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PANDEMIC AND THE IMPERIALIST WAR

U.S. trails as Cuba wins fight against COVID-19

The U.S. imperialism does not take a sick leave as COVID-19 claims thousands of lives. Instead, it has relentlessly weaponized the virus to intensify its attack against the working class. As Cuba leads the global fight against the coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. continues to pressure other countries to reject Cuban aid and has accused the Cuban government of inhumane treatment of its nurses and doctors in international aid missions. [1]

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DUTERTE AND HEALTH CRISIS 7

While the Philippine government is exulting that we are winning the battle against pandemic COVID-19, the dire situation of the poor, including the working poor, shows otherwise. To gauge if we are winning the battle or not, it's worthwhile to look back on the different health care systems of other countries and how they are handling the pandemic, specifically, the United States and Cuba. The two countries have different health care systems and economic and political policies.

The U.S. is considered as the most powerful nation in the world in terms of geo-political influence and military. While Cuba, still considered a third world country, is a model country in terms of health care.[2]

The U.S. Health Care System: Trailing and Trembling

The U.S. public health crisis is worsening as the COVID-19 has spread among 4.97 million Americans with 161,284 death tolls according to the U.S. Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention or CDC (as of 9 August). This is consequential to the destruction of the forces of production. With nearly 50 million Americans now jobless, the most powerful nation is clearly losing the fight.

The U.S. budget for health has decreased by 10 percent over the past decade. CDC Director Robert Redfield told Congress during a hearing last March that under-funding in public health has hampered their government's response to the pandemic. This systemic issue is due to the many years of austerity measures or budget cuts for social services undertaken in exchange for the payment of the government's soaring sovereign debts.

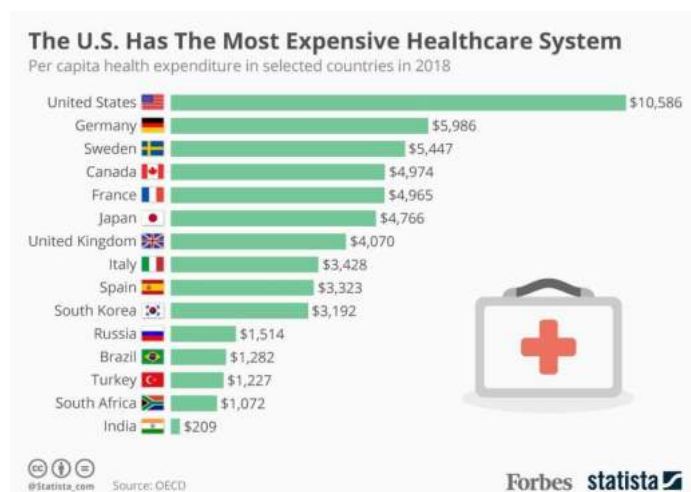
These neoliberal policies led to the elimination of 50,000 positions in the U.S. public health departments since 2008, resulting to inadequate response against COVID-19. The U.S. is actually considered to have one of the most expensive health care systems in the world (see Figure 1), wherein

Table 1.

USA	versus	Cuba
capitalist	economic model	socialist
200,000 in 177 countries ³	military deployment in other countries	0
0	doctors deployment in other countries	37,000 in 67 countries ⁴
one of the most expensive in the world ⁵	health care system	free ⁶
one of the most expensive college education in the world ⁷	education system	Free in all levels including university education ⁸

one out of three American families skip the medical care due to high cost. [9] Moreover, the U.S. health care system is severely dependent on employment-based and private insurance, wherein most of the citizens access health services through an employer or private insurance company that indulges business interests. Based on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Office of the Actuary Report, American households contributed nearly US\$1.04 trillion, equivalent to a third in total health spending of the country in 2018, in the form of expenses like out-of-pocket costs, contributions to Medicare via payroll taxes and premiums, and cost-sharing for employer-sponsored coverage.[10]

Figure 1.



