

## FERDINAND MARCOS JR.'S RANK HYPOCRISY AND DENIALISM IN THE FACE OF ESCALATING HUMAN RIGHTS AND IHL VIOLATIONS



The "Cards of terror" visual artwork by KARAPATAN describes the Marcos Jr.-Duterte regime's rank hypocrisy and denialism

**R**ank hypocrisy and denialism marked the first six months of 2024 under the Marcos Jr. regime. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. delved into his usual tack of distancing himself from the grim reality of human rights violations on the ground, coming out with ludicrous claims in March 2024 that human rights violations in 2023 were down by half compared to 2022.

Contrary to Marcos Jr.'s declaration, there were significant increases in the most serious human rights and international humanitarian law violations such as extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

In Marcos Jr.'s counter-insurgency war, there were 60 extrajudicial killings in 2023 compared to 41 in 2022. The biggest hike was in the number of victims of enforced disappearance -- four victims in 2022 as opposed to 11 in 2023.

Documented reports from KARAPATAN also noted the 66% rise in the number of victims of indiscriminate firing, from 12,263 in 2022 to 20,391 in 2023. Victims of bombing attacks by the AFP also markedly rose from 2,354 in 2022 to 20,391 in 2023, for a monstrous 766% increase. Documented reports of fake surrenders likewise rose from 153 in 2022 to 401 in 2023, for an upsurge of 162%.

These figures, as well as the subsistence realities of the marginalized sectors, are enough to dispel Marcos Jr.'s false claims that "things are looking better" on the human rights front.

The one thing that distinguishes Marcos Jr. from his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte is his self-preening cultivation of a more "presidential" image compared to Duterte's crassness.

Marcos Jr.'s penchant for PR gimmickry led him in May 2024 to order the formation of a "special committee on human rights coordination" as part of his continuing attempts to window-dress the grave human rights situation in the country. His premise of addressing human rights issues through mere "coordination" means that not much can be expected from this "special committee." It will go the inept way of the inter-agency task force created under Administrative Order No. 35 which has been tasked to resolve extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture and other severe violations of human rights, but which has a pitiful record of having handled merely 385 cases and securing 13 convictions only out of thousands of cases. This special committee on human rights coordination will likewise suffer the same fate as the more recently created task force under Executive Order No. 23, which is supposed to probe into labor-related violations, but has not been heard of again since its establishment in mid-2023 after the International Labor Organisation high-level tripartite mission.

Meanwhile, under Marcos Jr.'s counter-insurgency program, draconian policies and laws on counter-terrorism are being implemented in full swing, adding more and more to the crimes of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests and detention, bombings and forcible evacuations, and fake surrenders. State security forces continue to commit these violations with impunity in compliance with the militarist approach to the insurgency that remains government policy, and which excludes any effort to address the systemic roots of the armed conflict.

Marcos Jr., stripped of his meticulously applied veneer, has been enforcing the same fascist and militaristic policies that Duterte implemented, resulting in the same grave human rights violations as well as serious violations of international humanitarian law.

What better proof is there that Marcos Jr. and Duterte are cut from the same cloth than Marcos Jr.'s adamant refusal to do away with the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), despite growing international and national calls for its abolition.

Demands further stepped up to abolish the NTF-ELCAC after UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression and opinion Irene Khan echoed the call in her end-of-mission statement after her official visit in February 2024. In May 2024, the Supreme Court ruled that red-tagging, the NTF-ELCAC's reason for being, is a threat to a person's life, liberty and security. Yet, Marcos Jr. has turned a deaf ear, making the ridiculous claim that the NTF-ELCAC is not engaged in red-tagging!

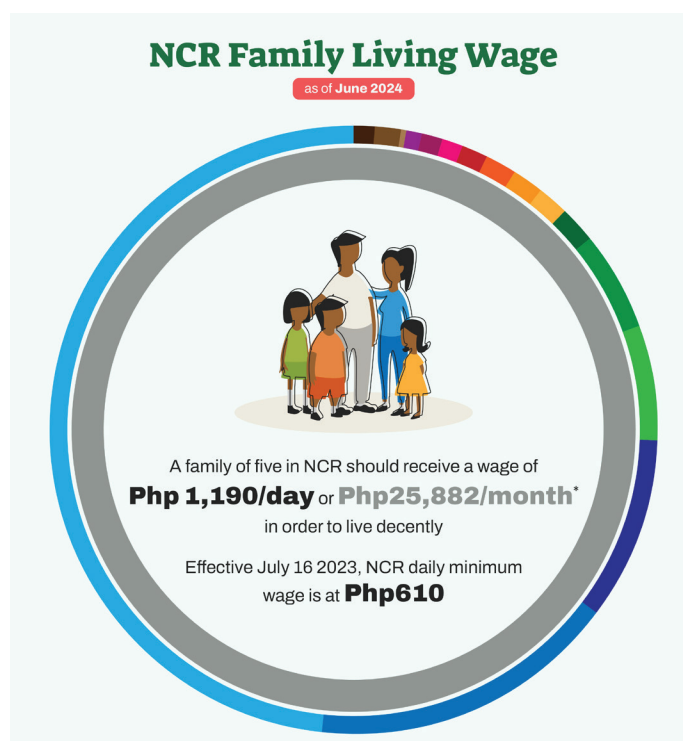
Created in 2018 by Marcos Jr.'s predecessor, the NTF-ELCAC has earned notoriety not only for red-tagging. It profiles activists and other dissenters, subjects them to threats, harassment and intimidation and then effects their fake surrender. Those who refuse to join the treacherous

charade get to be illegally arrested on trumped-up charges, arbitrarily detained, forcibly disappeared or killed extrajudicially. Through the task force, the Armed Forces of the Philippines orchestrates military operations in the countryside, enforcing hamlets and de facto martial law in peasant communities. Today, more than six years after its creation under Duterte, the NTF-ELCAC remains front and center in the Marcos Jr. regime's counter-insurgency drive, leading the assault in targeting communities for heightened militarization and escalating human rights violations.

## Economic hellhole

Marcos Jr. has not confined his window-dressing and denialism to human rights issues. At a recent briefing on the Philippine economy that drew in an 800-strong audience from the elite, Marcos' finance secretary crowed: "Our economic outlook is the brightest it has ever been."

However, reality bites. Economic growth has slowed to 5.7% in the first quarter of 2024 from 6.4% in the same period last year. Whatever growth has been experienced has not generated enough employment. In a phenomenon that IBON Foundation calls "job-losing growth," the 48 million employed in the first quarter of 2024 is 288,000 less than in the same period last year, and 1.3 million less than in the previous quarter. This is aside from some 19.2 million (40% of total employed persons) who have been in informal work in the first quarter of 2024. Add to them the estimated 16-18 million wage workers in unregulated informal establishments, and we see that up to 70% of so-called employment is actually informal work.



Source: Ibon Foundation




















Nearly 70% of 6.1 million jobs created since the pandemic are in the worst-paying sectors of agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, construction and food service. The average daily basic pay in these sectors is 10% to 45% less than the national average.

It is insufferable to see that Filipino families experiencing involuntary hunger increased to 14.2% in March 2024 from 12.6% in December 2023, as 46% of Filipino families rated themselves as poor and 30% borderline poor in March 2024, according to the Social Weather Stations.

And yet, the Marcos Jr. regime has been imposing one anti-poor policy after another, the latest of which is


Executive Order No. 62 which drastically reduced tariffs on imported rice from 35% to 15%. Previous executive orders had already mandated reduced tariffs for corn and pork imports. The Marcos Jr. regime's knee-jerk reaction of reducing tariffs ostensibly to boost supply and ease local food prices will lead to even more dumping of agricultural products in the Philippine market, further edging out products from local producers and resulting in plummeting incomes for farmers. However, food prices remain high despite the tariff reductions, as smugglers and hoarders in cahoots with corrupt government officials continue to manipulate prices.

## Stagnant real wages, more expensive food


|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    | JUNE                                                                                                | 2021       | 2022       | 2023       | 2024       |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--|
|                  | <b>NCR minimum daily wage</b>                                                                      | <b>REAL</b>                                                                                         | <b>505</b> | <b>508</b> | <b>481</b> | <b>504</b> |  |
|                                                                                                   | in Php                                                                                             | <b>NOMINAL</b>                                                                                      | 537        | 537        | 570        | 610        |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     |            |            |            |            |  |
|                 | <b>NCR food prices</b>                                                                             |  <b>RICE</b>      | 38         | 39         | 40         | 46         |  |
|                                                                                                   | in Php/kilogram, unless specified                                                                  | REGULAR-MILLED                                                                                      |            |            |            |            |  |
|                | <b>2.3%</b><br><b>NCR inflation</b><br>for June 2024                                               |  <b>CAMOTE</b>   | 50         | 59         | 76         | 76         |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |  <b>POTATO</b>   | 56         | 77         | 102        | 138        |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |  <b>CARROT</b>   | 66         | 82         | 85         | 111        |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |  <b>EGGPLANT</b> | 54         | 95         | 81         | 96         |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |  <b>PECHAY</b>   | 89         | 75         | 94         | 148        |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     | NATIVE     |            |            |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |  <b>GARLIC</b>   | 250        | 268        | 298        | 319        |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     | NATIVE     |            |            |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |  <b>ONION</b>    | 109        | 93         | 171        | 111        |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     | RED        |            |            |            |  |
|  <b>TOMATO</b> | 60                                                                                                 | 70                                                                                                  | 54         | 85         |            |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     |            |            |            |            |  |
|                | <b>SUGAR</b>                                                                                       | 50                                                                                                  | 75         | 98         | 70         |            |  |
|                                                                                                   | REFINED                                                                                            |                                                                                                     |            |            |            |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |  <b>EGG</b>     | 6                                                                                                   | 6          | 8          | 8          |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     |            |            |            |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |  <b>FISH</b>    | 127                                                                                                 | 130        | 141        | 144        |            |  |
|                                                                                                   | TILAPIA                                                                                            |                                                                                                     |            |            |            |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |  <b>CHICKEN</b> | 158                                                                                                 | 197        | 182        | 192        |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     |            |            |            |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |  <b>PORK</b>    | 367                                                                                                 | 381        | 371        | 385        |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     |            |            |            |            |  |
|                                                                                                   |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                     |            |            |            |            |  |


