

**REPORT  
ON  
THE  
SITUATION  
OF  
FILIPINO  
CHILDREN  
2012-2016**



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## **FOREWORD**

On April 24, 2012, the National Council of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) issued the document **NDFP DECLARATION AND PROGRAM OF ACTION FOR THE RIGHTS, PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN.**

The document affirms the rights of children and resolves to carry out a program of action for the protection and welfare of children within the framework of the Guide for Establishing the People’s Democratic Government (issued 1972) and the 1996 NDFP Unilateral Declaration of Undertaking to Apply the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Protocol I of 1977, and in accordance with the principles and policies enunciated by the NDFP as well as with the just and applicable provisions of international conventions pertinent to the rights and welfare of children.

A team of international lawyers, members of the International Lawyers Advisory Team (ILAT) lent their expertise to assist the NDFP in forging the document.

In Article V Section 13 Program of Action of the said document, the NDFP states that it shall create and operationalize under its Human Rights Committee, a Special Office for the Protection of Children (SOPC).

Among the functions of this Office is to issue an annual report on the situation of children in the Philippines in relation to the armed conflict and on the activities to uphold, defend and promote the rights of children.

### **The Report for 2012-2016**

In consultation with the Human Rights Committee of the NDFP, instead of an annual report, the SOPC is now publishing a report on the situation of children under the Presidency of Benigno Simeon Aquino.

The rationale for this is to see the situation of children, not on a yearly basis, but to see how the policies of a president during his term has affected children either positively or negatively.

It also shows how the revolutionary movement undertakes its work with children during a period of intense repressions, violations of human rights and amid intense natural disasters.

This document is divided into three parts: first, an Overview, where the general situation of children is presented. Included in this part are the following: educational situation of children, child labor, child abuse, human trafficking and cyber pornography, children and disasters and children in conflict with the law (CICL).

The second part discusses the Situation of Children in Areas of Armed Conflict. And third, What the Revolutionary Movement has Done to Protect and Promote Children's Rights.

The NDFP still has a lot of work to do to help develop the full potential of children within its area of responsibility. The challenge to undertake this work under militarized conditions continues through every presidential regime as long as the semicolonial and semifeudal system continues.

However, the NDFP is also inspired by the positive responses and development among the children as they are developed into responsible citizens of the Philippines.

## Introduction

Since President Benigno S. (BS) Aquino implemented the same neo-liberal policies of his predecessor, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (GMA), economic exploitation of the Filipino people and plunder of its vast natural resources continued. He was not called the “poster child of neoliberal economics” for nothing. Taking its cue from GMA, the BS Aquino regime came up with Oplan Bayanihan, its own version of a counter-revolutionary program. Aimed at ensuring the perpetuation of the regime’s servility to the imperialist masters and ruling elite and preserving the same social and economic structures, Oplan Bayanihan intensified the regime’s use of state terror and political repression.

At the end of his term, though the economy registered some growth, the wealth of big business, especially those close to the Aquinos, grew by leaps and bounds while more Filipinos became poorer.

BS Aquino’s regime failed to uplift the lives of the Filipino people and was beset by charges of corruption over the use of pork barrel funds. The pork barrel is a large development fund given to each Congressman and Senator to be used to improve the lives of their constituents and has become a source of large scale corruption.

The Aquino administration is also accountable for the criminal neglect in handling the disasters wrought by typhoons Pablo (international name: Bopha) and Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) and an atrocious record of human rights violations, especially against indigenous people, poor peasants and workers.







## I. OVERVIEW

When the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) issued its Declaration and Program of Action for the Rights, Protection and Welfare of Children on April 24, 2012, it was cognizant of the fact that Filipino children, together with 90% of the Filipino population, were victims of an unjust social system.

Since then, the exploitation and oppression suffered by Filipino children have intensified even more, subjecting them to worsening conditions of poverty, neglect and gross violations of their rights.

From 2012 until the end of the term of the BS Aquino regime in 2016, majority of the estimated 38.4 million Filipino children continued to suffer in poverty. They are children of the toiling masses and most come from the rural communities. They are among the most vulnerable population groups in Philippine society.

