

# KARAPATAN Monitor

January - March 2015

Released by KARAPATAN (Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights)

**L**ess than a week after the euphoria brought about by the visit of Pope Francis to the Philippines, on January 16-19, the Filipinos were shaken by another of President BS Aquino's fiasco, the Mamasapano botched military operation.

The ill-planned and executed military operation, which killed 44 of Aquino's own Special Action Force (SAF), 18 fighters of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and seven civilians, was easily turned by the US-Aquino regime to a game of lies and blames. The people plumbed the depths of lies and diversionary tactics that flooded the country as BS Aquino tried to hide his puppetry to the US, his inept leadership, and the favors and protection he gives his bosom buddy, the suspended chief of Philippine National Police Gen. Allan Purisima.

BS Aquino could not escape responsibility over the Mamasapano incident because even the Board of Inquiry's report, wanting as it is, pointed at him as commander in chief who approved Oplan Exodus. The report showed how BS Aquino violated the chain of command by retaining Gen. Purisima at the helm of the operation despite charges of corruption and subsequent suspension order by the Ombudsman. BS Aquino acted on behalf of the US's interest on Marwan, and received funding and information in exchange.

What followed were a resounding cry for truth and accountability and a renewed call for Noynoy Aquino's resignation/ouster from office as the country recalled and enumerated similar tragic events, policies and actions the BS Aquino government was responsible for but flouted. Simultaneously, BS Aquino took on the "business as usual" stance—even taking great pleasure in boasting of his so-called economic growth and infrastructure development.



And, the usually unnoticed but equally alarming human rights violations committed by the US-Aquino regime continue, “as usual” i.e., the extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests and detention, and forced evacuation.

### Extrajudicial killings

Human rights violations committed against civilians, not only in Maguindanao during the costly Mamasapano fiasco but also in many parts of the country, have escalated, raising the number of victims of extrajudicial killings under the Aquino regime to at least 238; and 270 victims of frustrated killing by the first quarter of 2015.

### Civilian victims of the Mamasapano fiasco

The reports of both the PNP Board of Inquiry and the Senate on the Mamasapano incident obviously skipped the seven civilian casualties and the hundreds of residents displaced during the military operation. They, too, were victims of the US-Aquino’s botched Oplan Wolverine/Exodus. They, too, should figure in in BS Aquino’s accountability.

Reports from Kawagib Human Rights Alliance for the Advancement of Moro Human Rights (Kawagib) said at around 4:00 a.m. of January 25, after the early morning prayer, **Badrudin Langalan**, 18, left for Crossing Tukanalipao, a community along the national highway of

Mamasapano, to charge his mobile phone. Riding a bicycle, he had to pass through a wooden bridge connecting his community and those along the highway. At the time, the PNP-SAF was stationed on the bridge.

After an hour, at around 5 a.m., Badrudin’s wife, **Sarah Lawani**, 18, heard gunfire and bomb explosion from the direction of the wooden bridge. Immediately, she took her children, and along with the rest of the residents, evacuated to another barangay.

Around lunchtime, when there were no more sounds of guns and bombs, Sarah and the other residents returned to their community. Sarah saw her husband Badrudin hogtied near the wooden bridge at Bgy. Tukanalipao, together with the rest of the bodies of PNP-SAF. His head bashed and his body bruised. A witness told Sarah the PNP-SAF had taken Badrudin before the fire fight began. Badrudin and Sarah have two children.

Almost at the same time that Badrudin left to charge his phone, the Pananggulon family was awakened by loud gunshots in Pimbalkan, Mamasapano. Their hut, which was right in the middle of the cornfield, was indiscriminately fired at by the PNP-SAF, killing 8-year-old **Sarah Pananggulon** and wounding her parents, **Samra Sampulna** and **Pananggulon Mamasalaga**. The sun was already up when civilians were able to help the Pananggulons leave the place. Only then did Samra realize that their hut was just 200 meters away from where the PNP-SAF made its assault.

According to the MILF’s Special Investigative Commission Report on the Mamasapano botched operation, the day after the mishap, and long after the GPH and the MILF declared ceasefire, another civilian was shot dead by the PNP-SAF lone survivor PO2 Christopher Lalad. Lalad shot **four MILF members** who were resting inside a small mosque. On his way out from the mosque, he shot one more, **Mohammad Ambilang**.



Killings “as usual”. Labor organizer Florencio Romano (left) and farmer Virgilio Leotorco .



Ambilang, a tricycle driver, happened to be at the opposite end of the wooden bridge in Tukapanalipao trying to get the belongings of his aunt who sought refuge at his house from the bombings the day before. Ambilang left a wife and two children.

#### *EJK cases all-over the country*

**Mabini “Tata” Beato** (earlier reported as Tata Baito), a Lumad of Bukidnon province in Northern Mindanao was gunned down on March 24 at about 9:00 a.m. He was a member of the Lumad group TINDOGA (Indigenous Group Tribal Indigenous Oppressed Group Association), an organization fighting for its members’ right to ancestral domain against the incursion of a landlord, Pablo “Poling” Lorenzo.

The security personnel of Lorenzo fired at Beato and wounded two others, **Jave Sam Bagna** and **Romeo Timtim** (earlier reported as Japsem Bagna and Ricky Tumbaga, respectively), whose upper torsos were hit by bullets.

TINDOGA is one of the legitimate claimants of ancestral land under the government’s Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) program. Some 622 hectares of the ancestral land claimed by TINDOGA was leased by the government to the Montalvan ranch, owned by Lorenzo. The contract, however, ended in 2009 but the Montalvan ranch continued to operate, with the use of its own security personnel and the support of the military and government agencies.

Beato was on his way to TINDOGA’s bungkalan, where the indigenous people collectively till parts of their ancestral land to assert their claim. Beato, with 200 others were met by some 20-30 of Lorenzo’s armed men and security guards who opened fire at them. Beato was killed instantly.

Up north, in Bgy. Matusalem, Roxas, Isabela province, another farmer, **Virgilio Leotorco**, was killed in the evening of March 16. “Help me. I was shot. I am dying,” Leotorco implored in Ilocano as a fellow farmer found him near an irrigation canal. Leotorco was there to catch edible frogs. He was shot three times at close range with a .45 caliber

pistol. Before the other farmer could ask for help Leotorco died.

A member of the Agbiag Matusalem Roxas Isabela-Danggayan Dagiti Mannalon iti Isabela (Amari-Dagami), Leotorco, 56, was among the 66 settlers fighting for a space at the Mallig Plains Reservation, a promised resettlement area for which the Isabela State University (ISU) claims ownership. He was a Kalinga who migrated to Isabela to find land which he can cultivate and develop.

In a statement, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) in Cagayan Valley stated, “The land dispute became increasingly violent as the ISU-Roxas, an academic institution which should be a bastion of human rights advocacy, resorted to illegal demolition and burning of hundreds of houses, shooting of residents, indiscriminate firing of guns, destruction of crops, housing materials and house perimeter walls as well as verbal assault, threats and intimidation by its security personnel.”

Soldiers of the 5th Infantry Division (ID) of the AFP also entered the community, beefing up the ISU-Roxas security guards.