**NCR** - National Capital Region

**SOURCES:** Department of Agriculture,  
National Wages and Productivity Commission,  
Philippine Statistics Authority

**IBON**

**PEOPLE**  
**ECONOMICS**

 [beacons.ai/ibonfoundation](https://beacons.ai/ibonfoundation)

 [ibon.org](https://ibon.org)



## Sucked into the US imperialist vortex

Even as Marcos Jr. glosses over the Filipino people's crushing poverty and zealously implements his brutal US-inspired counter-insurgency program, he has also been busy allowing his regime to be more and more sucked into the US' saber-rattling schemes against China.

Nowhere was this demonstrated more starkly than in the Balikatan exercises held from April 22 to May 8, 2024 in various areas of Central Luzon. Balikatan 2024 involved up to 16,000 American and Filipino troops that simulated battles by air and sea against anticipated full-scale attacks from China, which has also become increasingly aggressive in asserting its maritime claims in the West Philippine Sea and encroaching into the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. The US has exploited this situation, alongside stoking tensions over Taiwan in an attempt to provoke China which would most likely lead to US-led military actions.

Coupled with the recent deployment by the US in the Philippines of mid-range missiles capable of reaching Taiwan and the Chinese mainland, there can be no conclusion other than that the US, with the Marcos Jr. regime's collusion, intends to use Philippine territory as its launching pad for hostile acts against China and to foment war in Southeast Asia.

The US, with the collusion of Philippine puppet regimes, has long been fattening up the Armed Forces of

the Philippines (AFP) as its potential force multipliers in the region. The Philippines is the biggest recipient of US military and security assistance in Southeast Asia. On top of this, a bipartisan bill has been filed in the US Congress calling for \$2.5 billion more in military aid for the AFP in the next five years.

Reflecting the extent of Marcos Jr.'s puppetry, he himself has hinted that should a Filipino die as a result of Chinese aggression in the South China Sea, this would justify invoking the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty, signaling the escalation of conflict rhetoric and the unleashing of the US imperialist zombies of war in the region. Indeed, the loss of a thumb by a Philippine Navy seaman in a recent encounter with the Chinese Coast Guard at Ayungin Shoal has been exploited by the hawkish elements of the Marcos Jr. regime to call for more aggressive measures.

The heavy presence of American military troops and armaments in the country already makes the Philippines a potential target of military attacks by China. Notwithstanding China's intensifying incursions into the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is condemnable for allowing the US to exploit this issue and willfully acting as a pawn in the US' game plan against China.

Marcos Jr.'s reckless semantics reflect a narcissistic stance that slots in with his fascist and anti-people orientation.



# HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS UNDER MARCOS JR. FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2024

## Weaponizing anti-terror legislation

There has been a noticeable hike in the Marcos Jr. government's weaponization of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) and the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act against human rights defenders, political activists and other dissenters, signifying the shrunk civic space and the critical deterioration of the human rights situation in the country.

In a deceitful Janus-faced move, the Marcos Jr. regime directed the Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC) on December 6, 2023 to maintain the “terrorist” status of the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army, and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (CPP-NPA-NDFP) just eight days after his regime announced its “interest” to pursue peace talks in a joint statement with the NDFP on November 28, 2023. The ATC resolution, which neither builds confidence nor creates a conducive atmosphere for talks, puts serious doubt on the Marcos Jr. regime's sincerity in achieving a just and lasting peace for the country.

To date, at least 112 activists have faced complaints or court charges based on the ATA and its evil twin, the anti-terrorist financing law:

**In Manila.** In a resolution dated December 6, 2023 but released in January 2024, NDFP consultant and former political prisoner **Elizabeth Principe** was designated a “terrorist individual” by the ATC. Another NDFP consultant and former political prisoner, **Concepcion “Concha” Araneta**, was likewise designated a “terrorist individual” in a resolution dated October 25, 2023.

**In Nueva Ecija.** On January 9, 2024, the investigating prosecutor of Cabanatuan City recommended the indictment of, among others, six activists for alleged violation of the ATA. They are Makabayan secretary general **Nathanael Santiago**, Anakpawis campaign director **Servillano “Jun”**



**Makabayan leaders and the NUPL support calls to dismiss charges against Makabayan secretary general Nathanael Santiago and five others.**

**Luna Jr.**, ASCENT convenor and development worker **Rosario Brenda Gonzales**, and Bulacan Ecumenical Forum volunteer lay worker **Anasusa San Gabriel** and trade unionists **Rodrigo Esparago** and **Ed Cubelo**.

The fabricated ATA violation charge stems from their alleged participation in a supposed armed encounter between the NPA and the 84<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army (IBPA) in Barangay San Fernando, Laur, Nueva Ecija on October 8, 2023. The first four respondents submitted their counter-affidavits on May 3, 2024, vehemently belying the facts and allegations, while detailing their whereabouts during the alleged incident. In a resolution dated May 15, 2024, however, the investigating prosecutor disregarded the respondents' affidavits and recommended the filing of charges against them.



**(L to R) San Gabriel, Luna Jr., Gonzales, Santiago, Esparago and Cubelo**



**Leyte Center for Development, Inc. is active in helping poor communities in disaster preparedness and response in Eastern Visayas.**



**CDRC's accounts have been frozen, while CERNET personnel were charged with terrorist financing.**

**In Quezon.** In a resolution dated February 24, 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) indicted two activists, **Fritz Jay Labiano** and **Adrian Paul Tagle**, for violation of the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act. Labiano is the coordinator of Kabataan Partylist in Quezon province while Tagle is the coordinator and spokesperson of Tanggol Quezon.

The indictment stemmed from Labiano and Tagle's provision of PhP 500 and food items to environmental activist **Miguela Peniero**, and indigenous peoples rights advocate **Rowena Dasig** who had been arrested on July 12, 2023 and detained at the Atimonan Municipal Police Station. The case against Labiano and Tagle was dismissed by a local court in June 2024.

**In Negros.** On March 19, 2024, a police sergeant in Negros Occidental filed a trumped-up complaint against activists and development workers **Clarissa Ramos**, **Felipe Levy Gelle Jr.**, **Darryl Albañez** and **Federico Salvilla** for alleged terrorist financing. Albañez was the former secretary general of Karapatan-Negros and the September 21 Movement, while Clarissa Ramos is the widow of Atty. Benjamin Ramos, a human rights lawyer who was brutally killed by suspected state agents in Kabankalan, Negros Occidental on November 6, 2018. In addition to being human rights defenders, the respondents have been involved in development projects under the Paghida-et sa Kauswagan Development Group Inc. (PDG), a Negros-based institution focused on promoting sustainable agriculture programs. The respondents have been directed by the Department of Justice to submit their counter-affidavits.

**In Leyte.** In an order dated May 2, 2024, the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) ordered the Tacloban branches of PSBank and Metropolitan Bank to freeze the accounts of the **Leyte Center for Development Inc. (LCDe)**, as well as

the personal bank accounts of its executive director and members of its staff.

LCDe is a 36-year old development NGO based in Palo, Leyte that has won numerous awards for assisting poor and marginalized communities in Eastern Visayas especially in disaster preparedness and response. For instance, in the first four months after typhoon Haiyan, LCDe provided at least 23,000 families in Eastern Visayas with food, shelter kits, mats, blankets and cash as emergency aid, and enabled the construction of houses and provision of livelihood support. Its funds are sourced from private entities in at least seven countries and it has partnered with 23 local government units in Samar and Leyte. According to the AMLC, its freeze order stems from alleged findings that LCDe executive director **Jazmin Jerusalem** and her staff have been providing funds to the CPP and NPA. The AMLC also claims that Jerusalem and the LCDe staff have earlier been designated as "terrorists" although no public information is available attesting to such designation. **Bank accounts of service suppliers of LCDe such as hardware stores and other retail outlets have also been frozen.**

**In Quezon City.** In a related development, the AMLC has also ordered the accounts of the **Citizens' Disaster Response Center (CDRC)** frozen in an order dated May 10, 2024. CDRC is a development NGO with partners nationwide focused on community-based disaster management. Its accounts have been ordered frozen because it is allegedly a direct recipient of funds from the bank accounts of LCDe.

The CDRC has filed a petition before the Court of Appeals questioning both the basis of the freeze order and the constitutionality of the AMLC's power to freeze. In the same petition, the CDRC explained that the funds in question had been returned by LCDe as they exceeded what was intended for relief operations after Typhoon Agaton in April 2022.



