence of children, to threaten the residents. Some 100 houses were already demolished, without a court order. City Administrator Tadeo Palma and Marlowe Jacutin of the Quezon City Government only issued a court order.

Some 100 houses had been demolished, without a court order. City Administrator Tadeo Palma and Marlowe Jacutin of the Quezon City government only issued a court order. The notice of demolition said the residents have no building permit.

Irene Dela Cruz, one of those hurt during the demolition, said most of the residents in the community have been in the area since the 1960’s, saying they developed the place which used to be a grassland. Most of the residents are government employees, families of overseas workers and seamen, small entrepreneurs, call center agents, nurses, former members of the military and police force, and jeepney operators.

A series of demolition by private security guards backed up by police men were conducted against the residents at North Fairview in favor of building townhouses by land developers, that included a businessman named Angelito Dominguez.

The July 25 demolition of houses was preceded by earlier similar operations on April 19 and July 10.

In Brgy. Bignay, Valenzuela City, the homes of 216 families were demolished on 4 July. At 6:00 a.m., more than 200 demolition personnel, 200 Bantay Bayan volunteers, staff of the City Engineer’s Office and around 50 armed men arrived in Hulo Dulo, Friendsville, Brgy. Bignay. Members of the PNP, SWAT and around 200 anti-riot police also arrived. Community residents negotiated with the city officials and policemen put on hold the demolition.

The residents submitted an appeal to Mayor Rex Gatchalian, asking for a decree releasing accessible to schools and their source of livelihood. However, the local government representatives said the decision to demolish the community is final. The City Government said it was preceded by a consent agreement for the transmission line of the National Grid Corporation and the land is owned by the National Power Corporation.

The residents said they are willing to relocate but the local government has no concrete relocation plan. The local government only provided PhP5,000 financial assistance to the families displaced during the first round of demolition on May 31.

The demolition team began tearing down the houses at 8:00 a.m. They forcibly dispersed the community’s barricade and destroyed all the houses and structures using a backhoe. Ricardo Gagap, a worker at Pentagon Steel Corporation and resident of Brgy. Bignay, was arbitrarily arrested. Police filed charges of serious physical injuries and alarm/scandal against Gagap. He was detained for five days at the Valenzuela City Police station and was released on bail on July 8.

Residents of Sitio San Roque, North Triangle, Quezon City, blocked the city’s demolition team from tearing down their homes. On July 1, some 300 residents and supporters put up a barricade along Agham Road to prevent the entry of a demolition team, backed up by policemen.

At 10:00 a.m., around 100 policemen from the Quezon City Police District Station 2 arrived at the barricade. Supt. Pedro Sanchez said they were deployed to clear the road. But, the residents refused to dismantle the barricade. They knew the policemen were there to carry out the demolition order.

Representatives from the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) initiated a negotiation between the police and residents. Supt. Sanchez did not agree to the residents’ request for the police to pull out before the residents dismantle the barricade. Instead, the police men pushed back the human shield with their truncheons.

Some residents were hit by police truncheons, while some tried to defend themselves by throwing rocks. In the end, the police were able to dismantle the barricade and the human shield of the residents.

Around 14 individuals were hurt during the clash. Pedicab
driver Mario Mesa, 50, was hit by a police tran- cisor while helping other residents. He had a cut on his forehead and bruises on his limbs and was immedi- ately rushed to the hospital for treatment.

At noon, the residents regrouped and trooped to the City Hall for a dialogue with Mayor Herbert Bautista and to denounce the violent dispersal of the police. But, they were again dispersed by the police while having a protest program in front of the city hall.

The 30-day notice to the residents to vacate their homes ended on May 30. The local government did not present any relocation plan, including alternative sources of livelihood for those who will be evicted.

The community of San Roque used to be home to 206,000 individuals and 7,000 families for more than three de- cades. Nearly half of the residents were forced out of the community after the violent demolition in September 2012. The QC local government carried out the demolition to “develop” the area into a commercial district.

Some of the residents agreed to self-demolish their homes and accepted the money offered by the LGU. To date, 4,000 families continue to resist eviction and re- location to Montalban, Rizal. They complained that the relocation site is far from their workplace and sources of livelihood and, also lies on a fault- line. Residents who accepted the Montalban relocation are now going back to Sitio San Roque because of lack of access to sources of livelihood and basic services.

Sitio San Roque is a 340-hect- are land. Of this, 230 hectares are targeted to become Quezon City’s business district, a banner project of the local government and the Ayala Land Corporation.