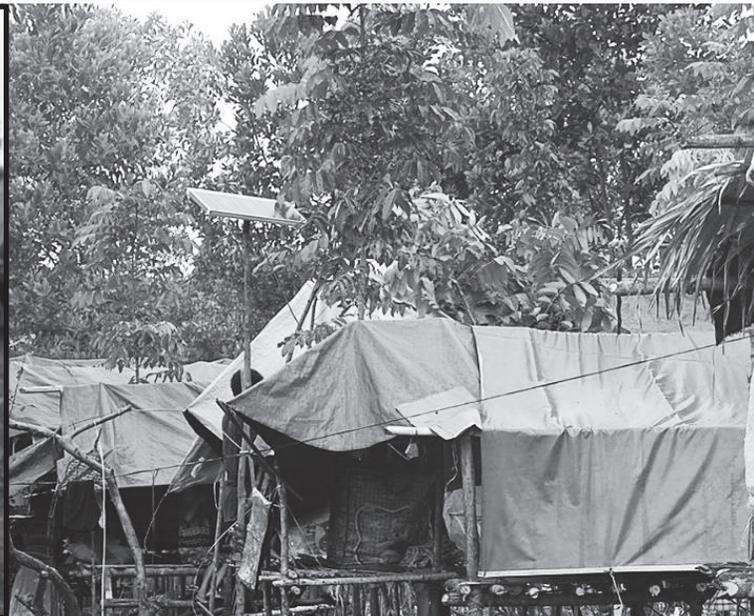
Last year, on February 28, 2014, another member of AMARI, Romulo dela Cruz, was a

victim of enforced disappearance. He has been missing since.

On March 8, a union organizer of Pagkakaisa ng Manggagawa sa Timog Katagalugan–Kilusang Mayo Uno (PAMANTIK-KMU), **Florencio “Ka Bong” Romano**, was found dead along the National Highway in Bgy. Suroso Karsada, Batangas City. He was shot and his face was crushed. Romano’s friends and colleagues point to the Philippine Air Force stationed

**TABLE 1: Violations of Civil & Political Rights under the Noynoy Aquino Government (July 2010 to March 2015)**

Violation	No. of victims
Extrajudicial Killing	238
Enforced Disappearance	26
Torture	110
Rape	5
Frustrated Extrajudicial Killing	270
Illegal Arrest without Detention	293
Illegal Arrest and Detention	723
Illegal Search and Seizure	311
Physical Assault and Injury	420
Demolition	20,745
Violation of Domicile	551
Destruction of Property	12,722
Divestment of Property	388
Forced Evacuation	59,612
Threat/Harassment/Intimidation	125,061
Indiscriminate Firing	11,305
Forced/Fake Surrender	59
Forced Labor/Involuntary Servitude	174
Use of Civilians in Police and/or Military Operations as Guides and/or Shield	593
Use of Schools, Medical, Religious and Other Public Places for Military Purpose	169,964
Restriction or Violent Dispersal of Mass Actions, Public Assemblies and Gatherings	27,129



at the Fernando Airbase in Batangas City as perpetrators. Other leaders of progressive organizations have been victims like Romano of harassment and surveillance from the intelligence service of the Air Force.

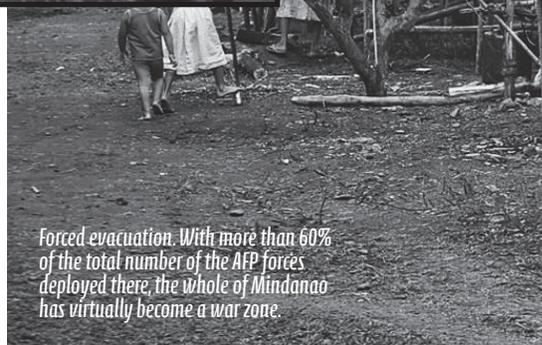
The many victims of extrajudicial killings all over the country were killed because they fought for their right to land and jobs. The bullets that killed them aimed to silence them, their colleagues and their organizations, and disrupt their communities.

### Terrorizing communities and people's organizations

The death, for example, of Necasio Precioso Sr. on December 22, 2014 prompted the evacuation of hundreds of residents from San Luis, Agusan del Sur to Balit in the same province. Precioso was killed by motorcycle-riding men in front of his children and a relative.

The military operations of the 26th Infantry Battalion (IB) of the Philippine Army (PA), which started in the last quarter of 2014, went on until the first quarter of 2015; the impact of which was aggravated by the killing of Precioso. His death was among the many human rights violations committed by the 26th IB since they arrived in San Luis, Agusan del Sur. The 26th IB accused residents of being supporters of the New People's Army (NPA). Precioso once confronted a soldier about the false accusation.

The presence of the military in the villages and the attacks against the people resulted in the evacuation



*Forced evacuation. With more than 60% of the total number of the AFP forces deployed there, the whole of Mindanao has virtually become a war zone.*



of the indigenous Banwaon tribe from their communities.

### *Banwaon tribe left their homes*

On January 1, 2015 the Banwaon tribe decided to leave Sitio Tabon-tabon and arrived at Sitio Tabanganan, Barangay Mahagsay the following day. A day later, they received reports that the house of one of the evacuees was burned down. Not having enough food, half of the evacuees transferred to another village in Sitio Kimambukagyang, Mahagsay on January 5.

In a span of five days, from January 18-25, 2015, residents in 14 more communities evacuated and headed for Barangay Balit, Agusan Sur. All in all, there were about 174 families or a thousand individuals who left their homes and farms.

On March 8-9, an International Solidarity Mission was conducted in Balit, Agusan del Sur to look into the situation of the evacuees. The mission also documented 93 cases of rights violations such as: "indiscriminate firing, restriction of movement,

gun-toting, destruction and divestment of properties, use of public facilities for military purposes, use of civilians as guides or human shields, fake surrenders, threats, harassment and intimidation."

The military encamped in schools and barangay halls in Balit and Mahagsay. The schools of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP) were particularly tagged as NPA schools, forcing the RMP to close down six of them.

The military's practice of encampment in schools, medical, religious and other public places has victimized 169,964 as of March 30, 2015.

The military, in the guise of implementing Community Organizing for Peace and Development (COPD), also forcibly recruited residents to join the Peace Development Security Volunteers (PDSV). The PDSV is similar to Oplan Bantay Laya's Civilian Volunteers Organization (CVO) under the US-Arroyo regime. It is a paramilitary group that serves as the AFP's force multiplier



in the implementation of its counterinsurgency program.

At the evacuation center, three children and an adult died from ailments. Exhaustion, lack of food, and the overall unsatisfactory health condition of the children even prior to the evacuation made the children susceptible to diseases which led even to their death. A pregnant woman was another casualty.

Those who died were: **Jamson Tilocan**, 4, and **Miguel Man-anito**, 3, who had German measles; and **Printon Saya-saya**, 2, who died of pneumonia.

On March 20, the Banwaon evacuees headed back to their communities after the 26th IB-PA announced in a dialogue with local government officials of Agusan del Sur that they will pull out of the Banwaon ancestral land.

Prior to the March 18 dialogue, calls for the military pullout echoed even in the international community. A dialogue between the East Mindanao Command headed by Lt. Gen. Aurelio Baladad and

the Banwaon representatives was facilitated by Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte on February 25, 2015. The 26th IB-PA operates under the East Mindanao Command. Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, also the chairperson of the Regional Peace and Order Committee, openly criticized the military for using public facility as base camp.

#### *All-out war in Maguindanao*

Kawagib and the Suara Bangsamoro conducted two Peace and Humanitarian Missions in Maguindanao after the Mamasapano botched military operation. It aimed to check on the situation of civilians when the AFP launched an all-out war against the forces of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). The BIFF became the target of the US-Aquino regime after the failed operation in Mamasapano. Consequently, thousands of civilians were displaced.

Two months after Mamasapano, civilians were still on the run to save their lives as the military bombarded

their communities. But their condition in the evacuation centers is no better. The participants of the peace mission who went to Bgy. Dapiawan in Maguindanao were witness to the gun fires and mortar shelling on March 11.

A 42 year old, 3-month pregnant mother with 10 children who was interviewed in one of the missions “expressed uncertainty of life if the war continues.” The woman said “one of her children collapsed in the middle of the volley of fires because of intense fear and (afterwards) could not talk anymore.”

From the initial 1,500 residents who fled their homes after the failed military operation in Mamasapano, the humanitarian mission citing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao’s Humanitarian Emergency Action and Response Team (ARMM-HEART) said there were at least 73,000 individuals from the 11 municipalities who were displaced. Most of them stayed in cramped evacuation centers —sick, hungry, and traumatized.