Pre-pandemic, financial oligarchs—investment bank JP Morgan Chase, technology company Amazon and conglomerate Berkshire Hathaway—were already eyeing to dominate America's US\$3.2 trillion system through a planned joint venture in 2018, finally named as Haven in 2019. Haven Healthcare is the biggest and most comprehensive entity in terms of capital and that will soon monopolize the industry of insurance-based health care system. The practical problem right now is in employment-based

insurance, where roughly 12 million Americans lost their employer-sponsored health insurance. The more than 50 million jobless Americans have become more insecure, apart from the 27.5 million uninsured (U.S. Census Bureau). [11]

As millions of Americans struggle for adequate health care access and decent jobs, big businesses were bailed out by Federal Reserve through purchasing corporate debts of Microsoft, Apple, Visa, Home Depot and others. Banks also gain amid the health crisis led by JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America and Citigroup, earning deposit increase of US\$2 trillion by facilitating stimulus packages from the government.[12] These measures are likened to the 2008 financial crisis bailout of the 1 percent.

The Trump Administration is losing the battle, allowing multinational corporations to reap superprofits and leaving the American working class behind.

Cuba's Health Care System and its Winning Ways against COVID-19

In Cuba, the total number of infected has reached more than 3,000 with 88 deaths, as of August 10, 2020. Notably, statistics show above 85 percent recovery rate. Out of the 92 health workers who had been infected by mid-April, not one has died. Different countries commended Cuba's efforts on preventing the spread of the virus and have sought their assistance in the global fight against the virus.[13]

Ranked number one in the World Bank's physicians per 1000 people charts in 2017 with 8.1, Cuba has dispatched 593 medical workers to 14 countries. Even President Rodrigo Duterte recognized the Cuban

health system. It would've been a different story, if he followed suit.

Cuba's health care system is an example for all countries of the world. In 2015, the WHO studied the country's experience on local production of medicines, technology transfer, and improving access to health care.[14] Such success is due to:

1. A political system and the government's commitment to driving the national vision for health sector development.
2. The Cuban government invested in the development of its human resources as the main asset for national growth and development.
3. Huge investments were committed to research and development institutions.

In Cuba, the health system is free, comprehensive, and progressive.

Free for all

Since the late 1980s, 100% of Cubans have had free access to family doctors and nurses, with more than 10,000 offices dotting the island today.[15] It is not insurance-based (as opposed to premium employment-based coverage treatment, curative, and through a long list of prerequisites such as proof of indigence).

Comprehensive

Holistic and Preventive, as mobilizing primary health care is Cuba's powerful weapon against COVID-19. A new model of community-based polyclinics was established in 1974 giving Cuban communities local access to primary care specialists. These polyclinics are the backbone of Cuba's health system. Each of the 498 nationwide polyclinics serve a catchment area of between 30,000 and 60,000 people and act also as the organizational hub for 20 to 40 neighborhood-based family doctor-and-

nurse offices, and as accredited research and teaching centers for medical, nursing and allied health sciences students. These polyclinics also acted as contact tracers of the whole population.[16]

Moreover, nationalized pharmaceutical industry is instrumental in Cuban use of 'Wonder Drug' Interferon Alpha-2B Recombinant (IFNrec) to fight coronavirus, [17] which is jointly developed by scientists from Cuba and China. Cuba first used advanced interferon techniques to treat dengue fever in the 1980s and later found success in using it to combat HIV, human papillomavirus, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and other diseases.

In terms of integration, Cuban medical schools, which are government-run and tuition-free, incorporate primary care, public health, and social determinants in their curricula.[18]

Progressive

In Cuba's health care system that is based on the needs of the people, the biopharma industry is driven by public health needs and produces nearly 70% of the medicines consumed domestically and exports to 50 countries.[19]

The development of the national drug industry began after the Revolution with the priority accorded by the new Cuban Government to the health of the population. The State created a legal framework to underpin the political, economic, and social transformations necessary to promote equity, access to services, and intersectoral development after the ouster of the US-backed dictator regime of Fulgencio Batista in 1959.



Dr Liz Caballero, left, and student Susana Díaz leave El Vedado polyclinic in Havana, to go door by door looking for possible coronavirus cases. Photograph: Adalberto Roque/AFP via Getty Images. © The Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/07/cuba-coronavirus-success-contact-tracing-isolation>).