Arrests and detention

Since April 13, 129 workers of the Pentagon Steel Corporation are on strike after the management sum- marily dismissed workers for hold- ing a sit-down protest on April 12. The management said the April 12 protest violated the company’s rules and regulations.

The workers however asserted the action is an exercise of their right to express grievance. They launched the protest after 10 union members were penalized with preventive suspension without utilizing the grievance proce- dure in the workplace. On April 15 the workers filed a case of illegal lock- out, and illegal dismissal against the Pentagon management in the National Labor Relations Commission.

On 19 June, around 8:00 a.m., some 50 policemen from the Quezon City Police District arrived at the Pentagon Steel compound. The work- ers on strike were at the company gates keeping eye on the entry of illegally-hired workers or scabs. The police positioned themselves between the gate and picket line. There were also members of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) and Bomb Squad. A few minutes later, around 50 Pentagon scabs arrived aboard three jeeps. The union workers protested the entry of scabs and negotiated with the police. After a failed negotiation, the union workers attempted to block the entry of the jeeps. The police then pushed the picketing workers away from the gates.

The police collided unionists Joe Fontiveros and Melvil Noval and immediately brought them to the QCPO Station 1. Police men in plain clothes also nabbed Ricky De Vera. The three were charged with “grave coercion” for allegedly preventing some employees to enter the factory. The police also charged them with “re- sistance and disobedience to a lawful order of the police authority”.

The complaint of grave coercion was dismissed for lack of informa- tion on the conduct of intimidation. Fontiveros, Noval and De Vera were released on June 20.

On June 24, Camilo Cuares, president of the Alliance of Nationalist and Genuine Labor Organizations-Kilusang Mayo Uno (ANGLO-KMU) and a supporter of the Pentagon workers, was ar- rested by members of the Quezon City police as the picketing workers tried to block scabs from entering the company premises. Cuares was charged with direct assault. He was released after a three-day deten- tion. The prosecutor ordered further investigation on the charge filed against Cuares.

On May 25, another motorcycle (hatal-hatal) driver Joey Atienza, 33, was arrested by five soldiers of the 69th IBPA in Paquibato District, Davao City.

He is the secretary of the Panabo- Paquibato Motor Operators and Drivers Association (PAPMODA), while waiting for passengers at the terminal of the PAPMODA in Paquibato, Atienza received a call from a fellow driver Ronnie Muña. Muña said a passenger in Carmen town wanted to hire a hatal-hatal for the whole day. Atienza and Muña met with the passenger in a village in Dujali Municipality who asked them to load two sacks on their motorcycle.

Neither of the drivers asked about the con- tent of the sacks. Atienza and Muña loaded one sack each on their motor- cycles. They were instructed to bring the two sacks to Purok Mangga, Bgy. Paquibato proper. Atienza and Muña agreed to meet in Purok Mangga. On his way to Paquibato, Atienza noticed two unidentified riders tailing him. At noon, Atienza reached Brgy. Mahahay and was stopped at a check- point in front of Mahahay Elementary School. The checkpoint was manned by five soldiers from the 69th IBPA who were in full battle gear.

The military unloaded and opened Atienza’s sack. Inside the sack was a cardboard box wrapped with packaging tape. When the box was opened, Atienza saw six milk cans inside. He was immediately arrested by the soldiers.

The military claimed the milk cans were landmines or improvised explosive device (IED). Atienza, in defense, said he merely picked up the package for delivery. He assert- ed he did not know the person who hired him and he is not a member of the NPA.

The soldiers took Atienza to the headquarters of the 69th IBPA in Brgy. Dalisay, Panabo City. Davao del Norte, where he was placed in one of the “safe houses”. The soldiers took a photo of Atienza as well as the sup- posed IEDs.

Lt. Col. Incenocio Pasaporte, commanding officer of the 69th IB, interrogated Atienza. He asked about his “connection with the NPA.” While he was interrogated, Atienza was blindfolded, his wrists and ankles tied up, while he was repeatedly punched in the head and torso. Later, his head was wrapped in a plastic bag for several minutes until he struggled for breath.

Atienza begged the commanding officer “Malayo mo sa akoa, daghan ko’g pag-umangkon nga gibuhi…” (Have pity on me. I have nieces and nephews to feed). At around 5:00 p.m., Atienza’s mother and siblings arrived at the station. They were not allowed to enter. Later in the evening, the military turned over Atienza to the PNP in Davao City.

