



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIAL

Duterte fascist regime has not learned from history

Reminiscent of the Vietnam War where US and local puppet troops called in massive airstrikes when they were in armed skirmishes with the Vietminh forces, Duterte's armed troops called in a massive airstrike against a guerilla unit of the New People's Army on 16 August in Dolores, Eastern Samar. US-supplied drones, attack planes and helicopters dropped bombs, fired missiles and cannon rounds against the revolutionary forces armed only with handguns, rifles and grenades.

This indiscriminate and brutal use of aerial firepower by the Armed Forces of the Philippines is a blatant violation of the rules of proportionality and necessity under international humanitarian law. The fascist troops disregarded the fact that there were unarmed medical personnel and civilians in the targeted area.

19 NPA fighters were martyred during the daylong air attack. Their sacrifice weighs heavy upon on the hearts of the working people across the Philippines and all the oppressed peoples of the world. We grieve the loss of our beloved warriors who gave their lives in the service of the people. But we will turn grief into greater strength and resolve to carry on in expanding the revolution.

Today in Eastern Visayas and the rest of the country, the NPA is making strides in increasing the number of new Red fighters, organizing new units, expanding its areas of operations, building new guerilla fronts and mounting tactical offensives to strike blows against the fascist monsters. The embattled NPA unit in Dolores will reorganize with new recruits to continue the work left by our fallen heroes.

Duterte did not learn from the lessons of the Vietnam War half a century ago and the recent events in Afghanistan. A corrupt puppet regime cannot rely on the massive use of bombs and advanced weapons to save itself from the wrath of a suppressed people fighting for its liberation. **UP**



*NPA fighter and visual artist Ka Parts Bagani.
Photo: cpp.ph*

Summary executions, aerial bombardment kill 22 revolutionary fighters

A series of large-scale combat and assassination operations by the Duterte government's security forces in the last two weeks have killed at least 22 revolutionary fighters of the New People's Army in central and southern Philippines. On 16 August, combined elements of the Philippine Army 5th Special Forces Battalion, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and local Philippine National Police assassinated celebrated NPA fighter and visual artist John Niebres in his home in Cannery Site village, Polomolok town in South Cotabato province.

Niebres, renowned as 'Ka Parts Bagani', was unarmed when killed by the state security forces. Marco Valbuena, Chief Information Officer of the Communist Party of the Philippines said, "Ka Parts was unarmed and was in no position to fight," countering the Philippine Army's version that Ka Parts was killed in a gunfight when he was supposed to be served an arrest warrant.

Also on 16 August, the Armed Forces of the Philippines launched a massive aerial bombardment and strafing campaign against a unit of the NPA in Dolores town, Eastern Samar province, killing 19 guerilla fighters. Starting at 8:00 am, AFP surveillance drones, attack helicopters, FA-50 jet fighters and A-29B Super Tucano aircrafts fired rocket missiles and cannon rounds and dropped 500-pound bombs, including in agricultural and residential areas of Dolores town.

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The CPP Information Bureau confirmed that “the fallen Red fighters were part of a 50-man unit of the NPA who were in the area to conduct political, military, economic, education, cultural and medical work among the peasant masses.” The CPP added the NPA unit included a medical team who were set to conduct surgery and other medical procedures in the camp when the AFP aerial attacks started.



NPA fighter and literary artist Kerima Lorena Tariman. Photo: Kiri Dalena | phkule.org

On 20 August, two NPA fighters, Kerima Lorena Tariman and ‘Ka Pabling’, were martyred in an armed clash with the Philippine Army’s 79th Infantry Battalion in Hacienda Raymunda, Silay City, in Negros Occidental province. CPP Chief Information Officer Marco Valbuena said that Tariman, known as Ka Ella, “was captured alive by elements of the 79th Infantry Battalion... was not provided immediate medical treatment and was instead finished off or left to bleed to death.”

Tributes and honors have been pouring in for the fallen revolutionary fighters. The CPP paid tribute to Ka Parts Bagani “as a Red Artist of the People and valiant warrior of the NPA... His artworks reflected the people’s yearning for freedom from oppression, exploitation, hunger and for national and social liberation.”

The CPP also called on all revolutionary forces and the Filipino people to honor the 19 martyrs of Dolores, Eastern Samar, saying they are “among the best sons and daughters of the people who dedicated their lives to the cause of national freedom and democracy.” Admitting their death as a big loss, the CPP said however that “it is a temporary setback... The NPA continues to make strides in recruiting new Red fighters, building more units, expanding its areas of operations, building new guerrilla fronts... In due time, the embattled guerrilla unit of the NPA in Dolores will be reorganized with new recruits to continue the work left by their fallen heroes.”