Since 1984, CDRC has been very well-known globally as the pioneer of community-based disaster management in the Philippines. It has provided food aid, emergency response, rehabilitation support and capacity building for disaster preparedness and mitigation measures for more than 11 million beneficiaries.

**In Cebu.** On May 13, 2024, Cebu City Regional Trial Court Branch 74 issued warrants of arrest against **27 individuals who are current or previous members of the council, board or staff of the Community Empowerment and Resource Network (CERNET)**. Bail has been set at PhP200,000 for each of them. Founded in 2001, CERNET is a Cebu-based development NGO that has consistently worked alongside grassroots organizations to alleviate poverty in marginalized communities in the Visayas. CERNET and the 27 individuals with current or previous connections to it are facing trumped-up terrorist financing charges solely on the testimony of a purported rebel returnee. They have since posted bail.

The case against CERNET follows the filing of terrorism financing charges against the Rural Missionaries of the

Philippines (RMP) and its Northern Mindanao office; the United Church of Christ of the Philippines HARAN ministry in Davao City and Brokenshire Integrated Health Ministries, Inc. (BIHMI) also based in Davao City; and local church UCCP Fatima in Ubay, Bohol; Amihan National Federation of Peasant Women and many other NGOs in Mindanao; journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio; and RMP humanitarian worker Marielle Domequil.

On June 7, 2023, the ATC designated four activists from the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) as “terrorist individuals”: **Sarah Abellon Alikes, Jennifer R. Awingan, Windel Bolinget and Stephen Tauli**. The CPA's property and funds, including related accounts were later ordered frozen. The four filed a writ of certiorari, prohibition, and preliminary injunction against the ATC and AMLC, questioning the use of ATA against them and the constitutionality of the ATA.

Meanwhile, criminal complaints for alleged violation of the ATA that have been filed against the following human rights defenders in Southern Tagalog have been dismissed: United Methodist Church pastor **Rev. Glofie Baluntong**; Tanggol Batangan paralegal **Hailey Pecayo**; Mothers and Children for the Protection of Human Rights secretary general **Jasmin Rubia**; Anakbayan-Southern Tagalog coordinator **Kenneth Rementilla**; United Church of Christ of the Philippines pastor **Rev. Edwin Egar**, also a Karapatan-Southern Tagalog officer; and **Rhoel Alconera**, vice chairperson of Unyon ng mga Panadero sa Gardenia Philippines – Olalia-KMU.

**TABLE 1**

**Violations of Civil & Political Rights  
under the Ferdinand Marcos Jr Government  
(July 2022 to June 2024)**

| Violation                                                                          | Number of victims |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Extrajudicial Killing                                                              | 105               |
| Frustrated Extrajudicial Killing                                                   | 75                |
| Enforced Disappearance                                                             | 12                |
| Torture                                                                            | 28                |
| Illegal Arrest without Detention                                                   | 236               |
| Illegal Arrest and Detention                                                       | 145               |
| Illegal Search and Seizure                                                         | 566               |
| Physical Assault and Injury                                                        | 80                |
| Demolition                                                                         | 16,934            |
| Violation of Domicile                                                              | 634               |
| Destruction of Properties                                                          | 460               |
| Divestment of Property                                                             | 129               |
| Forced Evacuation                                                                  | 42,426            |
| Threat/Harassment/Intimidation                                                     | 3,419,044         |
| Indiscriminate Firing                                                              | 63,379            |
| Bombing                                                                            | 44,065            |
| Forced/Fake Surrender                                                              | 558               |
| Use of Civilians in Police and/or Military Operations as Guides and/or Shield      | 520               |
| Use of Schools, Medical, Religious and Other Public Places for Military Purpose    | 7,780             |
| Restriction or Violent Dispersal of Mass Actions, Public Assemblies and Gatherings | 3,511             |

## Extrajudicial killings

The Marcos Jr. regime's troops perpetrated **11 extrajudicial killings from January to May 2024**, with six of the victims from Negros Occidental. Masbate comes next with three extrajudicial killings during this period. This brings to 20 the number of EJK victims in the island province since Ferdinand Marcos Jr. took power.

Except for one hors de combat summarily killed by soldiers in Bukidnon and a fatality during a violent demolition in Angeles City, most of the EJK victims were civilians falsely portrayed by the military to be NPA members killed in alleged gunbattles. Extrajudicial killings by the military or police using the fake encounter narrative remains the leading major human rights violation under the Marcos Jr. regime, claiming up to 77 lives from July 2022 to June 2024.

**In Angeles City.** Handicrafts maker **Gregorio Navarette Jr.** died on June 12, 2024 of complications arising from a gunshot wound to the abdomen sustained after a composite team of PNP-SWAT elements, goons hired by Clarkhills Properties and men from the Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (DARAB) opened fire on farmers and residents manning a barricade in Sitio Balubad, Barangay Anunas on March 12, 2024. Navarette, who was one of seven residents who suffered gunshot wounds to their legs and



**Extrajudicially killed: Gregorio Navarette, Kuni Cuba, Jose Caramihan, Kal Peralta, Pedro and Florencio Regala**

torsos in the violent demolition, had been in and out of the hospital until he finally succumbed to complications three months later.

**In Sultan Kudarat.** Elements of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army (IBPA) killed 16-year-old **Kuni Cuba**, a Dulangan Manobo student from Barangay Kiadsam, Senator Ninoy Aquino town, on June 8, 2024. Kuni, a scholar who would have been in 10<sup>th</sup> grade this coming school year, was walking home with family members and friends after attending a community event, when they were chanced upon by soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> IBPA who arbitrarily fired at them. Kuni was killed on the spot while his companions were able to take cover at a nearby cornfield. The 7<sup>th</sup> IBPA has reportedly agreed to an amicable settlement with Kuni's parents, in apparent admission that the boy's killing was a mistake. Earlier, however, the 7<sup>th</sup> IBPA's commanding officer Lt. Col. Tristan Vallescas tried to escape accountability by claiming that Kuni was an NPA commander surnamed "Cranzo" who was killed in a firefight with his troops.

**In Negros Occidental.** On May 30, 2024, unnamed State agents suspected to be elements of the 79<sup>th</sup> IBPA summoned farmer **Jigger Bartolo** while he was herding his carabao in Sitio Sangay, Barangay Hilub-ang, Calatrava town. Shortly after, a series of gunshots rang out, alarming the residents. Bartolo was found dead with gunshot wounds to his chest, right elbow, left leg and waist. Prior to his killing, Bartolo had been repeatedly summoned to the military camp for interrogation.

On May 21, at least 24 soldiers from the 62<sup>nd</sup> IBPA forcefully entered and fired upon the residence of the Dela Peña family in Sitio Inangaw, Barangay Quintin Remo, Moises Padilla town. The soldiers took **Richard dela Peña** away and killed him. The 62<sup>nd</sup> IBPA later claimed that Dela Peña was slain in an encounter between the NPA and the soldiers.

At 5:30 a.m. of April 4, 2024, **Marlon Catacio**, a 24-year-old farmer and charcoal maker from Sitio Ngalan, Barangay Quintin Remo, Moises Padilla town was killed by elements of the 62<sup>nd</sup> IBPA and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Negros Occidental Provincial Mobile Force Company of the Philippine National Police. Catacio had once been accused in August 2023 of being involved in a shooting incident in Sitio Inarawis, Barangay Quintin Remo. He had surrendered to the military and denied that he was with the NPA.

This time, soldiers and policemen first went to Catacio's house, asking for his whereabouts. A younger brother then

guided the soldiers to where Catacio was making charcoal at a relative's house. The soldiers and policemen dragged Catacio from the house and brought him to a secluded area where he was shot. He suffered gunshot wounds to his head and torso. To conceal their crime, the soldiers faked an encounter scene where they planted firearms and other materials near Marlon's body and falsely claimed that he was an NPA member killed in a gunbattle.

On February 21, 2024, elements of the 79<sup>th</sup> IBPA killed farmer **Jose Caramihan** in his hut in Sitio Mansulao, Barangay Pinapugasan, Escalante City and accused him of being an NPA member. Neighbors saw Caramihan going to his farm that morning. At about 11 a.m., a firefight reportedly ensued between the 79<sup>th</sup> IBPA and the NPA in Sitio Mansulao. Caramihan's family became anxious when he failed to return by dusk. Three days later, the 79<sup>th</sup> IBPA announced that three alleged NPA members had been killed, among them Caramihan. His family members disputed the military's claim, saying that Caramihan was only working on his farm and not a member of the NPA.