On May 25, Atienza’s inquest at the City Prosecutor’s Office was postponed because no fiscal was available. When Atienza was brought back to the precinct, three unidentified men, armed with pistols and in civilian clothes were waiting to hear him. The men interrogated Atienza from...
Anything and everything is PR

It is not very long ago when Aquino came up with his lofty but poorly crafted script. It is not very long ago when he bragged to the world that under his leadership the country eked out 7% GDP growth. True, but worse, that a President is spending on his whim funds coming from PAGCOR and PCSO, a state lottery and casino; the United States, a foreign country, is spending money on his military programs, for elementary and secondary public schools, state colleges and universities, government hospitals, including specialized hospitals so that these need not be privatized, and in all other social services that the people need, especially the poor and marginalized sectors of society.

In the final analysis, it is only in eradicating this rotten-to-the- core political system and the concomitant unjust social system, which breeds corruption, greed, exploitation and poverty, that we can truly be freed from the fetters of injustice and inhumanity. This can only be done by denouncing the existence of this recalchon, and from the top to the bottom of the political system to eradicate this system of corruption, greed and exploitation. It is only in eradicating this corrupt system that justice will be done to the victims of human rights violations.

Prosecution should not be confined to scammers like Janet Lim Napoles but, to all those who had connived with them to steal the people's money—agency heads, congressmen, senators and other public officials, including their very compliant staff. Prosecution should not be confined to those who are greatly and morally responsible, those who are the beneficiaries of the system.

Prosecute the culprits that deceived 16-year old Kristel Tejada, UP student, a future. She took her own life because education costs had been so prohibitive.

In the interest of justice, all party affiliation must be a reason for exemption and deterrent to prosecution. It is hoped that the slow grind of "due process" will not be an excuse to subvert justice. The same way that we hope expeditious, fair and impartial justice will also be rendered to the victims of human rights violations.

Rechannel pork barrel funds directly to budgets, with specific purposes, for elementary and secondary public schools, state colleges and universities, government hospitals, including specialized hospitals so that these need not be privatized, and in all other social services that the people need, especially the poor and marginalized sectors of society.

In the final analysis, it is only in eradicating this rotten-to-the-core political system and the concomitant unjust social system, which breeds corruption, greed, exploitation and poverty, that we can truly be freed from the fetters of injustice and inhumanity. This can only be achieved through vigorous, concerted, sustained, and decisive action by the people.
freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly.

The State violated Dutch activist Thomas van Beersum’s basic civil and political rights such as his freedom of movement and association. The persistent request of van Beersum’s family and SELDA to the Dutch authorities, however, launched a protest rally during Pres. Aquino’s visit to Oslo, Norway. Van Beersum was detained at the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center in 1996 to face trial for murder, double frustrated murder and illegal possession of firearms, all trumped up criminal charges. He was rearrested on November 5, 2010 on the same trumped up cases and was transferred to the New Bilibid Prison early this year.

In July, Oscar Belleza had an ischemic stroke and underwent a brain operation at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center to remove the blood clot in his brain. While recuperating in the hospital, Belleza was handcuffed on his hospital bed. He is now back at the Manila City Jail, although he still suffers from hypertension. The government did not spend a single centavo on Belleza’s hospitalization. Oscar Belleza was arrested on November 26, 2008 in Olongapo City. He was slapped with 15 counts of murder in Inopacan, Leyte in 1985. His case is pending at Branch 32 at the Manila Trial Court.

Death of a detainee while 47 others were injured

On September 14, Alison Alcantara, 55, died of fatal arrhythmia, sepsis and health-care associated pneumonia.

On September 9, Alcantara was rushed to the Philippine General Hospital from the New Bilibid Prison after he went into coma. He was earlier diagnosed with severe sepsis due to pneumonia and diabetes type 2. The persistent request of Alcantara’s family, SELDA to immediately transfer Alcantara to PGH and to eventually release him on humanitarian grounds was rejected by the Bureau of Corrections.

Butcor insisted they can manage Alcantara’s illness.

On September 4, Alcantara was rushed to the emergency room of the New Bilibid Hospitals when his blood sugar and blood pressure rose. He had been going in and out of the New Bilibid Hospitals due to uncontrolled diabetes with complications of hypertension, and an infected wound on the left foot.