Farmer **Boyong Unggala**, 36, of Bgy. Madia was hit by a bullet on his forehead while sitting at their house’s porch when the military strafed the house where he was temporarily staying. **Farhannah Abdulkahar**, 25, a resident of Bgy. Dapiawan, Datu Saudi, also evacuated when their house was indiscriminately fired upon. Her left leg was hit by a bullet.

During the peace mission at Barangay Madia, the **Peace**

**Mission participants** were harassed by soldiers of the 8th Mechanized Battalion who arrived in three 6x6 trucks and two military tanks. The soldiers went straight to the vacant lot beside the barangay hall adjacent to the evacuation center. They immediately mounted two 81mm mortars without even informing the barangay officials and residents in the community.

Other documented cases, aside from forced evacuation and divestment of property, were indiscriminate firing, mortar shelling (81mm & 105mm howitzer) and aerial bombing by OV10 Bronco planes; destruction of property; frustrated extrajudicial killings; harassment and intimidation of civilians; military encampment in public and religious structures. The military operation disrupted children's classes in the communities.

Karapatan at this point called on Aquino to immediately stop its all-out war against the Moro people. "It is nothing but a diversionary and face-saving tactic and does not help in arriving at the truth on the Mamasapano fiasco. It has only added to Aquino's dismal human rights record as numerous human rights violations were documented by the peace mission."

With more than 60% of the total number of the AFP forces deployed there, the whole of Mindanao has virtually become a war zone. Prior to BS Aquino's bungled operation in Mamasapano, some 55 combat battalions were already deployed in Mindanao, a declared priority target of the BS Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan. The deployment does not count PNP personnel, paramilitary groups and other civilian assets involved in combat operations.

Military presence alone in communities disrupts and endangers the life of the villagers. Soldiers harass and intimidate the civilian populace, tagging them as protectors and supporters of the New People's Army. Military violence fills the air.

### *Indiscriminate firing*

On February 18, 2015, **Ernesto Binaliw** and his wife **Merlyn Binaliw** went back to Mangasa, Sitio Damitan, Dalwangan, Malaybalay and saw that his farm house was forcibly opened and ransacked by elements of 1st Special Forces PA, based at Mampayag, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. The unit is under the command of Col. Nasser Lidasan.

The 53-year-old Binaliw, married with six children, is an Igorot farmer who migrated to Bukidnon. He has a farm lot and a hut in Mangasa and in Casisang, both in Malaybalay City.

Binaliw said that at around 11:00 a.m. on February 11, he and his wife Merlyn heard gunshots. An hour later, the military bombed the village, which caused panic among the residents. The incident prompted Ernesto and his wife to go to their residence in Casisang. Binaliw was certain their Mangasa farm house was locked and things were kept in order before they left.

When Binaliw went back to Mangasa after a week, they found several bullet holes in and outside the house—at the entrance, on one of the windows, in the kitchen and near the back door. They recovered empty .45

caliber and M16 armalite shells.

Ernesto and Merlyn said they found their belongings upturned and ransacked. The 50 sacks of chicken dung they use for fertilizer were thrown out and cooking utensils were deformed. Ernesto's wallet with important documents in it, his farming tools, and the pictures of his children posted on the wall were carted away. Later, they learned that it was the work of some 30 members of the 1st SF PA who had a firefight with members of the NPA at Capitan Anghel, an adjacent village.

Another case of indiscriminate firing involved **a group of tourists** from the United Kingdom, Denmark and Australia who went to Bukidnon Province for bird-watching at the Mt. Kitanglad Range Natural Park.

**Peter Simpson**, the group's leader, applied for a permit with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Malaybalay City. The DENR office issued a four-day permit, from February 11-14, 2015, after the group submitted all the requirements. The group left with their local tourist guides Carlito Gayramara and Dannie Docinos.

On the third day, February 13, at about 6:00 a.m., the group headed

**TABLE 2: Victims of Extrajudicial Killing & Enforced Disappearance under Noynoy Aquino Gov't by Region (July 2010 to March 2015)**

Region	Extrajudicial Killing	Enforced Disappearance
Ilocos	3	0
Cordillera Administrative Region	8	0
Cagayan Valley	11	2
Central Luzon	11	1
NCR	10	0
Southern Tagalog	22	4
Bicol	54	3
Western Visayas	12	4
Central Visayas	4	0
Eastern Visayas	11	1
Northern Mindanao	12	0
Caraga	19	7
Socskarsargen	10	0
Western Mindanao	11	1
Southern Mindanao	35	1
ARMM	5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Women</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Organized</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>11</b>

for Purok Mangaso, Bgy. Dalwangan, Malaybalay City. Almost three hours later, at around 8:45 a.m., the group was met with a burst of gunfire as they approached the forested area.

**Carlito Gayramara** said the first volley of gunfire hit his left forearm. He said he remembered the heavy gunfire, which sounded like they were coming from high powered guns.

Gayramara managed to order the group members to drop to the

ground and crawl for safety. Six of the tourists went with Gayramara while the other one went with **Dannie O. Docinos**. The tourists, using their shirts, jackets and belt, tried to give first aid to Gayramara who was bleeding profusely. The group spotted a farmer whom they approached for help. The farmer used his horse to bring Gayramara to Sitio Damitan, Dalwangan, Malaybalay City where a motorcycle was available.

The tourists were horrified and traumatized by the incident, hugging each other and teary-eyed after their “escape”. The tourists lost seven binoculars, two high-tech telescopes, cameras and a number of backpacks.

Later, in a radio interview, the Commanding Officer of 403rd IB PA ridiculously accused Gayramara of being an NPA commander who headed the group which had an encounter with the military.

#### *Harassment of leaders of people's organization*

Suppression of the people's voice also takes the form of false charges being filed against the leaders and members of people's organizations who openly criticize the fascist attacks on the civilian population and expose blatant state protection given to business interests that encroach on communities, especially those rich in natural resources.

Mindanao indigenous leader **Jomorito Goaynon** faces another trumped-up criminal case for the death of his cousin Dorlito Goaynon dela Mance on March 28, 2015.

Goaynon, Chairperson of Kalumbay, a regional organization of Lumad in Northern Mindanao, was named in a complaint filed by Jenita dela Mance, Dorlito's wife, at the Malaybalay City police station. Also named respondents in the murder charge were seven of Jomorito's siblings. The complainant claimed the Goaynon brothers were members of the Rexan Perez Command-New People's Army.

Later, members of the Julito Tiro Command-New People's Army owned up to the “revolutionary punishment” meted out to Dorlito de la Mance, a leader of the de la Mance group, a paramilitary/ bandit group involved in robbery, holdup, and extortion, cattle rustling, land grabbing and murder of civilians.

This is the second time Jomorito Goaynon



*Indigenous leader Jomorito Goaynon charged on the basis of a “complainant” tortured testimony by the military.*

**TABLE 3:**  
**Victims of Extrajudicial Killing & Enforced Disappearance under Noyon Aquino Gov't by Sector (July 2010 to March 2015)**

Sector	Extrajudicial Killing	Enforced Disappearance
Church	3	0
Entrepreneur	5	0
Environmentalist	7	0
Fisherfolk	5	0
Government Employee	3	0
Indigenous People	55	1
Media	3	0
Minor	20	0
Peasant	145	20
Teacher	1	0
Urban poor	13	1
Human rights worker	2	0
Worker	8	1
Youth and Student	8	1
Moro	6	1
Transport	6	0

was falsely charged with criminal offense since he figured prominently in the anti-militarization campaign in Mindanao, specifically the recent evacuation of the more than 1,000 residents from 14 communities to Balit, Agusan del Sur due to the continuous military operations in the villages.

A month earlier, on March 23, Goaynon and seven other leaders of people's organizations and human rights workers received a copy of a petition for writs of habeas corpus and amparo filed by the 4th IDPA in the name of Tedy Ostos on February 23. Ostos accused the respondents of the illegal detention of his son, Rene Ostos, and his family. Rene was among those who stayed at the evacuation center in Bgy. Balit.