Meanwhile, the Philippine healthcare system is patterned after the U.S. that is expensive, insurance-based, and privatized healthcare as imposed by multilateral financial institutions. Every Filipino spent P7,496 (US\$180) for health in 2018 or with a total of P799.1 billion (PSA, October 2018). This is an increase of 6.6 percent, compared to the previous year and more than half of expenditure are out of the pocket expenses for medicines and private hospital bills.

The remaining expenditure went to the health spending that is financed through government schemes, compulsory contributory health care financing schemes, and voluntary health care payment schemes. Majority of the contributions came from workers premiums like Philhealth and taxes. Worse, Health Capital Formation Expenditures, comprise only 4 percent of Total Health Expenditure,

decreased by 7.8 percent. Out of that decline, expenditure on the machine and medical equipment decreased by as much as 45 percent.

PhilHealth also rolled out an insurance package for COVID-19 cases for accredited level 2 and 3 hospitals. There were 355 level 2 and 3 private hospitals accredited by PhilHealth in 2019 vs. only 97 level 2 and 3 public hospitals. It only shows that the Universal Health Care program in our country is nothing more than an additional raking-in of profits of big businesses and government bureaucrats through pooled membership contributions as government subsidy for the poor.[20]

In the 2012 WHO detailed analysis, the country's financing system was described as “fragmented with insufficient government investments, inappropriate incentives to providers” and that the system has a weak social protection and high inequity. The WHO notes that only 30 percent of health professionals employed by the government address the health needs of the majority and the remaining 70 percent of health professionals work in the more expensive privately-run sectors. Moreover, the country has only around four doctors, nine nurses, four midwives, one medical technologist and 10 hospital beds for every 10,000 persons compare to the ASEAN average of nine doctors, 26 nurses and midwives, and 21 hospital beds per 10,000 persons. Two-thirds of all hospitals and 53.4 percent of all hospital beds are in the private sector.

The present health care system is the manifestation of our backward economy, in the absence of national industrialization and genuine agrarian reform. At one point in the crisis, our country cannot even produce protective personal equipment, face masks, and alcohol for our front liners, bringing our hospitals on vulnerable and critical level.

The people should be wary of the neoliberal economic managers who are pushing the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE) for legislation that favors big businesses through tax incentives, in the guise of stimulus package for post-pandemic economic recovery.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases in the Philippines (IATF) has been shifting, at times confusing, the degrees of community quarantine since March, making

the lock down one of the toughest and longest running in the world. It is not the right solution. We cannot win the fight against COVID-19, unless we prioritize the People's Health Agenda. The working class realizes that this pandemic crisis of onerous health system is caused by the greedy oligarchs and their cohorts agent states. Together, the working people must aim slings on Goliath's forehead as the Cubans did. #

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The global economic crises over the past decades created greater problems in the overall socioeconomic and political conditions of the people worldwide and consequently, on people's health... Monopoly capitalism is on the global offensive. It is using all the nation-state based multilateral and bilateral mechanisms at its disposal: the United States through [trade agreements] and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-World Bank, especially directed to least developed countries.

- The People's Health Agenda: A demand for free, comprehensive and Progressive Health Care Founded on Equity, Social Justice and People's Rights, by the Coalition for People's Right to Health (CPRH)

Duterte's intensified attacks on the Filipino workers amid health crisis

Duterte signed the “Terror Law”, as the state fascism is becoming more blatant and more devastating to the forces of production. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy was already sluggish. The UN notes that the economies of the world recorded an all-time low of 2.3% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in a decade. One of the reasons is the growing global debt. In particular, the biggest economy in the world which is the U.S., has 106.9 percent debt to GDP ratio—the highest in history (U.S. Bureau of Public Debt).

The debt ballooned primarily due to Quantitative Easing (QE) measures or lowering the interest rates of bonds; from Federal Reserve for private banks and other businesses undertaken by the U.S. government.[1] This is to artificially stimulate the economy from global financial crisis of 2008. Since these bonds were only invested in stock market, this measure does not create jobs. In fact, there were 11 million Americans unemployed in 2019, the slowest job creation in eight years. In the end, only the few elites benefited in the QE measures.