The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (popularly called “4Ps”) of the BS Aquino regime, its so-called cornerstone poverty alleviation program, failed to improve the lives of millions of Filipino children who are the priority target of the program. The program gives conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor with the intention of improving the health, nutrition and education of children from ages 0 to 18.

However, the program has only given an excuse to the BS Aquino regime to intensify the privatization of public welfare services and avoid addressing the increasingly inequitable distribution of wealth in the country. Many reports have alleged that it is also a source of corruption, as many “recipients” do not actually exist. The 4Ps was exposed as a mere palliative measure as it failed to address the major causes of poverty such as landlessness and unemployment.

In the 2015 poverty statistics for basic sectors compiled by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), population poverty incidence decreased to 21.6% with a magnitude of 22 million poor, citing that the conditional cash transfer (CCT) was a major reason in the decrease. However, according to the research group IBON Foundation, the multi-billion peso conditional cash transfer (CCT)-driven result is no reason for complacency because the signs of structural poverty from economic backwardness remain. The data on poverty incidence, IBON said, “grossly underreports real poverty in the country because it uses a conservative food threshold and an outdated and mechanical estimation of non-food expenses.”

Despite the decrease, the poverty incidence of children was still the third highest among all the 14 basic sectors identified in Republic Act 8425 or the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the country has one of the the worst unemployment rates in Asia. The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Peasant Movement of the Philippines), an organization of peasants, farmworkers and fisherfolk, reported that nine (9) out of 10 farmers do not own the land.

Under such conditions of poverty, it is no wonder that children from various sectors suffer from hunger, poor education and health and have limited economic opportunities.

Poverty also rendered children more vulnerable to human trafficking, cyber pornography and criminality, including petty thievery and the illegal drugs trade.

The Filipino children's vulnerability to human rights violations especially in areas where the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) are conducting covert and overt military operations under Oplan Bayanihan has also increased. Oplan Bayanihan is part of the United States (US) counter insurgency scheme in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, Katribu (Association of Indigenous People in the Philippines), a national alliance of indigenous people's organizations, mentions that in the countryside, children belonging to national minority groups are the most impoverished due to the imperialist plunder of their ancestral lands and other resources and the state's gross neglect of their needs and welfare. Minority women and children have also been targets of atrocities committed by state security forces during military operations. They have been killed, raped, tortured and displaced from their communities and ancestral lands.

The following subtopics tackle the issues mentioned above in more detail.

## Educational situation of children

Continuing neoliberal policies which foster the commercialization and privatization of education have placed it beyond the reach of the majority of Filipinos. Under the US-Aquino regime, their inviolable right to education was under attack under Oplan Bayanihan.

The BS Aquino government boasted that education got the biggest share of the government's 2016 budget. And yet, the government's much-touted free public education continues to be a fallacy as it is not really free of cost. Going to school entails many other miscellaneous expenses such as uniforms and mandatory school projects. Additional costs are the daily transportation and food expenses that the poor can ill afford.

### ***The statistics say it all:***

— According to IBON Foundation, out of every 100 students who enter elementary school, only 66 will be able to graduate. Out of the 66, only 58 will be able to enroll in high school. Of the 58, only 43 will finish their secondary education. Of the 43, only 23 will be able to enroll in college while 10 will be taking vocational courses. In the end, only 14 will make it to their college graduation and only seven will finish their vocational schooling. This, despite cash dole-out programs like the corruption-ridden 4Ps ostensibly designed to help families keep children in school.

— The lack of classrooms and teachers remains a perennial problem. Schoolyear 2015-2016 opened with a shortage of more than 200,000 classrooms and 100,000 teachers.

— Early childhood education is likewise doing poorly. Despite legislation like the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Law enacted in 2000 and Republic Act 6972 which recognizes the importance of early childhood and its special needs and requires every local government unit to establish day care centers in every village, only 36,388 day care centers have been built in the country's 42,025 barangays as of 2010, according to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

— Day care workers, most of whom are lowly paid casual employees have long been demanding that they be regularized and their wages raised. In some local government units (LGUs) like Manila, budget allocation for day care workers are marked as part of the budget for equipment which has a depreciation value. Thus, their lowly PhP2,000.00 monthly salary will be "depreciated" by P200.00 next year. They, moreover, deplore the lack of facilities and resource materials to help develop children at this crucial stage.