Aside from Goaynon, the seven others who were named respondents in the petition for a writ of Habeas Corpus were: **Julieto Tawide Gomez, Reyjoy Precioso and Junrey Precioso Manlikayan, Melissa Amado Comiso, Virginia Saguitan Tugay, and Tina Julieta Tawide Gomez.**

The Court of Appeals, however, in a resolution dated March 5, 2015, pointed out defects in the petition and ordered the petitioner to correct them within five days. But instead of correcting the petition, **Tedy Ostos**, through Atty. Hilarion P. Clapiz Jr., executed an affidavit recanting his testimony against the respondents. It turned out Ostos was tortured and detained by soldiers of the 26th IBPA in a CAFGU detachment, thereby forcing him to execute said complaint affidavit.

### *Illegal arrests and criminalization of political acts*

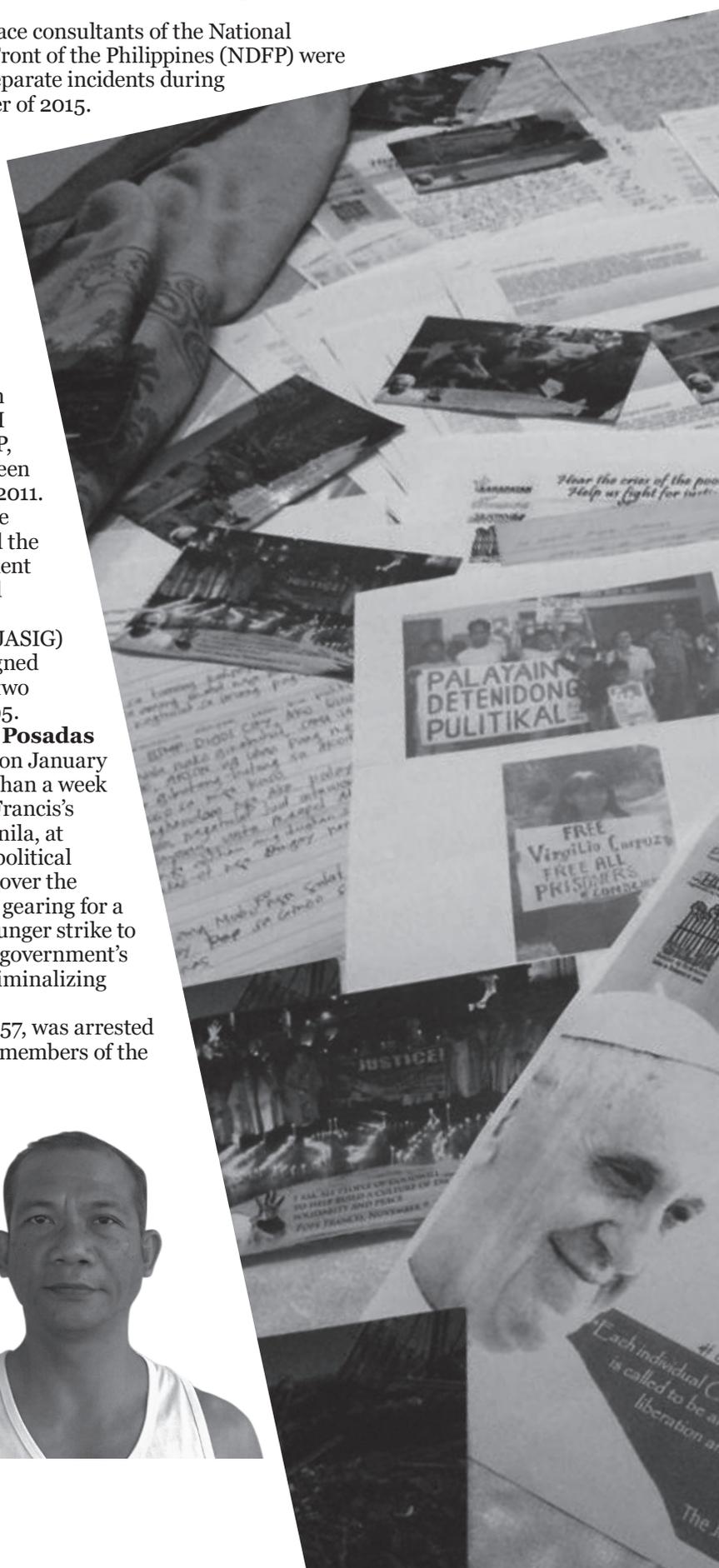
Three peace consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) were arrested in separate incidents during the 1st quarter of 2015.

This brings to 16 the currently detained NDFP consultants.

The arrests further jeopardized the peace talks between the GRP/GPH and the NDFP, which have been stalled since 2011. The GPH once more violated the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) which was signed between the two parties in 1995.

**Rogelio Posadas** was arrested on January 9, 2015, less than a week before Pope Francis's arrival in Manila, at a time when political prisoners all-over the country were gearing for a nationwide hunger strike to highlight the government's practice of criminalizing political acts.

Posadas, 57, was arrested by at least 12 members of the



*Criminalizing political acts: Torres, Ely and Guiuo illegally arrested on mere suspicion that they are NPA members; (Opposite) NDFP peace consultant Reynaldo Hugo.*



Regional Public Safety Battalion (RPSB) of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the evening of January 9 in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental. He was riding a motorcycle with two others when a pick-up truck overtook and flagged them down near a bio-ethanol plant in Bgy. Punao. At gunpoint, they were ordered to get off the motorcycle. Led by Captain Tony Benitez, members of the arresting unit searched Posadas but found nothing.

The three were brought to the PNP headquarters in San Carlos City, where Posadas was interrogated. At around 3:30 a.m., he admitted to the police that he was Rogelio Posadas. His companions were released and he was brought to the Cadiz PNP Headquarters.

The authorities arrested Posadas based on the same warrant used against human rights worker Zara Alvarez, a former political prisoner. He is charged with murder, robbery in band and homicide.

Posadas should not have been arrested as he was protected by JASIG, being an NDFP peace consultant. He has a Document of

Identification (DI) No. ND978313 under the assumed name "Angel Jose", acknowledged by the government peace panel, then led by its chairperson Silvestre H. Bello III. On March 7, Posadas was released on bail.

On January 27, 2015 combined forces of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of Regions 4 and 5, and elements of the AFP barged into the house where **Reynaldo Hugo**, 52, was staying in Cabuyao, Laguna. Hugo was ordered to lie face down and was handcuffed, while the CIDG and AFP searched the house. The faces of the perpetrators were concealed but they wore black vests with "CIDG" printed on them.

Without any warrant of arrest, the CIDG and the AFP took Hugo and brought him to Tinangis Penal Farm, Bgy. Tinangis, Pili, Camarines Sur. He is currently facing 15 criminal charges.

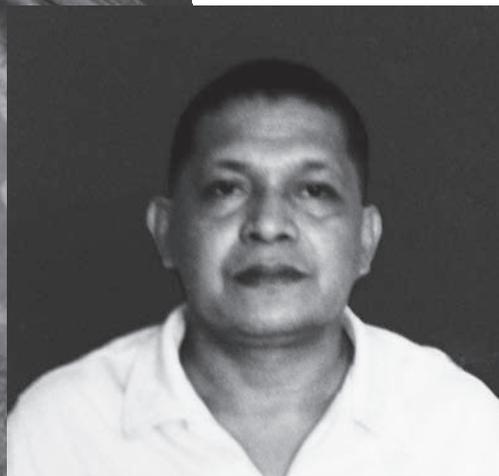
Hugo is also protected by JASIG and holds a DI No. ND978239 under the assumed name "Orgel Dimaano."

On March 4, 2015, Combined elements of the PNP - CIDG and the AFP simultaneously raided three houses in Quezon City and Caloocan City, and illegally arrested 13 civilians. One of them was **Ruben Saluta**, another NDFP peace consultant protected by JASIG.