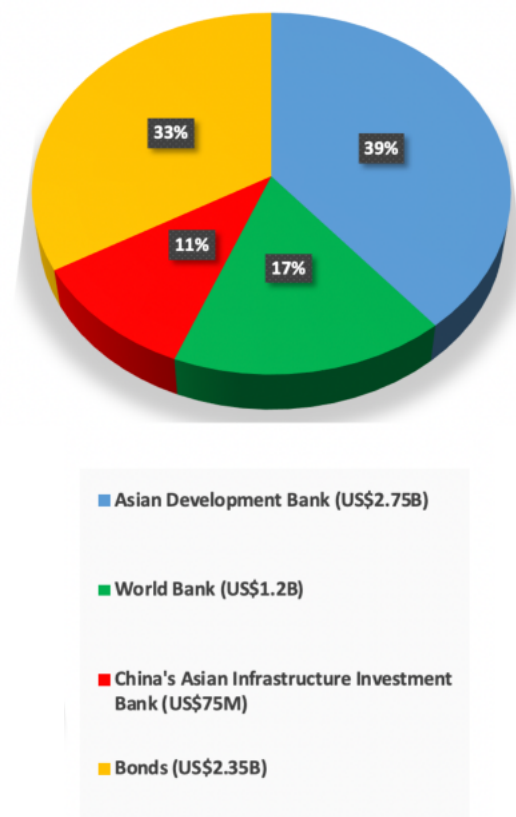
Now that the pandemic has heavily hit the U.S., the inutile privatized health system is even more exposed to the world. The privatization coincides with the austerity

measures or huge budget cuts on health and other basic services in exchange of higher budget for the debt payments of U.S. government to banks. Worse, the investment banks and other big businesses still reaped profit amid the crisis while millions lost their jobs.

Almost half of US\$2.3 trillion rescue package for pandemic or CARE ACT serves as bailout for the corporations. As the investment banks gain more profit, their surplus capital will be utilized as ready-made export for backward countries like the Philippines in order to further increase profits. It is important to note that these investment banks and big businesses also dominates the leadership of multilateral banks that are mainly accountable for the avalanche of debt in many developing countries.

Duterte regime as an agent state of multipolar imperialist powers, pushes vigorously its neo-liberal agenda. His administration resorted to foreign debts in order to combat the virus with the total of \$4.9 billion as of 14 May 2020 (see Chart 1), despite the call from different groups for debt moratorium while were in public health emergency. As the debts were getting bigger, more taxes are needed. As such, the government resorted to taxing online businesses and start-ups where most of the sellers are working class who lost their jobs due to the pandemic. The government also plans to collect bicycle fee because of the higher demand of workers access to mobility and transportation. The workers are having difficulties in commuting to and from their workplace as jeepneys, the most inexpensive means of public transport are being suspended in the guise of the implementation of Route Rationalization, which is funded by World Bank.

Chart 1. Philippine Foreign Debts for COVID-19 Response, as of May 14, 2020 (in billion dollars)



Source: CNN Philippines (\$25M, \$400M & \$750M approved loans from ADB, WB & China AIIB respectively are excluded from \$4.9 billion but included in this chart).

These neoliberal policies further burden millions of Filipinos who are facing losses of income and livelihood. Meanwhile, Duterte's economic managers are pushing the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE) for legislation that favor big businesses through tax incentives, in the guise of stimulus package for post-pandemic economic recovery.

Forces of production devastation

Flexible labor is naturally produced by semi-colonial and semi-feudal societies which are the social bases of imperialism in order to extract superprofit. This is deeply-rooted to crises of production and capital surpluses. The labor department admitted that up to 10 million Filipinos might lose their jobs because of the health crisis. But

Table 1. Employment by Sector and Subsector in the Philippines, Q4 of 2019.