Alcantara was among the three political prisoners in Cebu who were released in 2004 when the GRP agreed to release 32 political prisoners as part of confidence-building measures during the 3rd round of peace talks with the NDFP in Oslo, Norway. Alcantara was detained at the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center in 1996 to face trial for murder, double frustrated murder and illegal possession of firearms, all trumped up criminal charges. He was rearrested on November 5, 2010 on the same trumped up cases and was transferred to the New Bilibid Prison early this year.

On August 6, Bureau of Immigration officials at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) prevented Dutch activist Thomas van Beersum from boarding his flight, and detained him for 30 hours at the airport. Immigration officials insisted in holding Beersum supposedly because of his participation in a protest rally during Pres. Aquino’s SONA. To the BI, this was tantamount to participation in a partisan political activity.

Beersum and his counsel from the National Union of Peoples’ Lawyers (NUPL), however, contested the said charges saying it was a clear violation of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). According to the NUPL, the Philippines is bound to both covenants being a signatory and party to both. The State should respect Beersum’s basic civil and political rights such as his freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly.

On August 7, after a summary depositions session was inched, Beersum flew back to the Netherlands, although he was placed in a BI “blacklist.”

Enforced disappearance

Brian Epa, a coordinator of Katribu partylist – Nueva Vizcaya chapter, and a staunch anti-large-scale mining advocate disappeared on August 21. Epa led campaigns against destructive mining in the province.

In communities where there are barricades against the mining back pains. Peniero needs to undergo laboratory work-up to determine whether her thyroid nodule is benign or malignant.

There are 47 other political detainees who are ailing but do not receive proper and adequate medical treatment. The Aquino government refuses to release them even on humanitarian grounds.

Detection and deportation of a foreign activist

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In communities where there are barricades against the mining
exploration of the Royaleco Mining Exploration, military harassment and intimidation, red-tagging, surveillance, and sexual harassment of women are rampant.

On the day of Epa’s disappearance, around 9 a.m., village councilor Alfonso Shog-oy dropped off Epa at a friend’s house in Brgy. Salvacion, Dumalao Boulevard to get his bag. Both Epa and Shog-oy noticed three policemen at a street corner nearby.

On his way back to pick up Epa, Shog-oy saw six policemen inside a patrol car; three of them got off the car, approached Epa and tried to take away his bag. According to Shog-oy, Epa asked them what they were taking his bag for. Later, Shog-oy saw Epa being pushed by the policemen inside the patrol car. They said they were taking him for questioning because he is a fisher. The police punched Epa in the stomach and hit him with bats when he tried to resist attempts of police to handcuff him.

The following day, Shog-oy and Atty. Fidel Santos went to the PNP Bayombong station but policemen claimed that no male suspect was released. However, there was no record or police blotter on Epa’s arrest. The police claimed they released him because he was a fisher.

On September 1, at 8:00 a.m., a man on a Kawasaki motorcycle passed by. The motorcycle had no plate number, but with a sign on the side that was supposed to go to the site of the supposed encounter. The team accompanied the women to their homes, near the village chief’s house, they met two fishermen who were missing right after the encounter. The team accompanied the women to their homes, near the site of the supposed encounter. The team found their belongings either undisturbed or destroyed. As the two gathered their families’ remaining belongings, a soldier shot at the members of the human rights team. The soldiers were from an IBPA and the NPA.

On June 15, around 7:30 p.m., a seminarian noticed a man in front of the seminary gate. The man, unaware of the approaching seminarians, took out a rifle from a sack. When the man noticed the seminarians, he immediately shot the rifle on his shoulder and sped off on his motorcycle. In haste, the man left the sack in front of the gate.

Almost a week before this incident, seminarians from the ACTS noticed two suspicious looking men standing in front of the central gate of the seminary. As the seminarians approached the men, a motorcycle arrived, picked up the two men and sped off. People outside the seminary gate reported that four men would regularlyrove around the vicinity of the seminary, especially in the afternoons. There were also several reported incidents of attempted break-ins at the seminary.

Since 2001, Rev. Revollido has emphasized that the warrant of arrest for Roy Velez, still has a warrant of arrest for Roy Velez. Roy Velez is still being looked for by the barangay captain of Brgy. Boulevard, Molo, Iloilo City.

Migrante partylist congressman Erap Estrada called the incident “red-tagging” and warned they will hold the AFP and the Aquino government accountable should anything untoward happen to the members who were looking for their husbands who were missing right after the said encounter. The team accompanied the women to their homes, near the site of the supposed encounter. The team found their belongings either destroyed or missing. As the two gathered their families’ remaining belongings, a soldier shot at the members of the human rights team. The soldiers were from an IBPA and the NPA.