Saluta reported that during the arrest, he had in his physical possession his DI No. ND978240 under the assumed name of "Lirio Magtibay". Saluta invoked his JASIG protection but it was dismissed by the raiding team.

Arrested with Saluta was his wife, **Presentacion Saluta**, whom he was visiting at the time. Also arrested were four other civilians with diverse and unrelated activities—**Alexander Raymund Birondo** and his wife **Winona Oñate-Birondo**, **Ruben Rupido** and **Joseph Cuevas**. Cuevas subleased the rooms in said house to save on cost and be helped in defraying the rent.

Those arrested in two other houses in Caloocan City were **Osias Abad**, **Emmanuel Bacarra**, **Rosalia**



**Reboltar-Bacarra, Roy Baldostamo, Manolito Estrella, Emmanuel Villamor and Monette Alcantara.** They had no link with each other except being independent sub-lessors and sub-lessees of one another.

The raiding team purportedly had a search warrant issued by the Quezon City RTC Branch 78 for illegal firearms. When they did not find any of those fictitious items listed on the warrant, the members of the raiding team 'planted' guns and explosives and labeled them 'evidence' to justify the arrest. All three houses were searched and the raiding teams hauled the belongings of those arrested. The police-AFP operatives also 'invited', a euphemism for arrest, the 13 residents of the three houses. To justify the baseless and bungled operation, the police later filed false charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives against the 13 arrested, including Saluta.

It was the testimony of a certain Roger Reyes Rodriguez that was used to link together the three separate households. Rodriguez claimed he met Saluta in Antique province through his uncle. Saluta supposedly recruited him as gun for hire in Manila. Rodriguez went to Manila, contacted Saluta who gave him a gun he didn't like. Saluta brought him to the house where the Bacarras were staying and offered him another gun, which Rodriguez again refused. Saluta then brought him to the third house where **Osias Abad** resided and offered another gun that Rodriguez finally liked. Reyes's statement became the dubious basis of the search warrants improperly issued for the Quezon City and Caloocan houses.

At 1:25 a.m. of March 5, Ruben Saluta et al were brought to the CIDG office in Camp Crame, Quezon City. At around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. of the same day, Saluta et al were brought to the Prosecution Office at the Quezon City Hall of Justice for inquest, without the presence of a legal counsel of their choice despite continuously invoking their right. Those arrested in Caloocan City were presented for inquest before the City Prosecution Office of Caloocan City but was able to immediately contact the Karapatan National Office. Karapatan in turn

alerted the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL) which agreed to represent them during inquest.

All 13 are detained at the Custodial Center of Camp Crame in Quezon City.

Meanwhile, arrests of leaders and members of progressive organizations continue.

In Gapan City, Nueva Ecija, **Hilario Guiuo**, a member of United Methodist Church; **Andres Lapuz**

Nueva Ecija Annual Conference, arrived at the Parsonage and introduced himself. He tried to take video shots of the things the perpetrators took from the victims but the soldiers and police forcibly took the video footage and threatened to arrest Pastor Efren.

When Pastor Jun Candelaria finally arrived, he saw that the Parsonage was already in disarray. He also noticed that P5,000.00 in cash, a



*Political prisoners nationwide went on hunger strike during the Papal visit.*

**Ely**, Anakpawis member; and, **Joey B. Torres Sr.**, Bayan Muna member, were arrested on December 4, 2014 at the United Methodist Church (UMC) Parsonage in Bgy. Pambuan.

Guiuo, Ely and Torres were scheduled to meet Pastor Jun Candelaria at the UMC Parsonage for a consultation meeting on the socio-economic projects of the UMC. At around 4:00 p.m., the arresting team forcibly opened the door of the Parsonage, claimed that they have a warrant of arrest, and took the three by force. The AFP-PNP joint forces accused the three of being members of the New People's Army. Guiuo, Ely and Torres were harassed and repeatedly hit by members of the arresting team. They were also threatened that something bad would happen to their families if they did not cooperate.

Pastor Efren Reyes, Chairperson of the Church and Society of the South

PSP game console, and a DSLR camera were missing.

The three victims were taken to the Gapan City Police Station. Pastor Candelaria arrived at the police station an hour later. They were all separately subjected to tactical interrogation from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. the next day. Pastor Candelaria was charged with "harboring criminals", but was later bailed out with the help of other UMC pastors in Nueva Ecija.

The arrest was conducted by joint forces of the 7th Military Intelligence Battalion under Col. Carlos Rodriguez and Capt. Julius Caesar Cervantez; 48th IB Charlie Coy led by 1st Lt. Jessie Mar Moldez; 7th Infantry Division under Maj. Alex Toledo; Nueva Ecija Provincial Police Office -Provincial Intelligence Branch led by PSupt. Andrew Aguirre; Gapan City Police Station led by Acting Chief of Police Nelson Almoradie Aganon.

Region	TOTAL No. of PPs	Women	NDF Consultants & Staff	Arrested Under PNoy
Cordillera Administrative Region	8	1	0	8
Ilocos	0	0	0	0
Cagayan Valley	5	3	0	4
Central Luzon	12	2	1	7
Southern Tagalog	24	2	0	7
Bicol	39	3	1	28
NCR	221	19	10	56
Western Visayas	21	1	0	21
Central Visayas	2	0	0	0
Eastern Visayas	25	9	1	20
Northern Mindanao	23	0	2	17
Caraga	14	0	0	13
Socsksargen	28	1	0	15
Western Mindanao	26	5	0	18
Southern Mindanao	51	2	0	27
ARMM	28	0	0	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>252</b>
<i>Sickly</i>	<b>60</b>			
<i>Elderly</i>	<b>40</b>			
<i>Arrested Minor</i>	<b>6</b>			

**TABLE 4: Political Prisoners (as of March 2015)**

of supposed NPA members for identification, which he expectedly failed to do.

Gandinao has been charged with murder, multiple frustrated murder, and illegal possession of firearms.

In the first quarter of 2015, a total of 15 arrests were documented. The number of political prisoners in the country has now reached 527 with 48 women and 51 elderly and ailing.

### Inhuman condition and repression in jails

The campaign to stop criminalization of political acts and to release all political prisoners continues. For the US-Aquino regime demonizing, criminalizing and jailing people for their political beliefs and activities are not enough. Inside jails and detention centers, political prisoners as well as the ordinary crime offenders suffer from the inhuman condition – cramped cells, congestion due to too many prisoners, almost inedible food ration, lack of adequate water supply – and repressive measures that are in place.

#### *Mother and child in jail*

A five-month old baby boy has a detention cell for his home because his mother, **Miradel Torres**, is a political prisoner. When at two-months old he was transferred from the hospital, instead of “welcome home” greetings from relatives, the boy was received by Taguig City Jail inmates who chanted, “Batang city jail! Batang city jail!”

A prison cell should never be home to one who is a picture of innocence like all babies. But Miradel would rather keep Karl (nicknamed Pyter) beside her in jail to nurse him and take care of him. Fellow female inmates and political prisoners try their best to make their cells livable for babies like him. Torres and Pyter stay in a 2 x 4 meter cell with four other inmates.

Now five months old, Pyter needs more nutrition other than his mother’s milk. Miradel’s food ration is not enough for the two of them. Soon, this baby will learn to crawl, walk, climb and play. His first words would probably be “warden,” “gwardya” or “kosa.”



*Miradel Torres and son Pyter stay in a 4x2 meter cell with four other inmates.*

On February 8, 2015, farmer **Reboyo Gandinao**, 31, was arrested at Bgy. Lumintao, Quezon in Bukidnon province by combined forces of the PNP-Valencia, PNP Provincial Mobile Group, Philippine Army, and from the military Intelligence Battalion.

The arresting team informed Gandinao that they had a warrant of arrest for him, but he was not shown any. The military claimed Gandinao had several cases in court for taking part in the NPA attack of a military detachment.