**TABLE 2**

### **Victims of Extrajudicial Killing & Enforced Disappearance under the Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Government**

(July 2022 to June 2024)

| Region                           | Extrajudicial Killing | Enforced Disappearance |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Cordillera Administrative Region | 1                     | -                      |
| Central Luzon                    | 1                     | 4                      |
| Southern Tagalog                 | 7                     | 3                      |
| Bicol                            | 27                    | -                      |
| Western Visayas                  | 38                    | 4                      |
| Central Visayas                  | 9                     | -                      |
| Eastern Visayas                  | 13                    | -                      |
| Northern Mindanao                | 4                     | 1                      |
| Caraga                           | 2                     | -                      |
| SoCSK Sargen                     | 3                     | -                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     | <b>105</b>            | <b>12</b>              |
| <i>Women</i>                     | 21                    | 4                      |
| <i>Rights defenders</i>          | 8                     | 5                      |



Earlier, on January 17, 2024, soldiers from the 62<sup>nd</sup> IBPA killed former peasant activist **Dionisio Baloy**, 67 and former driver activist **Bernard Torres Sr.**, 56 at the house they were staying in Hacienda Gomez, Barangay Sag-ang, La Castellana, Negros Occidental. The soldiers dragged the two men out and interrogated them before gunning them down. To justify the killings, the 62<sup>nd</sup> IBPA released a statement saying that Baloy and Torres died during a clash between their soldiers and members of the NPA. Both men, who hailed from Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, had been red-tagged and had fled with their families to another town to escape harassment. Their families denied that Baloy and Torres were with the NPA, saying that the two men were making a living as farmers.

**In Bukidnon.** Soldiers from the 48<sup>th</sup> IBPA accosted unarmed NPA guerrilla **Kaliska Dominica Peralta** in Purok 8, Barangay Butong, Quezon town on April 10, 2024. Despite being in military custody, her rights as an *hors de combat* were not respected and she was summarily killed. The AFP Eastern Command falsely claimed that she died in an encounter.

**In Masbate.** On April 2, 2024, farmer **Elorde “Nonoy” Almario** was abducted, beaten up and summarily executed in Barangay San Carlos, Milagros town by two CAFGU elements, one of them identified as Alvin Masamoc. Two days later, on April 4, former barangay captain, **Nonong Monteseban** was also seized in the same barrio, beaten up and almost killed by the same CAFGU elements, but was let go when his abductors realized they had the wrong man.

Elderly farmer couple **Pedro Regala**, 78 and **Florencia Regala**, 67, were abducted from their home in Barangay Tuburan, Cawayan town on February 5, 2024 by elements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> IBPA and paramilitary forces. They were brought to a stream where they were killed, after which ammunition pouches were put on them to make them look like combatants. The military claimed that the couple were NPA members killed in a gunbattle that lasted eight minutes. Village residents disputed the military’s version of events, and said that all they heard were a few gunshots. The soldiers also red-tagged local transport group Condor-Piston-Masbate and women’s group Gabriela-Masbate by showing the Regala couple’s bodies with the two organizations’ flags.

**In Camarines Sur.** On February 2, 2024, farmer **William Señor** had just sent off his wife and daughter from his house in Barangay Lidong, Presentacion town when soldiers from the 83<sup>rd</sup> IBPA barged in and killed him. An autopsy revealed that Señor’s throat had been slashed and he had gunshot wounds in both thighs, which were inconsistent with the claims of the 83<sup>rd</sup> IBPA and the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division that Señor had been killed in an encounter.

In another incident in Albay at 2 a.m. of April 25, **Ernesto Lomangaya** and his nephew **Arlan Lomangaya** narrowly escaped death while two others, **Francis Leteral** and **Ace Diano** sustained gunshot wounds after being strafed by soldiers. The Lomangayas were walking home to Sitio

Monreal, Barangay Del Rosario, Jovellar, Albay after cooking food for a fiesta in Sitio Libton, Barangay De Vera, in the adjacent town of Donsol, Sorsogon. When they were nearing the boundary of Barangay De Vera, they were accosted by soldiers and brought to a pathway near a stream. They then saw a motorcycle approaching with two men aboard. The soldiers called on the riders to stop. When the riders failed to stop, the soldiers shot at the riders until the motorcycle skidded. The riders were identified as Leteral and Diano, civilians who had also come from the fiesta. Leteral was wounded in the arm and Diano in the foot. The soldiers then told Ernesto and Arlan Lomangaya to run, but they refused, fearing that they would also be shot. At around 4 a.m., policemen in motorcycles and a mobile car arrived, and the soldiers left. The Lomangayas immediately contacted the wounded men’s families who brought them to the hospital.

TABLE 3

### Victims of Extrajudicial Killing & Enforced Disappearance under the Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Government

BY SECTOR (July 2022 to June 2024)

| Region              | Extrajudicial Killing | Enforced Disappearance |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Fisherfolk          | -                     | 1                      |
| Government Employee | 1                     | -                      |
| Indigenous People   | 3                     | 1                      |
| Peasant             | 72                    | 6                      |
| Teacher             | 1                     | -                      |
| Worker              | 3                     | 1                      |
| Youth and Student   | 2                     | 2                      |
| Moro                | 1                     | -                      |
| Transport           | 4                     | 2                      |
| Minor               | 7                     | -                      |

TABLE 4

### Victims of Extrajudicial Killing & Enforced Disappearance under the Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Government

BY AFFILIATION (July 2022 to June 2024)

| Affiliation            | Extrajudicial Killing | Enforced Disappearance |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Anakpawis              | 3                     | 2                      |
| Gabriela Women's Party | -                     | 1                      |
| Katribu                | -                     | 1                      |
| KMP                    | 3                     | -                      |
| KMU                    | 2                     | 1                      |
| NDFP                   | 5                     | -                      |

## Enforced disappearance and abduction

**In Bukidnon.** **William Lariosa**, a labor organizer of pineapple, banana and sugarcane farmworkers in Bukidnon since 2021, was arrested at around 10 a.m. of April 10, 2024 in Purok 16, Barangay Butong, Quezon town by elements of the 48<sup>th</sup> IBPA. He has not been heard of as of this writing, despite efforts by his family and human rights workers to ascertain his whereabouts. A petition for habeas corpus filed by his wife with the courts has been denied.

**In Pangasinan.** On March 24, 2024, environmental activists **Francisco “Eco” Dangla** and **Joxelle “Jak” Tiong** were riding a tricycle in Barangay Polo, San Carlos City when a gray Toyota Hi-Lux pick-up overtook them. Three men in masks alighted from the pick-up, with another man in a motorcycle trailing them. The masked men forced Dangla and Tiong into the pick-up. Dangla and Tiong were blindfolded, interrogated, bound at the wrists, deprived of sleep, physically assaulted, threatened with death and bodily harm for three days before they were surfaced by their abductors at 2 a.m. of March 27. Their families and human rights workers who went to see them found them psychologically traumatized and bruised in different parts of their bodies. Before they were surfaced, their abductors who claimed to belong to a private group with links to the AFP and PNP, told them to maintain contact and spy on their organizations for the government.

## Illegal and arbitrary arrests

Twenty-one persons were illegally or arbitrarily arrested and detained by State security forces from January to June 2024.

**In Capiz.** Combined elements of the 82<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> IBPA, and the local police arrested alleged NPA member **Francisco Balois** in a relative's house in Barangay Tapulang, Maayon town on June 25, 2024. Balois' relatives informed human rights workers from Karapatan-Panay that he was physically assaulted and intimidated during his arrest and that the firearms and explosives allegedly found in his possession were actually planted.

**In Taguig City.** Animal rights and climate justice activist **Edison Yu** was arrested at the Bonifacio Global City on June 8, 2024, after an altercation with a diplomat security officer of the Israeli Embassy. Yu was set to join a solidarity action opposing the genocide of the Palestinian people. He was waiting for a friend near the Israeli embassy and took pictures of nearby buildings to while away his time when security officer Rodolfo Osorio Jr. confronted him. Yu decided to leave to avoid trouble but Osorio pursued him and punched him in the face. Yu punched him back in self-defense. Ironically, it was Yu who ended up facing charges of alarm and scandal, unjust vexation, physical assault and oral disobedience. He was released on bail after 10 days in jail.

**In Manila.** Police forces arrested six activists during a protest rally at the US Embassy on May 1, 2024. Arrested were Anakbayan members **Azrael Adan de Guzman** and **Ellyza Austria**; NNARA Youth member **Nikko Bugarso**; and three volunteers of the International League of People's Struggle (ILPS). The arrested activists were charged with violation of Batas Pambansa 880 (rallying without a permit), direct assault, disobedience and malicious mischief and then allowed to post bail after six days in jail. The PNP had dispersed the rally using shields, truncheons, and water cannons, resulting in numerous injuries among the protesters.

**In Surigao del Sur.** Manobo leader **Efren Belandres** was arrested without a warrant in his farm in Pamanggutan, Lianga town by elements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces Battalion on April 14, 2024 and detained at the unit's camp in Barangay St. Christine, Lianga. He is a council member of Malahutayong Pakigbisog Alang sa Sumusunod (MAPASU), an activist Lumad organization based in Surigao del Sur. Upon his arrest, Belandres learned that he was facing 18 trumped-up charges before courts in Surigao del Sur and Agusan del Sur. While in custody, he was forced to sign a document stating that he had voluntarily surrendered to the military. The soldiers also coerced him to inform on other members of MAPASU and point out the location of NPA camps even if he was not an NPA member. Belandres has



(L-R) **William Lariosa**, **Eco Dangla** and **Jak Tiong**



requested that he be transferred to police custody because of the military's threats on his life. A nephew of his who has been following up his case has reported being under surveillance.

**In Bukidnon.** Elements of the 48<sup>th</sup> IBPA arrested former University of the Philippines-Mindanao student **Marielle Pagoto** and Lumad couple **Reymart Torres** and **Gigi Mansimuy-at** during a military operation in Purok 8, Barangay Butong in Quezon town. NPA member **Kaliska Peralta** was also arrested unarmed by the soldiers in the same incident but brought to another location and summarily executed. Pagoto, Torres and Mansimuy-at are currently detained at the Bukidnon Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center in Malaybalay town.