Employed Persons by Sector and Subsector, Philippines (2019, 4th Quarter)			
Sector/Subsector	January 2019	January 2020	Difference
EMPLOYED PERSONS (in thousands)	41,029.5	42,653.1	1,623.6
SECTOR			
Agriculture	8,846.5	9,664.0	817.5
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	7,695.4	8,494.1	798.7
Fishing and aquaculture	1,151.2	1,169.9	18.7
Industry	8,168.3	8,005.7	-162.5
Mining and quarrying	182.2	184.3	2.1
Manufacturing	3,692.2	3,642.3	-49.9
Electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply	97.9	108.0	10.2
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	78.2	61.9	-16.4
Construction	4,117.8	4,009.3	-108.5
Services	24,014.7	24,983.3	968.6
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	8,028.4	8,609.6	581.2
Transportation and storage	3,425.2	3,408.0	-17.2
Accommodation and food service activities	1,813.7	2,014.3	200.6
Information and communication	410.9	371.9	-39.1
Financial and insurance activities	589.2	626.9	37.6
Real estate activities	258.8	211.2	-47.6
Professional, scientific and technical activities	323.2	274.5	-48.7
Administrative and support service activities	1,591.4	1,664.4	73.0
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	2,604.5	2,805.8	201.2
Education	1,263.2	1,343.7	80.6
Human health and social work activities	524.1	562.2	38.1
Arts, entertainment and recreation	393.1	395.6	2.5
Other service activities	2,789.0	2,693.2	-95.8
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0.0	2.1	2.1

Notes: Estimates for January 2020 are preliminary and may change.

0.0 - Less than 0.05 percent

Details may not add up to totals due to rounding.

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority, January 2019 and January 2020 Labor Force Survey

even before the lock down, the manufacturing subsector loss almost 50,000 jobs already in the third quarter of 2019 (see Table 1). Among these job losses are retrenchment from foreign firms, Nokia and Honda. Even one of the biggest banks in the world, Wells Fargo, retrenched workers in their operation in the country. These retrenchments were consequential to the world's sluggish economy since our country's manufacturing sector is part of global value chain.

The biggest job losses were on the construction (109,000), the subsector that is mostly funded by foreign capital. Moreover, the 700,000 jobs added to

agricultural sector does not catch up to the previous years wherein millions of jobs related to food production were lost. The service sector which consistently adds more than a million jobs in previous years, decreased to only 969,000. The figures also show that those employed in the service sector is largely represented by the mass of of ambulant vendors, small stall keepers, urban small handicraft workers, carpenters and masons, dockworkers, pedicab, tricycle, and jeepney drivers, domestic helpers, homeworkers, and a multitude of others in the semi-proletariat. These are workers who only intermittently inserted in wage relations and/or may own the most minor of means of production for independent petty

production, be it for exchange or subsistence.[2] Many of these workers, especially in the rural areas, are sidelining peasants in reality. Additionally, almost half of the employment in our country are in informal sector. This characteristic of the country's labor force is reflected on the data of the beneficiaries of government's social amelioration program, where around 18 million out of 24 million families belong to the informal sector. This indicates that the majority of our population are vulnerable in crises like the pandemic, worsened by weak job creation and labor export policy. In the first quarter of 2020, almost nine million jobs were lost compared to last quarter of 2019 (see Table 2).

Table 2. Employment by Sector and Subsector in the Philippines, January and April 2020

Employed Persons by Sector and Subsector, Philippines (Jan. and Apr. 2020)			
Sector/Subsector	Jan 2020	Apr 2020	Difference
EMPLOYED PERSONS			
Number (in thousands)	42,653	33,764	-8,889
SECTOR			
Agriculture	9,664	8,743	-921
Agriculture and forestry	8,494	7,647	-847
Fishing and aquaculture	1,170	1,096	-73
Industry	8,006	5,745	-2,261
Mining and quarrying	184	154	-30
Manufacturing	3,642	2,702	-940
Electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply	108	61	-47
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	62	48	-14
Construction	4,009	2,779	-1,230
Services	24,983	19,276	-5,707
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	8,610	6,452	-2,158
Transportation and storage	3,408	2,583	-825
Accommodation and food service activities	2,014	1,224	-790
Information and communication	372	267	-104
Financial and insurance activities	627	437	-190
Real estate activities	211	163	-48
Professional, scientific and technical activities	274	233	-42
Administrative and support service activities	1,664	1,501	-163
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	2,806	2,499	-307
Education	1,344	1,122	-222
Human health and social work activities	562	460	-102
Arts, entertainment and recreation	396	200	-195
Other service activities	2,693	2,135	-558
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	2	0	-2