Gandinao was brought to the Valencia Kalasag Center where he was interrogated for several hours by his captors, led by a certain Macky Fuentes, reportedly chief of military intelligence.

He was later brought to the regional trial court of Malaybalay City, then to a hospital for check-up, and eventually to the Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center (PDRC).

When Gandinao was visited in jail by human rights workers, he reported

that for five successive days elements of the 10th Special Forces and a certain Valmorita from the 403rd Brigade based in Impalambong, Malaybalay City visited him in jail and interrogated him. The military repeatedly showed him pictures

Now, more than ever, Miradel Torres should be immediately released on humanitarian ground.

Torres is currently facing trumped up charges of murder and frustrated murder at the Regional Trial Court Branch 65 of Infanta, Quezon. This is the same court which ordered the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology to bring Torres back to Taguig City Jail two months after her delivery at the Philippine General Hospital where she was allowed to recover from giving birth and to breastfeed her baby.

Torres fought to keep the baby since the day she was illegally arrested on June 20, 2014 in Lucena City, Quezon Province. She was four-months pregnant. She had threatened abortion and was prescribed bed rest. But her arresting officers forced her to travel from Quezon Province to Taguig City while profusely bleeding. Torres has had a series of bleeding while in detention and was confined at Taguig Hospital months before giving birth.

Her counsels filed motions to quash both criminal charges. While waiting for the court's resolution, Miradel and her baby languish in jail—a situation that is far from human for both Torres and baby Pyter. Torres is charged with trumped-up criminal

charges and her child is likewise made to suffer for this.

#### *Violations of the rights of detained persons*

Repressive measures in jails reached its peak when **political prisoners**, particularly those at the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology- Special Intensive Care Area-1 (**BJMP-SICA-1**) male dormitory, launched a fasting and hunger strike during the visit of Pope Francis in January.

The reprisals and restrictions against the political prisoners at the BJMP-SICA-1 were enforced when the political prisoners launched their 10-day hunger strike (five days before and five days during the visit of Pope Francis) that apparently irked Warden Michelle Ng-Bonto

Despite the political prisoners' letter informing jail authorities and other government agencies of their planned action, the jail warden refused to allow entry of doctors and human rights workers, and to some extent, the lawyers of the political prisoners.

Representatives of human rights organizations, doctors and leaders of people's organizations attempted several times to visit the political prisoners but jail authorities gave

various lame excuses—all were brazen violations of the law on the rights of detained persons.

Among those denied entry were **Dr. Julie Caguiat**, former Gabriela partylist representative **Liza Maza**, Bayan Chairperson **Dr. Carol Araullo**, Karapatan Chairperson **Marie Hilao-Enriquez**, and Karapatan Secretary General **Cristina Palabay**. Lawyers from the **National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL)**, who are handling most of the cases of the political detainees, were twice denied entry but were later allowed to see a representative of the political detainees.

For the first time some family members like **Julieta Caloza**, wife of detained NDFP peace consultant Leopoldo Caloza, was not allowed inside her husband's cell. A jail guard informed her that Leopoldo's health is "OK", but could not see her because he could not get out of bed!

The jail authorities also prevented visits to the common crime violators, citing the fasting and hunger strike as the reasons. This was an attempt to isolate the political prisoners from the other inmates. It provoked violent reaction by the Sputnik gang leaders and members who shouted threats and



invectives at the political prisoners, “*Papatayin namin kayo! Huwag kayong bababa dito, papatayin namin kayo. Lalo na yung mga matatanda!*” (We will kill you! Don’t come down, we will kill you, especially your elderly.” The jail guards enjoyed the threatened violence against political prisoners.

The hunger strike was meant to symbolically deliver the political prisoners’ call for freedom, social justice, and the resumption of peace talks between the GPH and the NDFP.

### People’s counter action

The blatant violations of people’s rights perpetrated by the US-Aquino regime and its machineries have made the poor majority of the Filipino people realize that they only have themselves to defend their lives and limbs, and their livelihood, too. People’s actions are alive, calling attention to and gathering support for the need for genuine change.

#### *Letters to the Pope, letters of hope*

The need to free all political prisoners—their unjust detention, the inhuman condition in jails, and the need to resume peace talks between the NDFP and the GPH—became the central call of the campaign of human rights organizations and the families and relatives of victims of human rights violations during the Papal visit in January.

The visit of Pope Francis to the Philippines became an opportunity to show the realities in Philippine society to the whole world—the hunger and inequality, the oppression and exploitation. The international media covering the Pope’s every move further exposed the BS Aquino government’s criminal negligence of disaster victims. Even a year after the super typhoon Yolanda, no significant rehabilitation has been implemented for the survivors.

For the under-represented and marginalized Filipinos, the papal visit was the perfect opportunity for their cries to be heard and have someone like Pope Francis to stand by them in their search for justice and peace as their demands always fell on the government’s deaf ears.

As early as November 2, 2014, Families of Desaparecidos for Justice

started its letter writing activity on Plaza Miranda, in front of the Quiapo Church. Relatives and friends of the disappeared wrote to Pope Francis seeking his help in the search for their missing loved ones. Raised in Argentina, Pope Francis, or Father Jorge to his fellow Argentinians, knew only too well the issue of enforced disappearances for his country experienced thousands of abductions and disappearances during the dictatorship.

Pope Francis’s intercession in the release of the Cuban 5 also gave stronger hope for Filipino political prisoners that he can do the same in the Philippines. For this, almost all political detainees in more than 50 jails held a nationwide hunger strike or fasting in time for the Pope’s visit on January 15-19. They appealed to Pope Francis to join them in their call for the release of political prisoners especially the women, the sick and elderly.

In the Batangas Provincial Jail and Davao Penal Colony, more than 600 common crime offenders joined the hunger strike in solidarity with the political prisoners.

Political prisoners in SICA-1 in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City, requested jail authorities to donate the money saved from their food rations to the typhoon victims. “As we will not be getting our food rations for 10 days, we are asking the jail authorities to donate, in our behalf, the savings in our food rations to the victims of super-typhoon Yolanda and typhoon Senyang. We estimate such savings to amount to

at least P10,000. We ask that the donation be coursed through the International Committee of the Red Cross.” The request was dismissed by jail authorities who opted to serve unusually good meals at the time of the hunger strike.

Families of political prisoners, desaparecidos, and victims of extrajudicial killings held a welcome activity in front of the office-residence of the Papal Nuncio on the eve of the Pope’s arrival on January 14. “Viva Il Papa! Hear our cries for justice,” the families chanted.

On January 15, relatives of political prisoners and other victims of human rights violations joined members of people’s organization in welcoming Pope Francis in a “Misang Bayan” (People’s Mass) at the Liwasang Bonifacio. During the Holy Mass, relatives of political prisoners offered red roses made of beads, product of women political prisoners at the Correctional Institute for Women. They also offered a cross with



painting done by Eduardo Sarmiento, an NDFP peace consultant who is at the New Bilibid Prison. The painting depicts the plight and struggles of political prisoners and the role of the Church of the Poor.

As a response, the BS Aquino government militarized the Pope's visit—shameless as it is tainted with numerous human rights violations, corruption scandals and guilty of criminal neglect. The AFP and the PNP's deployment of forces bordered on the absurd, in the guise of the Pope's safety and security. In truth, the deployment was meant to keep the people away from the Pope, especially those who would want him to know what ails this country.

"... We tried to line up along your route from Malacañang to Manila Cathedral, holding banners of gratitude and pleas, but we were blocked by policemen brandishing truncheons and clubs. They could not give us any reason for doing so aside from their grim faces of suppression. They continuously questioned us whenever they saw us holding our banners and pictures of our loved ones with the word "Free" written on it, as if we were holding an instrument of potential harm. We were not disheartened, for we saw in the eyes of others waiting for you, dear Pope Francis, a light of interest and sympathy," Nikki Gamara, daughter of a political prisoner, NDFP peace consultant Renante Gamara, wrote in her open letter to Pope Francis.