Ka Ella Tariman, an acclaimed literary artist, revolutionary journalist and mother was hailed by the CPP, “She became the artist she was by immersing herself with the peasant masses whom she served. In them, she found the muse for her craft... Ka Ella offered her life for the liberation of the Filipino people from fascism, oppression and exploitation.” **UP**



Image: cpp.ph

NDFP urges probe of Eastern Samar airstrikes

The Eastern Visayas Chapter of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines on 24 August called on the Philippine Commission on Human Rights to investigate “the disproportionate use of force” by units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in the airstrikes against a local unit of the New People’s Army in Dolores town, Eastern Samar province, on 16 August.

In a letter addressed to Atty. Desiree Pontejos of the CHR Region 8, the NDFP said, “the AFP committed gross violations of international humanitarian law, particularly provisions regarding the disproportionate use of force against opponent forces, as well as those protecting the rights of hors de combat and civilian communities surrounding the site of attack.”

The 13-hour bombing, indiscriminate firing and shelling, the NDFP said, was “a mere three kilometers away from the nearest village” which could have caused psychological trauma and damages to residents’ properties.

The NDFP Eastern Visayas noted that “the CHR has also been subjected to threats and Red-tagging by the AFP. We urge your office to be steadfast to your primary mandate of investigating human rights violations, especially those committed by state actors.”

The Communist Party of the Philippines has also accused security forces of the Duterte government of violating international humanitarian law in the murder on 16 August of NPA visual artist John Niebres in Polomolok, South Cotabato, and the death on 20 August of NPA literary artist Kerima Lorena Tariman in Silay City, Negros Occidental.

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The CPP said that Niebres, popularly known as ‘Ka Parts Bagani’, was unarmed in his home when he was murdered by combined elements of the Philippine Army, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and Philippine National Police.

The CPP said that Tariman, renowned as ‘Ka Ella’, was captured alive after her NPA unit had an armed encounter with elements of the Philippine Army. Ka Ella, however, “was not provided immediate medical treatment and was instead finished off or left to bleed to death.”

Philippine human rights alliance Karapatan said an independent investigation should be conducted on Tariman’s death. Karapatan Secretary General Cristina Palabay said, “according to a witness, Tariman only had gunshot wounds on her fingers, but apparently the military decided to finish her off.” According to Philippine Army officials themselves, Tariman’s shoulder had been hit by bullets and was severed.

Meanwhile, close to 400 human rights advocates from the Philippines and around the globe signed a joint statement on 13 August, calling on the International Criminal Court and the UN Human Rights Council “to conduct impartial and independent investigations into the human rights crisis” in the Philippines and “to prosecute President Rodrigo Duterte and his allies for their cruel crimes against the Filipino people.”

Recalling murders committed by security forces of the Duterte government since 2016, “August has come to be marked as a month of killings in the Philippines under the Duterte administration... We choose to mark August as a month of remembering and reckoning, a month of taking action and demanding justice.”

They added, “we ring our call to stop the killings in the Philippines and to end all the bloody campaigns and policies that have facilitated these murders.” **UP**



Photo: miningnewspro.com

Systemic labor rights abuses found in Dinagat Nickel mines

A two-year study conducted by Amnesty International on the situation of nickel mine workers in Dinagat Islands in southern Philippines showed “systemic” labor rights abuses, including workers being employed without written contracts, delayed payment of wages, and nonpayment of employers’ contributions for their employees’ mandatory health, housing and social security benefits.

The study, released by AI on 27 August, involved at least 100 mine workers and 15 focus group discussions in 15 villages of the Dinagat Islands province. AI analyzed the

workers’ payslips and held talks with the provincial governor, experts in labor and industrial relations and officials of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and Department of Labor and Employment.

The study exposed the practice of mining companies hiring through ‘manpower services companies’. While the mining firms were not directly involved in the hiring, AI said the mining companies are complicit in perpetrating labor abuses because they failed to do due diligence on the companies that provide them with workers. In 2019, a total of 2,300 workers were employed in the mining sector in Dinagat Islands.

Five companies currently operate nickel mines in the province, namely, Cagdianao Mining Corp, Century Peak Corp, Libjo Mining Corp, Oriental Vision Mining Philippines Corp and Sinosteel Philippines HY Mining Corp. Libjo Mining, Oriental Vision and Sinosteel have substantial involvement of capital from China. These three mining firms were also exposed in 2016 by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for violating several environmental codes, including siltation of coastal waters, illegal cutting of trees and failure to comply with their environmental certificates.

The Philippines is one of the largest producers of nickel ore in the world and is the leading supplier of nickel ore to China. **UP**