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority

These losses encompass all sectors and subsectors (921,000 in agriculture, 940,000 in manufacturing, 1.2 million in construction and 5.7 million in service). The

survey only covers the months of January to March; the lockdown actually started on the second half of March. However, instead of helping the displaced workers, government resorted to further harming the forces of production and creating large, profound wells of reserved labor as material basis for low wages and precarious work. The DOLE released Labor Advisory No. 17 and the Department Order No. 213, providing companies and businesses the legal justification to terminate its workers and to cut their wages, resulting to wage theft. Section 5 of this advisory states that, "Employers and employees may agree voluntarily and in writing to temporarily adjust employees' wage and wage-related benefits as provided for in existing employment contract, company policy or collective bargaining agreement (CBA)," as cited in the press releases of the Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (18 and 21 May 2020).

The advisory and order reiterates the implementation of flexible work arrangements that are also allowed in previous department issuances such as job rotation, reduction of normal workdays, partial closure of establishment, and others, while suspending the labor inspection for establishments. This only means that the government continue to abandon their duties to regulate the labor market and make it more flexible for the capitalists in order to further squeeze workers' wages to reap higher profit.

Added burden to the workers is the full implementation of Route Rationalization funded by the World Bank, dubbed as the government's 'modernization' program and one of the rationales of the government in pushing for the jeepney phaseout. The

program will displace 400,000 jeepney, utility vehicles and bus drivers according to transport group PISTON. This is in the form of the Omnibus Franchising Guidelines as policy of the Transportation Department, a component of which is the country version of the route rationalization to privatize and corporatize the fleet management system. This is also an attempt to take away the victories of the organized transport groups, a clear attack on established labor rights won by the labor movement.

Even the debunked Balik Probinsya Program for displaced workers eventually failed; it wanted to go back to the province without livelihood and income in the absence of genuine agrarian reform at the countryside and national industrialization for the whole country, aggravated by the neoliberal policies of labor contractualization and wage rationalization.

Duterte regime is sowing reign of terror to his own citizens

“My order to the police and the military, as well as the barangay officials, is that, when you create a disorder and there would be an occasion that you fight back and their [the authorities’] lives are put in danger, shoot them dead.” This is the statement of President Rodrigo Duterte on 1 April, 2020 after 20 informal settlers from Sitio San Roque in Quezon City were arrested by Philippine National Police demanding for food and other assistance amid the lockdown. He also warned the leftist groups and violators of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in Luzon not to “challenge” the government during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. His statement and shoot to kill order is patterned after his war on drugs that killed thousands of poor

Filipinos.

Pre-pandemic, extra judicial killings, mass arrests, suppressing freedom of speech, redtagging and presentation of fake surrenderees as members of New People’s Army are prevalent in his regime (see table 3) and intensified during the lock down. Government wasted no time to use the pandemic as a cover up to suppress the rights of its own citizens. Military rules and control the mobility of the people through the emergency powers also granted to the commander in chief by his rubber stamp legislators. Meanwhile, free and reliable mass testing and contact tracing remains very slow, inadequate, and uneven.

Table 3. Number of victims of civil and political rights and extra judicial killings

Number of victims of civil and political rights, July 2016 - December 2019		Number of victims of extra judicial killing by sector, July 2016 - December 2019	
Violations	Number of victims	Sectors	Number of victims
Extra judicial killing	293	Worker	13
Enforced disappearance	11	Peasant	239
Torture	210	Indigenous people	59
Frustrated extra judicial killing	429	Transport	9
Illegal arrest without detention	2,516	Fisherfolk	3
Illegal arrest and detention	768	Youth and student	15
Illegal search and seizure	645	Human rights worker	16
Physical assault and injury	358	Church	7
Demolition	6,492	Entrepreneur	4
Violation of domicile	1,043	Environmentalist	13
Destruction of property	6,615	Government Employee	22
Divestment of property	901	Teacher	2
Forced evacuation	454,696	Lawyer	2
Threat/Harassment/Intimidation	97,362	Cultural worker	1
Indiscriminate firing	8,436	Moro	32
Bombing	370,186	Minor	10
Forced/Fake surrender	3,296		
Forced labor/Involuntary servitude	35		
Use of civilians in police and/or military operations as guides and/or shield	147		
Use of schools, medical, religious and other public places for military purpose	44,029		
Restriction or violent dispersal of mass actions, public assemblies and gatherings	3,496		