Nuns from the Sisters Association of Mindanao (SAMIN), led by its Executive Secretary Noemi Degala, were stopped and held up for an hour by members of the PNP in Tanauan, Leyte. They were on their way to Tacloban, where the welcome ceremonies for Pope Francis were held. The nuns had official identification papers and travel passes. The police accused them of being members of the NPA.

The families of the victims of human rights violations could only hope that their calls reached the Pope through the news reports,

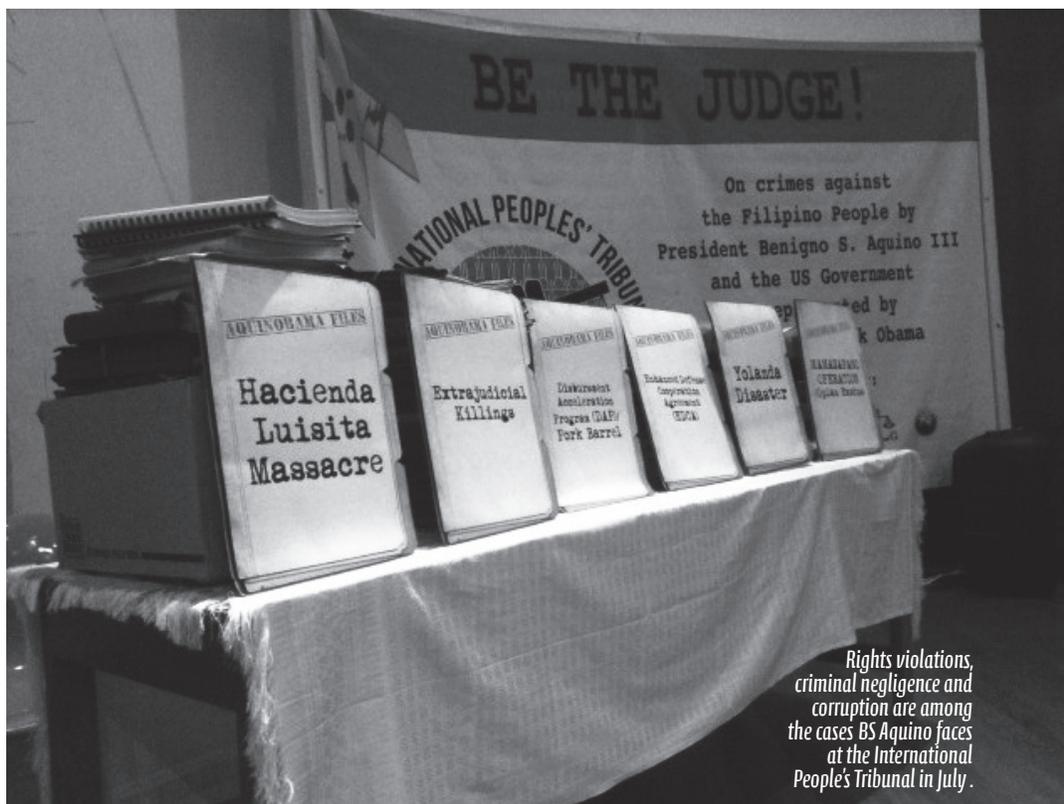
international support, and the letters they sent through Obispo Maximo Efraim Fajutagana of the Philippine Independent Church. He was among the ecumenical leaders who met with the Pope.

#### *Raps vs. Jail Warden Michelle Ng-Bonto*

On February 12, political prisoners and their relatives, lawyers

Ng-Bonto for gross misconduct, grave abuse of authority, gross oppression and for conduct unbecoming of a Public Officer.

The complainants are political prisoners Aristides Sarmiento, Dennis Ortiz, Eliseo Lopez, Voltaire Guray, Hermogenes Rezes Jr., Modesto Araza, Rolando Laylo, Philip Entera, Alberto Macasinag, Felicardo Salamat, Edward Lanzanas, Jared Morales, Jesus Abetria Jr., Alex Arias, Eddie



*Rights violations, criminal negligence and corruption are among the cases BS Aquino faces at the International People's Tribunal in July.*

and doctors, and human rights advocates filed before the Office of the Ombudsman criminal and administrative charges against Jail Senior Inspector Michelle Ng Bonto, OIC Warden of SICA 1- Camp Bagong Diwa.

Ng-Bonto was charged with violation of Section 2 (a), (b) and (f) in relation to Section 4 of Republic Act No. 7438 (An Act Defining Certain Rights of Persons Arrested, Detained, or Under Custodial Investigation As Well As the Duties of the Arresting, Detaining and Investigating Officers, and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof). The complainants also filed an administrative charge against

Cruz, Cesar Balmaceda, Fidel Holanda and detained NDFP peace consultants Leopoldo Caloza, Emeterio Antalan, Tirso Alcantara, and Alan Jazmines.

Other complainants were Karapatan Secretary General Cristina Palabay, Bayan Chairperson, Dr. Carol Araullo, and former Gabriela Partylist Representative Liza Maza.

Ng-Bonto is also facing a complaint before Taguig RTC Branch 266 and 271 filed on January 27. Through their manifestation, the political prisoners asked the Taguig courts to order Jail Warden Ng-Bonto to respect the rights of the political prisoners, especially the right to be visited by doctors and

religious ministers of their choice, lawyers, relatives, and human rights organizations. The political prisoners also asked the court to enjoin Ng-Bonto to desist from committing further violations of rights of the political prisoners, including transferring custody without any court order, and for the court to ensure the safety and security of the political prisoners.

Despite, or because, of the cases filed against her, Ng-Bonto continued to deny the rights of the detained persons at SICA-1. Long after Pope Francis left the country, which was the reason given for effecting “containment measures”, Karapatan staff members were still denied access. She also disregarded pleas for a dialogue between her and the political prisoners.

Ng-Bonto claims that upon the declaration of the political prisoner’s hunger strike, she received a phone call from the “higher-up” to “contain” the noise of the political prisoners. But as she imposed “containment measures,” utterly disregarding the rights of the detained, more noise was created by the political prisoners, their families, human rights advocates and other supporters. The government’s objective to gag the political prisoners failed. More news came out about the striking political prisoners, especially those who are detained at SICA-1.

By the end of March, Ng-Bonto finally acceded to a long-overdue

dialogue with the political prisoners that would be facilitated by the NUPL, the political prisoners’ legal counsel.

#### *Protect the defender*

“Exert extra-ordinary diligence and efforts to protect Salucon and her immediate family,” the Special 6th Division of the Court of Appeals (CA) told the state security forces, granting the Petition for Writ of Amparo (WoA) and Habeas Data for Atty. Maria Catherine Dannug-Salucon. The granting of the writ of amparo to Atty. Salucon is considered a hallmark decision, being the first WoA granted a lawyer who is under attack.

The Petitions for a WoA and Habeas Data were filed by Atty. Salucon on April 11, 2014, less than a month after, human rights worker William Bugatti, was killed by state security forces. Atty. Salucon filed said petitions because of the continuous harassment and surveillance against her by members of the AFP and the PNP.

The respondents in the petition were Cagayan Valley Acting Regional Director Police Supt. Miguel De Mayo Laurel, Philippine Army Commanding General Hernando Irriberi, Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) Chief Eduardo Año, and Gen. Emmanuel Bautista, then Chief of Staff of the AFP.

Although Gen. Año and Gen. Bautista are no longer holding said positions, the CA said its decision is

still “enforceable” against whoever the incumbent officials are. Gen. Año is Commander of the 10th Infantry Division in Davao Provinces in Mindanao; while Bautista retired as AFP Chief in 2014 and was replaced by Lt. Col. Gregorio Catapang.