On June 18, Deduro said, she was at a NEDA Review Consultation on Official Development Assistance at the NEDA-VI Building, Iloilo City. The meeting, presided by Director Ro-Aann Bacal of NEDA VI, went from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

After the meeting, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., she accompanied a woman victim of domestic violence to the Molo PNP station and to the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Deduro, with a police inspector and DSWD social worker, later escorted the woman to meet with the barangay captain of Brgy. Boulevard, Molo, Iloilo City.

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On May 31, elements of the 74th IBPA fired at members of the Karapatan-Quezon quick reaction force and went to the Doongan village in Catanauan, Quezon. The team was sent to respond to reports of human rights violations after an encounter between the 74th IBPA and the NPA.

When the team arrived at the village of Bagtasan, three women who were looking for their husbands who were missing right after the said encounter. The team accompanied the women to their homes, near the site of the supposed encounter. The team found their belongings either destroyed or missing. As the two gathered their families’ remaining belongings, a soldier shot at the members of the human rights team. The soldiers were from an IBPA and the NPA.

On May 4, a blue van was spotted slowing down in front of Vener Cristosotomo’s house in Quezon City. A staff member of Karapatan-Quezon, got off the vehicle. Vener’s neighbor immediately reported this to the village security guard, who confirmed that a group of men indeed entered the subdivision.

The village guard said the van driver identified himself as Miqt. Fed. Saguin Tambacao, Jr., and presented a national chairperson, was inside the house preparing to leave for the Labor Day rally when he saw at least four men inside the house, wearing military jackets visibly hanging at the back.

Vener’s neighbor immediately reported this to the village security guard, who confirmed that a group of men indeed entered the subdivision.

The village guard said the van driver identified himself as Miqt. Fed. Saguin Tambacao, Jr., and presented a national chairperson, was inside the house preparing to leave for the Labor Day rally when he saw at least four men inside the house, wearing military jackets visibly hanging at the back.

Doubful, the security guard followed the van. The men neither went to the destination they gave the guard nor picked up anything from any of the houses. The guard followed the men and asked them to turn back and leave the area.

In Mendolka where the rally was held, Cristosotomo still noticed that he was being tailed.

O ne thing is clear. The people no longer trust the BS Aquino regime.

Neither BS Aquino’s sweet talk nor force can contain the people’s rage; nor can it break the people’s unity forged by the people’s movement and all forms of corruption it represents.

The people will not allow BS Aquino to suppress people’s indignation and protests, much more to preserve the exploitative and oppressive system that breeds corruption. The people will not allow BS Aquino to stand in the way they march on the road to real and meaningful change in Philippine society.
The call to abolish the presidential and congressional pork, and the worsening human rights situation under the BS Aquino regime direct the public’s eyes to focus on the 2014 budget appropriations of the various line agencies and how these agencies spend the people’s money.

For one, the people’s money finds its way to the implementation of US-Aquino regime’s counterinsurgency program Oplan Bayanihan. Karapatan’s research on the 2014 budget appropriation showed Oplan Bayanihan budget of at least PhP162 billion spread in various government agencies. The Department of National Defense (DND) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the main implementers of BS Aquino’s counterinsurgency program Oplan Bayanihan, expectedly get the biggest share.

The proposed budget of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA), Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), National Security Council (NSC) and specific projects such as PAMANA are included in the overall budget of Oplan Bayanihan because they serve as conduits in the implementation of Oplan Bayanihan’s components, specifically the psy-ops and intelligence aspects.

Many of these items, including intelligence funds and the budget for PAMANA program, are discretionary in nature and are exempted from audit by the Commission on Audit (COA).

The cases of human rights violations under the Aquino government that were documented by Karapatan are enough proof that billions of people’s money are spent by the BS Aquino government that were documented by Karapatan are enough proof that billions of people’s money are spent by the BS Aquino government to commit gross human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, against its own people.

### P466M reward for ‘communists’ a waste of people’s money

The DND-DILG’s Order of Battle (OB) list of ‘wanted communists’ and the corresponding ‘reward system’ are graphic illustration of how the government spends people’s money to violate people’s rights, while bureaucrats dip their fingers in the PhP 466 million bounty.

The Joint Memorandum of the DND-DILG allotted the PhP 466 million for the arrest of 235 individuals accused as ‘communists’ and to reward so-called informers who provide information that would lead to the arrest of the so-called communist leaders.