**In Rizal.** Some 50 to 60 armed police barged into a rented house of the Labustro family in Phase 2, Greenbrier Subdivision, Patiis, San Mateo between 7:30 and 8 a.m. of March 14, 2024. They ransacked the residents' belongings and arrested **Gary Labustro**, his brothers **Allan** and **Junnel**, and their brothers-in-law **Rene** and **Louie Ramirez**. The raiding team physically assaulted all of the adults in the house, including **Gary Labustro's wife Analyn** and ordered them to lie on the floor face down, while accusing them of being NPA members. The hour-long raid traumatized Analyn's two young children and niece who witnessed the violence. According to Analyn, the raiders stole their cellphones, identification cards and their earnings from selling popcorn worth around PhPro,000. The victims were brought to the San Mateo Municipal Police Station, where the policemen told Analyn that they would be frequenting her house for further investigation. The day after, the Labustro brothers were transferred to a detention facility in San Jacinto, Masbate, while the Ramirez brothers were released. The Labustros are facing trumped-up murder charges. Meanwhile, the stress of the raid took its toll on Analyn, who died of a heart attack on April 6.

**In Negros Occidental.** Officials of the San Carlos City District Jail arrested **Pertinisa Charita**, 52, on February 13, 2024, after they planted a firearm in her bag while she, her children and grandchildren were visiting her husband **Leon Charita** at the jail to celebrate his birthday. Pertinisa's husband, auditor of the National Federation of Sugar Workers, was arrested on September 18, 2023 along with seven other activists as they were preparing to join a protest to mark the Escalante Massacre anniversary. Elements belonging to the 79<sup>th</sup> IBPA, Escalante City PNP, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, 1<sup>st</sup> Negros Occidental Provincial Mobile Force Company had flagged the jeepney they were riding and planted various firearms and explosives.

Earlier, on February 8, farmer and chainsaw operator **Elmer Quillano** was arrested in his house in Sitio Dawahon, Barangay Buenavista, Himamaylan City by elements of the 95<sup>th</sup> IBPA who were accompanied by five "rebel surrenderees." Quillano, who faces seven trumped-up cases of frustrated



**Francisco Balois, Edison Yu**

murder, is the brother of an NPA member slain on April 3, 2022 in Sitio Kulihaw, Barangay Buenavista, Himamaylan City.

**In Quezon.** Police arrested film director **Jade Castro** and three others in Catanaun town on January 31, 2024 for allegedly setting fire to an e-jeepney. Castro and his companions maintained that they were vacationing in Mulanay town when the alleged incident took place. They were released after 40 days in detention after a judge dismissed their case on March 11, 2024 on the grounds that their arrest was invalid.

**In Masbate.** On the morning of January 29, 2024, ten uniformed soldiers and CAFGU members swooped down on Tubog, Pio V. Corpus, Masbate and rounded up seven farmers — **Ruben Menchavez**, **Ronel Rondina**, **Inday Wilyn**, **Macmac Catapan**, **Cadong Mendoza**, his wife **Gingging** and their 9-year-old son — and ordered them to accompany the troops on their military operation. When they arrived at the house of a resident of the town, **Johnny Compuesto**, 82, the soldiers were joined by other troops who were masked, with some wearing civilian clothes. All in all, the soldiers numbered 27.

The adults were interrogated, threatened, slapped and punched, all witnessed by the 9-year-old boy, who was traumatized and crying. Even the old man was interrogated and slapped by the soldiers, who later stole from him five fighting cocks, a large solar panel, two big cauldrons and two machetes. The farmers were only released at 1 p.m. with the soldiers leaving them the malicious lame "apology" that all they wanted was to scare them, not to kill them.

## Political prisoners

There are 755 political prisoners held in various detention facilities nationwide as of June 30, 2024, with one hundred and three (103) of them arrested under the Marcos Jr. regime.

Of the total number of political prisoners, 102 are elderly, and 90 suffer from various ailments.



(L-R) Gerardo dela Peña, Rosita Taboy, Ernesto Jude Rimando, Maritess Coseñas

**Gerardo dela Peña**, who at 85 was the country's oldest political prisoner, was finally released from the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City at 9:30 p.m. of June 30, 2024 by virtue of executive clemency, after having been imprisoned on trumped-up murder charges for close to 12 years. Dela Peña's release was the culmination of a long and relentless campaign by human rights organizations here and abroad.

After Dela Peña's release, the eldest political prisoner is now 79-year old **Rosita Taboy**, who is detained at the Samar Provincial Jail in Catbalogan City. Taboy's husband, 74-year old **Antonio Legaspi**, succumbed to a heart attack on April 19, 2024 while in detention at the San Jose del Monte City Jail. Despite his age and frail physical condition, Legaspi had been kept in solitary confinement, never being let out of his cell for sunning, exercise or socialization, in violation of the Mandela rules mandating minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners. The jail authorities' inhumane treatment of Legaspi likely heightened his stress and hastened his death.

Of the ailing political prisoners, Cebu labor rights advocate **Ernesto Jude Rimando** is the most seriously ill. Rimando has been confined at the Philippine General Hospital since May 17, 2024 for Stage 4 liver cancer, pulmonary tuberculosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and pulmonary embolism. He has been given a poor prognosis by his doctors and without treatment, may have only three more months to live. Rimando was seeking treatment in Metro Manila for liver cirrhosis and sepsis but was arrested on January 6, 2021 before he could commence treatment. Despite his physical condition, he was blindfolded, tortured and interrogated on the spot by the arresting team. His health has deteriorated since his detention.

Apart from Rimando, **Maritess Coseñas**, who was arrested in January 2009 and unjustly convicted, has suffered from a painful lump in her left breast since 2022. Prison doctors did not lift a finger to treat her or provide medication, even when the initial diagnosis was breast cancer. She was finally operated on last May through the efforts of a human rights-affiliated group and the lump

determined to be benign. But she still suffers from post-operative pain weeks later.

Meanwhile, a number of political prisoners have won their freedom through tireless campaigns for their release by human rights groups and the efforts of human rights

**TABLE 5**

**Political Prisoners (as of June 30, 2024)**

| Region of Detention      | Total No. of Political Prisoners | Women      | NDFP Consultants | Arrested Under Marcos Jr. |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Cordillera               | 6                                | -          | -                | 2                         |
| Ilocos                   | 6                                | 1          | -                | 2                         |
| Cagayan Valley           | 20                               | 5          | -                | 5                         |
| Central Luzon            | 9                                | 4          | -                | 1                         |
| Southern Tagalog         | 78                               | 18         | -                | 24                        |
| National Capital Region  | 89                               | 17         | 8                | 2                         |
| Bikol                    | 48                               | 10         | -                | 21                        |
| Western Visayas          | 97                               | 20         | 1                | 26                        |
| Central Visayas          | 72                               | 4          | -                | 5                         |
| Eastern Visayas          | 34                               | 8          | 1                | 1                         |
| Western Mindanao Region  | 12                               | 5          | -                | 0                         |
| Northern Mindanao Region | 105                              | 23         | 2                | 2                         |
| Southern Mindanao Region | 49                               | 6          | 1                | 2                         |
| Socsksargen              | 40                               | 5          | 1                | 5                         |
| Caraga                   | 90                               | 21         | 1                | 5                         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>755</b>                       | <b>147</b> | <b>15</b>        | <b>103</b>                |
| <i>Sick</i>              | 90                               |            |                  |                           |
| <i>Elderly</i>           | 102                              |            |                  |                           |
| <i>Arrested as Minor</i> | 4                                |            |                  |                           |





**Adora Faye de Vera and Leila de Lima**

lawyers. **Adora Faye de Vera** walked out of her detention cell at the Iloilo Provincial Jail in February 2024 after the last of the trumped-up cases against her was dismissed. De Vera, a writer, organizer and researcher was twice arrested and detained under martial law and survived rape and torture by her military captors. She was rearrested in August 2022 for manufactured cases of murder and rebellion.

Opposition figure **Leila de Lima** was likewise acquitted of the last of her cases on June 24, 2024 after almost seven years. She was able to post bail in November 2023, six years and nine months after her arrest. A series of twists and turns in the trumped-up drug-related cases filed against her at the instigation of former president Rodrigo Duterte eventually caused the prosecution's case to crumble, leading to her eventual release. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. made much of De Lima's release, citing it as "proof" that the Philippine justice system "works". However, critics were quick to point out that taking almost seven years to prove one's innocence is indicative of a seriously flawed justice system.

Another glaring example of how skewed the justice system is against the most vulnerable and marginalized is the case of political prisoners **Rocky Torres and Avellardo Avellanida**, both from the Dumagat tribe, who have not had a single hearing since their arrest in Barangay Umiray, Infanta, Quezon on May 14, 2018 on trumped-up murder and rebellion charges. On top of their unjust and prolonged detention, Torres and Avellanida were tortured upon their arrest. Both also contracted tuberculosis due to the harsh conditions of detention.

## **Bombings, forced evacuations and endangerment of civilians**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has been resorting increasingly to artillery strikes and aerial bombings during heightened military operations. The aerial attacks have terrorized the civilian population in the affected areas and have led to economic displacement.