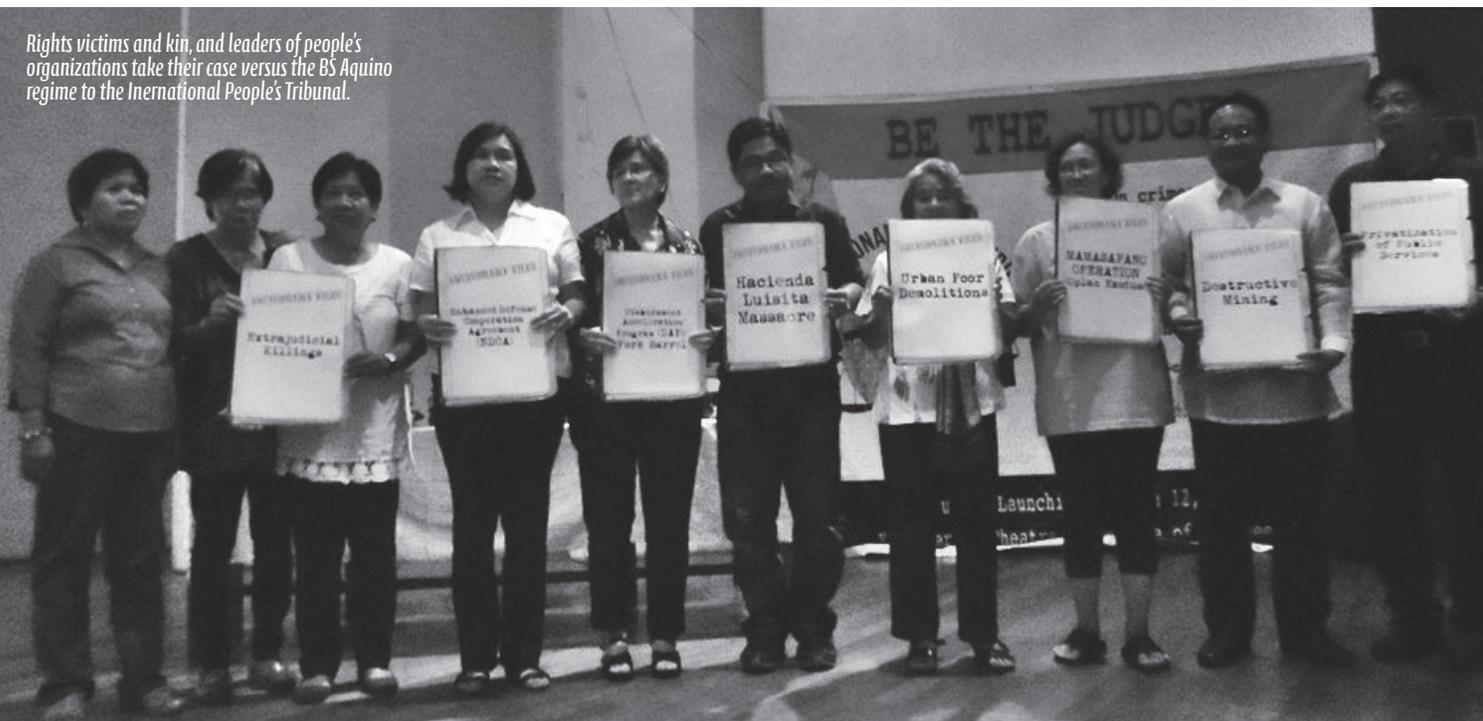
The Court of Appeals also directed the respondents to conduct a thorough investigation into the case, submit a periodic report, and to produce, any and all facts, derogatory and prejudicial information, statements, records, photographs, dossiers, and all other evidence, documentary on Atty. Salucon “for possible destruction upon order of this Court.” Failure to comply with these directives shall constitute contempt of court, the CA warned.

Before human rights worker William Bugatti was gunned down on March 24, 2014, he warned Atty. Salucon to change her routine in going to hearings for her own safety.

After Bugatti’s death, Atty. Salucon was able to piece together details confirming she is also under surveillance and is included in the military’s watch list of “Communist Terrorist” for defending in court suspected rebels. A long-time public defender, Atty. Salucon is the National Auditor of the National Union of People’s Lawyers (NUPL).

The NUPL in a statement said, “While it (the NUPL) is elated by the issuance of the decision, the same will only become meaningful if it will result in the resolute

*Rights victims and kin, and leaders of people’s organizations take their case versus the BS Aquino regime to the International People’s Tribunal.*



prosecution and due punishment of those involved in the threats against a human rights defender.”

*The trial of BS Aquino launched*

The crimes of the BS Aquino government—the extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, massive forced evacuations, the Mamasapano fiasco, its criminal negligence of disaster victims, the massive corruption through the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) and the pork barrel system, other attacks on the people’s lives and livelihood, and the sell-out of the country’s sovereignty and patrimony—have gone too far, from worse to worst. The need to make the US-Aquino regime accountable for these crimes becomes more urgent today.

Last March 12, 2015, the International People’s Tribunal (IPT) was launched at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City to try the crimes of the US-Aquino regime.

Among those who attended the activity were families of victims of the BS Aquino government and complainant organizations. Aurora Santiago, wife of slain Dutch missionary Willem Geertman, came to the launch and is set to present Geertman’s case to the IPT, which will be held in July 2015 in Washington, DC. Geertman, a Dutch national who lived for many years in the Philippines, was killed almost three years ago in July 2012.

Mothers of missing University of the Philippines activists, Karen Empeno and Sherlyn Cadapan also attended the launch to represent the victims of rights violations during the Macapagal-Arroyo administration who are still crying out for justice. For them, BS Aquino should also be held accountable for the continuing injustice and impunity.

Other cases that will be presented to the IPT are the military attacks against people-initiated schools and learning centers, the extrajudicial killing of Fr. Fausto

Tentorio and free-trade advocate Romeo Capalla, the killing of a minor, Roque Antivo, and the violations of workers’ rights in TNC-owned plantations and agri-business especially in Mindanao.

The IPT will also probe into the role of the continuing and even increasing US military presence and intervention in the Philippines such as the botched Oplan Wolverine/ Exodus in Mamasapano, Maguindanao.

Conveners of the tribunal include the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP), the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), and IBON International.

The ICHRP Chairperson and IPT Convenor, Reverend Canon Barry Naylor, explained the IPT, although judicially non-binding, is symbolic and significant. “People’s tribunals have had success in directing international attention to grave abuses of human rights in various countries including the Philippines during the Marcos and Arroyo regimes. The IPT draws inspiration from and builds on the momentum of previous peoples’ tribunals to advance human rights and hold governments to account,” he said.

A similar tribunal was held in 2007, the independent Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal (PPT) based in The Hague, Netherlands that handed down a guilty verdict against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for “crimes against humanity.” The PPT said Arroyo was guilty of colluding with her US counterpart, George W. Bush, to perpetuate extrajudicial killings, massacres and tortures of civilians in the Philippines in the name of the US war on terror.

The current president, similar to his predecessor, will have to face serious charges in the courts. Now that calls for BS Aquino to resign have become popular, the cases to be presented to the IPT will give clearer bases why this criminally negligent president has to step down.

**BS** Aquino’s ‘business as usual’ stance did not and can no longer deflect the people’s call for his resignation from office, which he brought upon himself. The attacks against the people are bound to intensify and cases of human rights violations will continue to rise if he stays longer in power.

BS Aquino fanned the flames of people’s anger with his treachery in the Mamasapano case. He provoked the people to call for his resignation because of a failed promise to end corruption in government and because of his barefaced puppetry to US imperialism.

BS Aquino showed the people the need for nationalist and pro-people leaders. BS Aquino showed the people the need for leaders who genuinely respect human rights and international humanitarian laws. The Filipino people need leaders who need not suppress the people’s voices because they and the people’s voices are one. BS Aquino showed the people the need for leaders who know the meaning of real peace. BS Aquino showed the people the need for leaders who have the heart for the poor. BS Aquino moved the Filipino people to unite. He showed the Filipino people the reasons why he should resign, now!



PHOTO CREDITS

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