The scheme is nothing but an “organized racket” as exemplified by the arrest, torture, and detention of security guard Rolly Panesa and farmer Olegario Sebas. Both were wrongly tagged as leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People’s Army (NPA).

PANAMA has a 235 individuals accused as ‘communists’. The DND-DILG allotted the PhP 466 million for the arrest of 235 individuals accused as ‘communists’ and to reward so-called informers who provide information that would lead to the arrest of the so-called communist leaders.

The scheme is nothing but an “organized racket” as exemplified by the arrest, torture, and detention of security guard Rolly Panesa and farmer Olegario Sebas. Both were wrongly tagged as leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People’s Army (NPA).

Panesa was arrested on October 5, 2012, tortured and detained for 11 months because he was mistaken for “Benjamin Mendoza”, an alleged high ranking regional officer of the CPP. Last August 29, the Court of Appeals (CA) ruled positively on Panesa’s petition for writ of habeas corpus, citing it was a case of mistaken identity. The Court ordered the immediate release of Panesa from Camp Bagong Diwa.

Sebas, 65, was arrested on December 25, 2012 by the joint forces of the Philippine Army and the Philippine National Police in Tubod, Manjuyod, Negros Oriental. Sebas was mistaken for alleged top NPA cadre “Felimon Mendrez”, a subject of four arrest warrants for rebellion. Sebas was detained in the BJMP District Jail in Bayawan City for three weeks and was released when the court granted his petition for writ of habeas corpus.

In August, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Emmanuel Bautista proudly handed P5.25M and P5.6M rewards to informants who “identified” Panesa as “Benjamin Mendoza” and Sebas as “Felimon Mendrez,” respectively.

Now that the Courts have ruled, in both cases, that the military got the wrong men, the big question is where did the P10.8million bounty end up.

### OPLAN BAYANIHAND FUND

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agencies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Department of National Defense (DND)</td>
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### Paramilitary groups

Despite widespread and persistent clamor to disband paramilitary groups, civilian volunteer organisations and private armies, the DND budget includes PhP 2 billion for the compensation of members of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGUs).

The people’s money also goes to the operation of the Special Civilian Armed Auxiliary (SCAA) units, which are organized and trained by the AFP but are already financed by transnational mining corporations. The creation of the SCAA was given a go-signal by BS Aquino on October 20, 2011.

Several extrajudicial killings and human rights violations since 2010 involved paramilitary groups. These groups, attached to particular commands of the AFP and were involved in the killing of Bukidnon datu Jimmy Liguyon, Italian priest Fr. Fausto Tentorio, and the massacre of anti-mining activist Juvy Capion, and her two children.

During the United Nation’s Universal Periodic Review in 2012, the European Parliament and several other States, had called on the Philippine government to immediately disband all paramilitary groups.

The call to scrap Oplan Bayanihan becomes more urgent as mounting cases of human rights violations occur. It becomes more meaningful as the Filipino people clamor to redirect huge amounts of government money to social services — instead of ending up either in the generals’ pockets or used to violate people’s rights.

The Filipino people deserve better than a government that is repressive and corrupt.
International Conference for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines

The huge ballroom was filled with people from different nationalities speaking in various languages. They were from different cultures, gender, professions, and religion, representing generations of activists and peace workers. Most had never met before the gathering (or had just heard of each other from a colleague or the internet). Yet, everyone seemed to be smiling everyone inside the big hall. In each corner, people shook hands, gave a hug, a kiss on the cheek. In many ways, it looked like a reunion of friends who had never seen each other for years.

The 280 delegates flew into the Philippines with one thing in common: they all work for peace and human rights in their respective countries. They have one goal in mind: to forge and strengthen the solidarity for human rights in the Philippines.

Work for peace, fight for justice

Locally and globally, human rights have been violated and ignored by nearly all states which signed and ratified the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related treaties. The last three decades showed even more alarming developments—the erosion of legal standards for what constitutes human rights, and the use of human rights rhetoric as an imperial tool for reaction and even aggression.

Progressive movements must take to task governments and international bodies to adhere to the articles of the UDHR and related treaties and protocols. As signatories, the governments and international bodies are committed to the principles embodied in these declarations. They should be held accountable for the violations of these rights.

The theme, “Work for peace, fight for justice,” sets the tone for the three-day conference. The International Conference for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines (ICHRPP) was focused on the ever-worsening human rights and peace situation in the Philippines.