**In Nueva Vizcaya and Nueva Ecija.** The AFP launched aerial strikes in **Sitio Marikit, Barangay Abuyo, Alfonso**

**Castañeda, Nueva Vizcaya** on June 20, 2024, leading to the **evacuation of 49 families** from the area. Despite the AFP's claims of conducting pursuit operations against the NPA, no encounter occurred in the area. The operation by the 84<sup>th</sup> IBPA reportedly spilled over to the adjacent town of **Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija**, where strict checkpoints were set up, imposing a virtual lockdown in the town. On June 26, 2024, ten NPA guerrillas were reported killed in clashes in Pantabangan.

**In Aurora.** Since May 20, 2024, the 91<sup>st</sup> IBPA had been conducting aerial strikes in the villages of **Diamanen, Toytoy, Puangi, Dimabuno, Salay and Sapang Kawayan in Dipaculao town and in the villages of Bannawag, Bayanihan and Cadayacan in Maria Aurora town.** Residents reported that the ground shook whenever bombs were dropped, prompting them to stop sending their children to school, or work on their farms or on other means of livelihood. Residents in these areas were forbidden from tending to their rice and vegetable farms, as well as their coconut crops and swidden farms due to the concentrated military operations in Aurora province that began in January 2024. Almost a thousand individuals were forced to evacuate in Dipaculao town alone. The total number of individuals forcibly evacuated reportedly reached 2,500 in May.

A family lost their carabao due to the military's aerial strafing near residential areas and farms. For fear of being held accountable, soldiers rapidly patched roofs damaged by the strafing, but did not extend any assistance to compensate the loss of livelihood of the affected residents, who missed one cropping season because of the intensified military operations. Most severely affected are farm workers who have not been able to make their living by hauling coconut and vegetable crops from the mountains to the town centers. Residents say that the focused military operations are an added burden to the difficulties they have already been suffering due to El Niño.

Various human rights violations against civilians such as stringent checkpoints, curfews, ransacking of homes and interrogations were stepped up by the military in the weeks leading to May 20, 2024, when clashes erupted between the NPA and forces under the 72<sup>nd</sup> Division Reconnaissance Company. The military also effected fake surrenders to boost their "achievement reports" and haul in funds in cahoots with corrupt local politicians.

**In Cagayan.** A series of aerial strikes by attack helicopters were conducted from May 9 to 10, 2024 in the **Peñablanca area.** Residents of Tuguegarao City and Peñablanca were alarmed by a strange sound of a low-flying fighter jet, followed by a series of powerful explosions between 2 to 3 a.m. of May 9. Thunderous effects were felt in towns as far as Baggao, Enrile and Amulung, according to residents. At about 2 a.m. on May 10, residents in Peñablanca, Tuguegarao City, Baggao, and nearby areas were surprised by deafening explosions and fighter jets after Philippine Air Force planes

from the Tactical Operations Group (TOG) dropped about three bombs in the **Lagum area**, which includes **barangays Manga, Buyun, Nabbababalayan, Lapi, and Minanga**. Eyewitnesses and initial reports confirmed that attack helicopters and fighter jets dropped three to ten bombs, then fired .50 caliber machine guns. Residents were woken by the low-flying planes, flames, and loud explosions that shook the ground.

By 7 a.m. on May 10, the military admitted the aerial bombings in a Facebook post by Radyo Pilipinas Tuguegarao. The DSWD reported that **690 families or 2,765 individuals evacuated** from two barangays in Peñablanca.

**In Iloilo.** An encounter between troops of the 61<sup>st</sup> IBPA and the NPA in the early morning of February 28, 2024 in a forested area of **Barangay Torocadan, San Joaquin, Iloilo** was used by the military to launch artillery attacks at around 3 a.m., terrorizing the affected barangays. Residents reported that the explosions caused tremors in the surrounding areas and which made them deduce that the military used not just artillery fire but also aerial bombings in its attacks.

**In Negros Occidental.** The 79<sup>th</sup> IBPA had concocted stories about numerous encounters with the NPA to justify its indiscriminate firing, strafing and bombing that led to the forced **evacuation of at least 300 families** from nine barangays in **Escalante** and the neighboring town of **Toboso**.

According to reports from the locality, there was only one encounter on February 21, 2024 but the AFP exaggerated the number of firefights to justify its use of disproportionate force, in violation of International Humanitarian Law. The military reportedly fielded its newly purchased T-129 attack helicopters in an apparent attempt to test their ability to terrorize the area through bombings.

The AFP's attacks resulted in the deaths of two NPA guerrillas and the extrajudicial killing of a farmer who was killed while tending to his rice field. Peasant Jose Caramihan was sowing rice when the encounter occurred and then was falsely reported by the AFP as the third NPA casualty.

**In Oriental Mindoro.** Around 15 soldiers and policemen made camp at the health center in Barangay San Jose in Naujan town on January 15, 2024, coinciding with the conduct of a boat construction and dispersal project by the **NGO Southern Tagalog Serve the People Corps (STPC)** and government's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. The soldiers, who were from the 203<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade claimed that they were just watching over the area but had been there for a week. Police and military elements had also surveilled STPC's relief operations in April 2023. Fisherfolk leaders from Calapan and Naujan received unwanted visits from soldiers after joining STPC in consultations and relief operations in June 2023. Police and military elements also made camp in Maidlang, Calapan City after the barangay was visited by STPC in July 2023.



**Protest action calling to stop the bombings**



## Violation of domicile

On June 18, 2024 at 7 a.m., around a hundred combined elements of the 80<sup>th</sup> IBPA, the Philippine National Police-Special Action Force (PNP-SAF), and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams conducted military operations in at least **six sitios of Barangays San Roque, Paradise 3 and Tungkong Mangga in the City of San Jose Del Monte (CSJDM) in Bulacan**, causing widespread fear and distress among peasants and other residents. The military men forcibly entered and searched the unoccupied residence of **Ronnie Manalo**, secretary general of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and spokesperson of Tanggol Magsasaka. The state forces claimed that they found a gun inside, which Manalo's relatives said was planted by the raiding team. The military also interrogated his relatives.

Manalo had long been a victim of threats and red-tagging from State forces, owing to his long-time active involvement in the peasant struggle in the Araneta Estates. This area faced landgrabbing actions by Gregg Araneta III, the husband of Irene Marcos Araneta, the youngest sister of Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

In 2022, **Manalo and Cecilia Rapiz**, a leader of the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Bulacan and also a resident in the area, lodged complaints with their barangays on the persistent threats, harassment and intimidation of the military against them. In that same year, Manalo together with other peasant leaders and advocates were shot at and harassed by goons of Araneta in Sitio Ricafort, Tungkong Mangga in the City of San Jose Del Monte.

Military operations in peasant communities in the city intensified in 2018. Soldiers conducted Community Organizing for Peace and Development (COPD) and encamped in the peasant villages. AMB leaders were subjected to surveillance and harassment by the elements of the 80<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> IBPA. Residents were asked about the

whereabouts of KMP and AMB leaders, and they were repeatedly forced by the military to “clear” their names in the barangay and municipal halls.

## Demolition

In **Quezon City**, Demolition teams dispatched by the Quezon City government and the National Housing Authority tore down without warning the houses of some **50 families (300 individuals) in Sitio San Isidro, Barangay Pag-asa** on April 17, 2024. The families were threatened with legal action if they resisted eviction. The demolished houses were built on a lot planned for a parking area of the Philippine Children's Medical Center (PCMC). The affected families were not relocated, nor did they receive any financial assistance. Families were forced to stay overnight on the sidewalk of Quezon Avenue and the children even faced threats from the demolition team.

From a peak of 1,700 households, the population of San Isidro is now down to only 700 households as residents have been forced to move due to the constant worry of being evicted.

In **Angeles City**, Combined elements of the Philippine National Police and goons hired by Clarkhills Properties Corporation opened fire on farmers protesting the violent demolition of their community in Sitio Balubad, Barangay Anunas on March 12, 2024. At least seven persons were injured. Even reporters covering the demolition were harassed and threatened by the raiding team. Clarkhills Properties has been trying since October 2023 to gain control of a 72-hectare landholding that had already been awarded to the farmers under the government's agrarian reform program after they had completed paying the required amortization. The Department of Agrarian Reform, however, later voided the Certificate of Land Ownership Award granted to the farmers, leading to a series of violent attempts by Clarkhills Properties to seize the land from the residents.



**Demolitions and land grabbing under the Marcos Jr. administration favor the interests of private business.**

## Threats, harassment and intimidation

Victims of threats, harassment and intimidation, mostly in the form of red-tagging, constitute the largest number of human rights violations documented by KARAPATAN. Activists are profiled, subject to surveillance, are pressured into disaffiliating with their organizations, informing on co-members, and are even enjoined to attend bogus surrender ceremonies to boost the NTF-ELCAC's so-called achievements. Those who refuse or relocate residences to evade persecution are often vulnerable to threats of more serious human rights violations.