Source: KARAPATAN

Recent victim of these killings is the secretary general of Kadamay Carlito “Ka Karletz” Badion, a veteran urban poor mass leader who fought for the right to housing of homeless informal workers. He was found dead on 28 May, in Ormoc City, Leyte. Before his killing, he was redtagged and received death threats. This incident of redtagging and death threats holds true to Marlon Maldos and Jory Porquia, who were also killed during the lock down.

According to Bulatlat.com reports, Maldos who came from a family of peasants, was killed in broad daylight on Tuesday, 17 March, in Bohol island. Before the incident, Maldos and his family were redtagged by members of the Army's 47th Infantry Battalion, as reported by the Hugpong sa Mag-uumang Bol-anon (Humabol), a chapter of the Kilusang Mabubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) in the island. While Porquia, a former migrant worker in China and the current Bayan Muna coordinator in Iloilo City where he was gunned down on 30 April. He sustained 9 gun shots, according to his son, Lean. Before the incident, he was harassed by the members of Philippine National Police because of his active participation on the relief operations. As it was, the city also placed under the lock down. "They killed my tatay in the middle of a crisis when all he did was to give relief to those who need it. They killed my tatay, mercilessly," Lean wrote on his Facebook account.

These killings does not exempt anyone, even former member of Armed Forces Corporal Winston Ragos was shot twice by Police Master Sergeant Daniel Florendo, Jr. on April 21 in Quezon City. According to ABCBN report, cops claimed Ragos was carrying a sling bag with a handgun and did not raise his hands when told to. Instead, he allegedly attempted to pull out his firearm inside the sling bag, prompting Florendo to shoot him, hitting him twice in the body. But Ragos' sister and witnesses said he was unarmed.

Resisting repression

Duterte thought that he can take advantage of the public health crisis by limiting

people's mobility, restricting protests and silencing dissent. However, the masses were quick to show that he and his cohorts were wrong. The Independence Day Commemoration on 12 June 2020 at the University of the Philippines-Diliman showed thousands of protesters following quarantine protocols by wearing face masks and following physical distancing even with the threats of arrest from the police (see back cover page).

The protest tagged as Grand Mañanita (satirical to Mañanita birthday celebration of PNP National Capital Region Head Debold Sinas which violated the quarantine protocols) was the living proof that the people will refuse to cower. Duterte further isolated and exposed himself as a monster through railroading of the "Terror Law" instead of addressing the legitimate demands of the people. Now more than ever, Duterte has become extremely distant from the Filipino people and he has shown that his administration is merely another organ of oppression, headed by imperialist powers and local elites. He has no intention to uplift the lives of the majority who are suffering from hunger and poverty. The oppressed is pushed to the extreme and has no choice but to struggle and resist repression.

Huwag matakot, Makibaka! #

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- [1] See "The U.S. Is Experiencing A Dangerous Corporate Debt Bubble", *Forbes* (29 August 2018), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jessecolombo/2018/08/29/the-u-s-is-experiencing-a-dangerous-corporate-debt-bubble/#584f0a04600e>
- and "Does Quantitative Easing Mainly Help the Rich?", *CNBC*, (14 September 2012), <https://www.cnbc.com/id/49031991>
- [2] See EILER *Labor Flexibilization and Imperialist Crisis* "Intensifying Exploitation, Dismantling Job Security, Liquidating Unions", (2001), p. 26

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People's Grand Mañanita Protest at UP Diliman shows protesters following community quarantine protocols and observing physical distancing.
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