The conference called on Aquino’s anti-people policies such as his centerpiece program the Public-Private Partnership that favors big business and foreign investors at the expense of the poor Filipino people; his puppetry to the United States government at the expense of the country’s sovereignty and patrimony; and, the Oplan Bayanihan that terrorizes and kills people.

It is in this context that the International Coordinating Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICCHRPP) called for a Peace and Human Rights in the Philippines, Peace for Life, and the International League of Peoples’ Struggle (ILPS) organized the first International Conference for Human Rights and Peace in the Philippines.

The conference aimed to: 1. Identify and analyze the social, economic, and political and/or the geopolitical context of the worsening violations of collective and individual rights in the Philippines; 2. Identify common grounds with progressive forces in various countries and develop, expand, and promote international solidarity to defend, uphold and advance human rights and people’s rights; and, 3. Assess the significance of the combined national and international human rights solidarity campaigns concerning the Philippines since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship, and draw up a plan for an international solidarity campaign for human rights and peoples’ rights in the Philippines.

 Held at the Great Eastern Hotel, Quezon City, Metro Manila, the conference delegates came from 26 countries in five global regions: Asia, Latin America, North America, Europe and Oceania. Included are representatives from people’s and multi-sectoral organizations based in the Philippines.

International Solidarity Mission: First-hand experience of human rights situation in the Philippines

Prior to the conference, an International Solidarity Mission (ISM) was conducted in seven regions where human rights violations are rampant. The 92 ISM delegates from 15 countries expressed their steadfast support for the Filipino people’s struggle for human rights and justice.

The Central Luzon (CL) team went to Pags. Aquino’s Hacienda Luisita, Tarlac province where farmers and hacienda workers experience continued harassment and military operations; and in Aurora Province where people are threatened with displacement because of the Aurora Pacific Ecozone and Freeport Authority (APECO) project. The CL team also visited the place where Dutch volunteer worker Willem Geertman lived and worked before he was killed.

Another team went to Bondoc Peninsula, Quezon Province, where eight battalions of the Philippine Army are deployed, sowing terror in communities. The ISM delegates joined the humanitarian mission that included medical services, psychosocial workshops for the children, and distribution of relief goods among the displaced families.

In Mindanao, the biggest ISM delegation went to Talalanguid, Pananonlan, and New Bataan. These are communities hit by typhoon Pablo. The residents’ efforts to rehabilitate their communities, despite government neglect, are tagged with displacement because of the Aurora Pacific Ecozone and Freeport Authority in Aurora Province where people are threatened with displacement because of the Aurora Pacific Ecozone and Freeport Authority project. The team also visited the place where Dutch volunteer worker Willem Geertman lived and worked before he was killed.

In the Philippines, the successive regimes after martial law were no different from the Marcos dictatorship. Governments pay lip service to democracy, justice, and peace as they tamper on people’s basic and inalienable rights.

Locally and globally, human rights have been violated and ignored by nearly all states which signed and ratified the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related treaties. The last three decades showed even more alarming developments—the erosion of legal standards for what constitutes human rights, and the use of human rights rhetoric as an imperial tool for reaction and even aggression.

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As signatories, the governments and international bodies are committed to the principles embodied in these declarations. They should be held accountable for the violations of these rights. They must actually devote maximum available resources to progressively realize basic economic human rights as articulated in the ICESCR and the UDHR.

A conference of fighters

The conference teemed with energy and powerful voices that articulated the resolve of the oppressed and violated peoples to fight back.

Jeanne Miler delivered a strong keynote speech saying, “It is time that we use human rights law to challenge policies to ensure that the Filipinos can make the Philippine government act. The maximum available laws and resources to progressively realize basic economic human rights as articulated in the ICESCR and the UDHR.”

Afrida is the president of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and a founding member of the US-based National Lawyers Guild. Prof. Jose Maria Stein, chairperson of the International League of Peoples’ Struggle, said in his keynote speech through a video message, “Anchored in these violations of counterrevolutionary violence and human rights violations.” He scored the Aquino government for allowing multinational (MNC) companies to exploit the broad masses of the people and violate their economic, social, and cultural rights, and for using the “executive apparatus of the state to discourage and suppress even lawful petitioning as a tool of the military to continue to seek justice for my murdered brother,” Herman said during the conference. Herman’s brother, Willem, was gunned down on July 3, 2012 in Angeles City, Pampanga by suspected military assassins. Willem, a former missionary, was Executive Director of Alyan San. He spent most his life in the Philippines helping the peasants in Aurora province to organize themselves, and in opposing destructive mining and other “development” projects.