**In Negros Occidental.** Elements of the 62<sup>nd</sup> IBPA wearing civilian clothes and carrying sacks concealing firearms entered farmer **Evelyn Manait**'s house in Barangay Amontay, Binalbagan town and asked about the whereabouts of her husband and a brother-in-law. She replied that her husband had gone to Sitio Tambo, Barangay Amontay to deliver mangoes to a buyer, and she was uncertain when he would return. She denied any knowledge of her brother-in-law's whereabouts. Meanwhile, some of the armed men searched the house. The interrogator insisted on speaking to her husband and left his cellphone number, claiming it could be used to contact him upon his return. They alleged that both her husband and brother-in-law were affiliated with the NPA. On a piece of paper, the interrogator wrote down the name 'Fernandez,' introducing himself as a member of the Philippine Army.

Over in Barangay Guiljungan, Cauayan town, three masked men went to **Joselito Macapobre**'s house to look for him. His wife, who was awakened by the forced entry of the unknown persons, asked them who they were and why they had entered the house. One of them answered that they were looking for a bag which the NPA had left. One of them entered the room without permission. When his wife said she would call her husband, they told her to not call him and immediately left.

Earlier on June 10, 2024, while visiting his friend in Barangay Yaoyao, Cauayan, **Joselito Macapobre** noticed two people on a motorcycle following him. He continued driving and stopped in Caliling, Cauayan, to let them pass.

Additionally on June 9, 2024, a barangay kagawad informed him that the 15<sup>th</sup> IBPA had summoned him to the barangay hall on June 10 to discuss Macapobre's affidavit supporting **Perla Jaleco**'s counter-affidavit. Jaleco, a development worker based in Cauayan, had also been red-tagged and harassed. Macapobre refused the summons, citing uncertainty about the summoner and asserting the legitimacy of his affidavit. He suspected that the military wanted him to retract his statements.

Macapobre was also subjected to surveillance and intimidation in 2023 when members of the Reengineered Community Support Program team of the 15<sup>th</sup> IBPA and police were deployed in his community.

In Hacienda Cataywa II, Talisay City, three military men went to the residence of Kabataan Partylist-Negros secretary general **Florence Guzon** on April 25, 2024, but she was in school. They spoke instead to Guzon's mother, asking her to convince her daughter to "change her ways." They made veiled threats, saying that some of Guzon's predecessors were already in their custody or were killed. They also made false claims that former Kabataan Partylist-Negros secretary general **Angel Albor** had joined the NPA and was assigned to Calatrava, when in fact, Albor had already graduated and was holding a regular job elsewhere.

**In Batangas.** A man who identified himself as a policeman asked barangay officials from Bauan, Batangas for the whereabouts of **Tanggol Batangan** paralegal **Juvie Ann Biding** last June 10, 2024. Biding, a human rights worker, had been providing services to political prisoners in their province and had also been involved in various humanitarian missions in Batangas and other parts of Southern Tagalog. She reported being under surveillance



# Hands Off Marifel Macalanda!

**Hands Off Cagayan Valley Activists!**

**Stop The Attacks!**



Protests continue against dangerous red-tagging of activists, critics, and people.



and harassed multiple times since April this year and had filed a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights.

**In Baguio City.** The family of Cagayan Valley Indigenous Peoples Alliance national council member **Marifel Macalanda** was visited several times in the first and second week of June 2024 by men in plainclothes who introduced themselves as operatives of the Criminal Intelligence and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police (PNP-CIDG). The men repeatedly asked Macalanda's mother for Marifel's whereabouts and said that there was a warrant out for Marifel's arrest, but that it could be withdrawn if she would cooperate with the government. They also accused Marifel of having links with the NPA, an allegation her mother vehemently denied.

In a later meeting with the family at a restaurant, the men from the PNP-CIDG clarified that there was no warrant on Marifel, but one other Cagayan Valley activist leader, regional Makabayan coordinator **Agnes Mesina**, allegedly had a warrant for her arrest and a PhP100,000 bounty on her head. They also claimed that an arrest warrant would soon be issued against another Cagayan Valley mass leader, regional Kabataan Partylist coordinator **James Paredes**.

Marifel had also reported being under surveillance during her visits to her family's residence in Baguio City in the first week of April 2024. Her colleagues had likewise reported being tailed in February and March this year.

**In Albay.** On May 1, 2024, red-tagging posters showing the faces of Kabataan Partylist-Bicol spokesperson **Danica de Jesus** and Bicolana Gabriela officers **Jenelyn Nagrampa Caballero** and **Nica Ombao** alongside the logos of the CPP-NPA-NDFP, were seen throughout the route taken by the Labor Day march conducted by activists in Legazpi City. Similar posters had already been seen earlier in Peñaranda Park, Old Albay District and Calle Siping St., Barangay Bonot, Rawis, Legazpi City. The police also tried to sabotage the activists' Labor Day activity by reserving Peñaranda Park ahead of time, where they shouted "Dani de Jesus, CPP-NPA!" through loudspeakers while the activists were holding their program nearby.

**In Kalinga.** On April 21 to 22, 2024, delegates to the 40<sup>th</sup> People's Cordillera Day en route to Tanglag, Lubuagan town where the program would be held, were met with sacks posted on trees red-tagging the Cordillera People's Alliance. The delegates took down the sacks.



Flyers were posted and distributed in Cebu City vilifying youth activists.

Meanwhile, in Lubuagan, the military, police and local government units timed their "outreach program" consisting of a medical mission and red-tagging seminars to coincide with a dental and medical mission led by **Chestcore** and **RDC-Kaduami Inc.** from April 19 to 20, 2024. The red-tagged organizations were the **CPA**, **Kabataan Partylist**, **Anakbayan**, **League of Filipino Students**, **Gabriela**, **Katribu**, **Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas**, **Anakpawis**, **Kadamay**, **Kilusang Mayo Uno**, **Kalikasan Partylist**, **Piston**, **Karapatan**, **Act**, **Migrante**, **Bayan Muna** and **Bayan**.

Earlier, on April 14, six officers from the PNP 503<sup>rd</sup> Brigade and the 54<sup>th</sup> IBPA went to CPA-Kalinga officer **Danny Bangibang**'s house to force information from him on the CPA and the upcoming Cordillera Day event. The same day, 14 AFP officers and one PNP official went to CPA-Kalinga chair **Juan Dammay**'s house to ask him the same questions.

**In Cebu City.** On April 8, 2024, a poster was found near the University of San Carlos (USC) Downtown Campus Sanciango Gate red-tagging Kabataan Partylist chair **John Kyle Enero**, National Union of Students of the Philippines Vice-President for Visayas and former USC Supreme Student Council President **Angel Mendiola**, Bayan Muna Regional Chairperson **John Ruiz** and Anakbayan-Cebu Chairperson **Kei Galon**, along with their respective organizations. On April 18, Kyle Enero and other youth activists reported to and requested the Commission on Human Rights-Central Visayas Office to investigate the incident and other instances of red-tagging in Cebu. On April 15, another group went to the police station in Barangay Parian in Cebu City, but the authorities were not cooperative and chided them, calling them "sayang" (pitiable) for being activists.

**In Tarlac.** At around 9 a.m. of April 5, 2024, the **Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs)** from **Makisama-Tinang**



went to the Provincial Agrarian Reform Office (PARO) to inquire about the delay in the installation of the ARBs to the 64-hectare parcel of land in Concepcion, Tarlac that they had been claiming. In the office were Provincial Agrarian Reform Officers Rogelio Marzan, Operations officer Mike Acosta, and Senior Legal Officer Atty. Jerson Carpio. The dialogue turned into a heated argument between the ARBs and the PARO officials when Marzan stated that the scheduled installation on April 11 would be canceled. He explained that 86 out of the 90 beneficiaries would come from the rival cooperative, while only four would come from Makisama-Tinang. Atty. Jerson Carpio attempted to close all the gates and detain the farmers inside the office while they called the police. The Makisama-Tinang ARBs were finally installed on May 8.

**In Negros Oriental.** On March 18, 2024, elements of the 62<sup>nd</sup> IBPA summoned **Maribel Pecore and her husband Randy** to the town proper of La Libertad. Maribel Pecore is a Barangay Population Development Officer and her husband is a farmer. Maribel was accompanied to La Libertad by her sister Mariel Senicolas, chair of Barangay Talaon. They were taken to a hut along the sea where Maribel underwent interrogation by a soldier who did not introduce himself. He was accompanied by the same soldiers she had encountered on the night of March 15. The soldier interrogated her about firearms and the alleged presence of the NPA. Maribel denied all accusations. One of the interrogators threatened to sue her if she refused to cooperate, but she stood her ground, asserting her innocence. After the interrogations, she was allowed to return home. Out of fear for their safety, she and her family vacated their house and sought refuge with relatives.