“The fact that impunity continues in the Philippines is proof that EU (European Aid) aid has been a waste of European taxpayer’s money,” Herman said as a response to the statement of EU ambassador Guy Ledoux lauding the Aquino government’s human rights record. “It is like rubbing salt to the wound and pain we are suffering with the unresolved killing of his brother,” Herman said. El Salvadoran peace activist Marta Benavides talked about her friend and colleague Oscar Romero who was shot dead while he celebrated mass on March 24, 1979. Bishop Romero was a critic of the El Salvadoran military junta, and assisted a number of victims of human rights violations during more than four decades. “We are in the Philippines right now… to continue to seek justice for my murdered brother,” Herman said during the conference. Herman’s brother, Willem, was gunned down on July 3, 2012 in Angeles City, Pampanga by suspected military assassins. Willem, a former missionary, was Executive Director of Alyan San. He spent most his life in the Philippines helping the peasants in Aurora province to organize themselves, and in opposing destructive mining and other “development” projects.

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peace globally,” said Aya Santos, daughter of Leo Velasco, a peace consultant of conference like this brings victims together, to take the struggle for justice and violence unites victims of rights violations, and it’s amazing how an international shared with each other the stories of how their loved ones disappeared and, their struggle of searching and fighting for justice.

Meeting Samuel is like meeting a brother from a distant land. Government violence unites victims of rights violations, and it’s amazing how an international conference like this brings victims together, to take the struggle for justice and peace globally,” said Aya Santos, daughter of Leo Velasco, a peace consultant of the National Democratic Front who is still missing.

Surveillance

The international human rights and peace activists gathered in one place seemed to have been perceived as a threat by the Aquino administration as it deployed military and police intelligence during the conference.

On the last day of the conference, July 20, as delegates geared up to attend the People’s SONA protest action the next day, the security staff of the conference apprehended a police officer and suspected military asset in two separate incidents.

A certain Kenneth Mendez was caught taking photos of delegates, and plate numbers of the cars of conference guests. Mendez initially claimed he is a news reporter but, could not mention what media outfit he was from. Also, a PO2, Emilio Fetalvo Jr. admitted he received order from a certain Col. Pelibillo of the PNP to conduct surveillance of the conference. Fetalvo was previously seen shadowing staff members of the Karapatan national office.

The foreign delegates of the conference condemned said surveillance. “I am indignant at the covert surveillance of the conference participants. But we will not be intimidated from joining the Filipino people in the vigorous protests,” Peter Murphy, an Australian labor rights activist, said in a statement.

On July 22, the delegates attended the People’s SONA held simultaneously with BS Aquino’s State of the Nation Address. It was an act of solidarity, the delegates said, with the Filipino people struggling for their rights. They saw first-hand how the Philippine police violently dispersed the Filipino protesters trying to get through the police barricade to reach the House of Representatives.

Milestone

One of the major achievements of the three-day international conference was the establishment of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines. More than 50 organizations from different countries joined the coalition, and vowed to “campaign and assist the Filipino people in their search for justice, hoping to bring their plight to the rest of the world, and in so doing, contribute to the realization of genuine and lasting peace in the Philippines.”

The establishment of the ICHRP is the result of several years of active campaigning by the international solidarity groups for the Philippines, specifically on the release of political prisoners, an end to political killings and enforced disappearances, the pull-out of military troops from rural communities, and for the resumption of the peace talks between the government and the NDFP.

The solidarity coalition also vowed to bring their lobby and advocacy work to the United Nations, national parliaments, and other relevant international institutions to “make the Macapagal-Arroyo and BS Aquino regimes accountable for their crimes against the Filipino people,” and to, “mobilize the international community for human rights in the Philippines.”

An 11-person global council composed of prominent human rights and peace advocates, church leaders, jurists, lawyers, academics, journalists, and community leaders were elected in the coalition’s founding Congress. Rev. Barry Naylor of the Anglican Church of the United Kingdom was elected Chairperson, while Peter Murphy of the SEARCH Foundation (Australia), General Secretary.

“Together with the Filipino people, our campaign for human rights and democracy in the Philippines is, indeed, a “portent of doom” for the anti-people, pro-haciendero, pro-foreign big business, and pro-US-Aquino regime,” Murphy said.