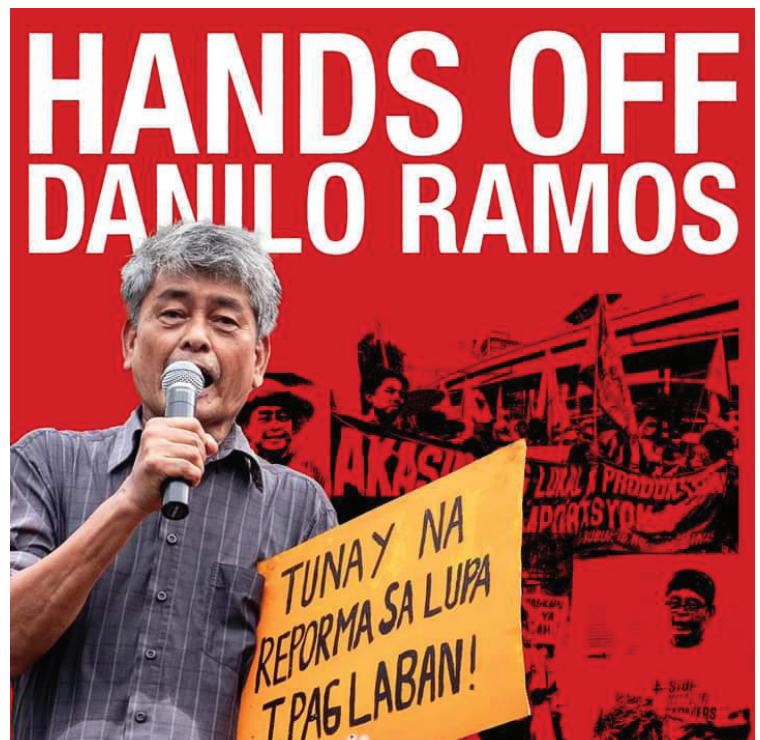
This incident was a continuation of the harassment by the soldier against the Pecore family. On March 15, around 8 p.m., the Pecore family was awakened by gunfire. Outside, they spotted armed men in civilian clothes surrounding their house. The soldiers claimed they saw armed individuals leaving her house, which Maribel denied, recognizing them as Philippine Army soldiers due to their frequent presence near her workplace. They forcibly entered her house without a warrant and conducted a thorough search before leaving.

**In Camarines Sur.** Three officers from the Camarines Sur Polytechnic College Naga City Police Office interrogated **Rea Rodavia**, secretary-general of Jovenes-Anakbayan, in Naga City on February 29, 2024 at her school campus. They asked her about her family and educational background, and showed pictures of her taken during police surveillance of her activities. To further intimidate her, they mentioned the names of other student activists and their alleged positions, and claimed that one of them had already informed on her. They asked her if she would be willing to work for them undercover. She refused. They also asked her to promise

in writing that she would no longer join the organization. Rodavia retorted that this would be the last time she would talk to the police. Two days before, she was interrogated by two former police officers who were now professors at Naga College Foundation. Her interrogators had shown her pictures of dead NPA guerrillas to intimidate her.

Meanwhile, on February 8, 2024, two burly-looking men who were accompanied by two other helmeted men on a motorcycle came looking for development worker and broadcaster **Paul Vincent Casilihan** at his house in Zone 4B, Calagbangan, Sipocot town. The men said they were from the Philippine Army sent to invite him to a dialogue. Casilihan asked for a written invitation, but because the men could not produce one, he refused. He later learned that the day before, the men had been in the neighborhood observing Casilihan's house.

**In Isabela.** Two intelligence officers from the 86<sup>th</sup> IBPA and the Santiago City Police Office went to the home of **Bobby Vargas Sotelo Jr.** at the Iglesia ni Cristo Compound in Barangay Villasis, Santiago City. Sotelo is an Applied Physics major at the University of the Philippines in Diliman and a former volunteer of Project Arapaap, a youth group providing tutoring services to community children. The intelligence operatives pressured Sotelo to disaffiliate from Project Arapaap in order to have his name removed from "the list", then sign a document stating that he would not support organizations "connected" to the CPP-NPA-NDFP. Otherwise, he would not be "delisted" and they would keep on coming back to visit his home and family. They warned him against disclosing their conversation, and said that he was being surveilled even at the UP campus.





Earlier, on January 12, 2024, the Sta. Maria Police Station, Bravo Coy, 5<sup>th</sup> Civil Military Operations Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 201<sup>st</sup> Maneuver Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Mobile Platoon 201<sup>st</sup> Maneuver Company, Regional Mobile Force Battalion 2, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon 1<sup>st</sup> Isabela Police Mobile Force Company claimed in a media report that an alias “Jon” and an alias “Lita,” residents of Purok 6, Barangay Bangad, Sta. Maria town were “Communist Terrorist Group” supporters who had surrendered. “Jon” and “Lita” turned out to be **Jhonson Postada** and **Norlita Talana**, both members of the *Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (UMA)*-Isabela who, in November 2022, were with other residents who were deceived into filling up “biodata forms,” putting on smelly, white T-shirts and holding up placards while their pictures were taken in exchange for assistance from TUPAD, a government cash-for-work program. The residents were not allowed to see what was written on the placards.

**In Bulacan.** On January 15, 2024, unidentified men wearing bonnets were looking for the whereabouts and residence of peasant leader **Danilo Ramos**, national chair of *Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas*. The three unidentified men positioned themselves several hundred meters away from the residence and farm of Ramos. They also asked a neighbor for the whereabouts of Ramos, to which the elderly neighbor responded that she did not know.

This latest incident of harassment and surveillance was the latest against Ramos. In a separate incident on January 3, three unidentified men, believed to be State forces or intelligence agents asked: “*Taga-saan ba si Danilo Ramos? Matagal na namin siyang hinahanap kasi terorista ‘yun.* (Where is Danilo Ramos? We have been looking for him for a long time because he is a terrorist.)” The first incident of surveillance and harassment against Ramos under the Marcos Jr. administration was documented last August 2023. Ramos, together with *Tanggol Magsasaka* immediately submitted reports and held dialogues with the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) to expose and demand a stop to the harassment and surveillance.

**In La Union.** On January 7, 2024, elements of the Municipal Police Station in Agoo town went to the San Manuel Norte barangay hall to talk to **George Cacayuran**, chair of *Timpuoyog ken Namnama dagiti Mangngalap ti La Union (TIMEK-LU)* and convenor of *Alyansa dagiti Mannalon ken Mangngalap iti La Union (AMMLU)*. Cacayuran, however, was not available. The police instead left a blank bio-profile form at the barangay hall, stating that the persons whose signatures were needed on the bio-profile form were engaged in peddling shabu. This was the latest modus by the police to incriminate Cacayuran, a long-time fisherfolk leader. Since 2019, he had been threatened, harassed, intimidated and subjected to surveillance and red-tagging. In one of the police’s latest visits to Cacayuran, he was told that his organization was affiliated with the NPA.

## CONTINUING PROTESTS



Repression breeds resistance and further repression breeds further resistance. In protest after protest, the Filipino people persisted in asserting their rights and assailing the pro-imperialist and fascist policies of the Marcos Jr. regime.

**Keeping the spirit of EDSA.** Activists and martial law survivors marked the 38th anniversary of the EDSA People Power Uprising on February 25, 2024, despite Marcos Jr.’s attempts to consign the historic event to oblivion by striking it from the list of national holidays. With a stroke of the pen, Marcos Jr. sought to erase from public memory the deaths, disappearances, torture, and massive corruption that characterized his dictator-father’s martial law regime. EDSA 38, which rejected attempts to change the 1987 Philippine Constitution to facilitate 100% foreign ownership of land and other resources, was still exuberantly observed amid the Marcos Jr. regime’s launching of his *Bagong Pilipinas*, a petty little tune emulating his father’s *Bagong Lipunan* mantra, and the renewed call for charter change. These Marcosian cheap spins, meanwhile, spurred people to reject even more everything that smacks of Marcos branding.

**Free our sisters.** On March 8, 2024, *KARAPATAN* and *Tanggol Bayi* raised the call to free all political prisoners, especially women political prisoners. Out of the 799 political prisoners at the end of 2023, there were 164 women who were unjustly imprisoned and their voices silenced by trumped-up charges, planted evidence, and perjured testimonies. Gabriela and other women’s groups called on the Marcos Jr. regime to focus on programs that would improve livelihoods, address human rights violations, and attain genuine national sovereignty, instead of drumming up charter change intends to subsume Philippine businesses to 100% foreign ownership.

**No to jeepney phaseout.** Jeepney drivers and operators consistently waged protests staunchly opposing the Marcos Jr. regime's jeepney phase-out scheme that masquerades as a jeepney modernization program. Marcos Jr.'s program compels operators to form cooperatives and purchase expensive "modern jeepneys" imported from China, and requires the consolidation of franchises, with only one franchise allowed per transport route.

Piston and Manibela transport groups led transport strikes against Malacañang's scheme which they called elitist and anti-people.

**Jobs and wages.** Thousands of workers marched on May 1, 2024, International Workers' Day, to renew their demands for higher wages, job security, and the recognition of their right to unionize. They called for a stop to the attacks against workers and the people under the Marcos Jr. regime. They demanded justice for veteran labor organizer Jude Fernandez who was extrajudicially killed by CIDG operatives in September 2023, and the surfacing of missing unionist William Lariosa who was abducted in Bukidnon in April 2024.

The workers assailed the US imperialist-inspired neoliberal policies embraced by the Philippine government which have kept wages low and systematically attacked unions and other hard-won workers' rights. A march to the US embassy in Manila also denounced the US wars of aggression against Filipinos, Palestinians and other oppressed people.

**Free Palestine!** Filipinos joined protests to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people suffering from the US-supported genocidal attacks of Israel. Protests in the Philippines form part of an international wave of popular actions condemning Israeli Zionist crimes. The Filipino people support the Palestinian people's rights to national self-determination and liberation.

Activists, rights defenders, workers, and freedom-loving Filipinos will never keep silent in the face of oppression. Anti-apartheid activist Bishop Desmond Tutu had once said, "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

**We shall outlive and overcome all oppressors.**