The Department of Education's (DepEd) K to 12 (K-12) Senior High School program, approved in 2011 and slated to begin in 2016, added another two years to the basic education curriculum, thus burdening children and their parents with additional expenses. The K-12 program only espouses neoliberal doctrine as it is intended to provide cheap and docile labor for the global supply chain. It is designed to make Filipino youth fit for the global job market by emphasizing skills needed abroad instead of enhancing skills and knowledge necessary for basic national industries. This is the logical consequence of the Philippine government's failure to prioritize national industrialization in its economic programs and policies. The number of out-of-school youth is expected to soar in the coming years as not all high schools are equipped to implement the K-12 program. As a result, millions of students will have no choice but to stop schooling.

## **Health situation of children**

Government health care services have continued to deteriorate and have become more inaccessible to the poor: six (6) out of 10 patients die without seeing a doctor. Preventable and curable diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera and measles, continue to top the leading causes of mortality and morbidity. Hospitalization remains to be expensive. Public health care has become a commodity with a price tag for every service.

The BS Aquino regime spent less on health. According to the PSA, in 2013 every Filipino spent about PhP5,260.00 for health wherein PhP2,961.00 came from his/her own pocket, PhP994.00 from the government and PhP605.00 from social insurance.

Worse, the BS Aquino regime has facilitated the fast-tracking of the privatization of public health services. The Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in the health sector only exacerbates the deplorable state of public health and, consequently, the state of Filipino children's health. The plans of government to privatize government hospitals clearly indicates that the policy of making business out of public health facilities is paramount to this regime. Once again, this has negatively impacted on Filipino children's health. Children from impoverished families suffer from malnutrition and poor health, among the other dire situations they face.

Among the indicators, it was in child mortality and undernutrition that the Philippines have the worst rates. A large number of Filipino children are undernourished: 3.6 million of children 0-59 months are underweight; and 4 million are stunted. The latest National Nutrition Survey of the Food

and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) in 2015 showed that the Philippine chronic malnutrition rate among children aged 0-2 was at 26.2%, the highest in the past 10 years.

According to the international non-government organization (NGO) Save the Children, death before reaching five (5) years of age was at 27% in 2015. Forty-eight percent (48%) of total child deaths in the Philippines are attributable to underweight, an indicator of child undernutrition. This rate is higher than in 2013 and is worse than the global average of 45%.

The same NGO found out that in rural households suffering from serious hunger or “severe household food insecurity,” children six (6)-59 months old were three times at higher risk of death. The Social Weather Stations (SWS) fourth quarter survey for 2015 stated that as many as 2.6 million families (or 11.7%) suffered from involuntary hunger during that period.

Up to 50% of child mortality is attributed to malnutrition and wasting (having low weight for height). In the 2015 Global Nutrition Report of the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Department of Health (DOH) and the National Nutrition Council (NNC), the Philippines was scored for failing to meet its target of reducing child wasting and anaemia.

The FNRI also reported that the number of underweight Filipino children below five (5) years old increased from 20% of their population in 2013 to 21.5% in 2015, meaning there were 203,244 more underweight toddlers in the said period.

The number of stunted Filipino children below five (5) years old likewise increased from 30.3% of their population in 2013 to 33.4% in 2015, meaning 402,134 more Filipino children aged one (1) to four (4) became stunted.

According to UNICEF, “The damage to health, physical growth and brain development of children affected by chronic undernutrition—stunting in the first two (2) years—is often irreversible, impairing them for life and leaving them with lower chances of finishing school and becoming highly productive adults. Stunting, iron and iodine deficiencies impact learning abilities and intelligence of children.”

Meanwhile, the incidence of fully immunized children aged 12-23 months also decreased from 68.5% in 2014 to 61.9% in 2015, which meant 629,113 less fully immunized babies. A research group found that the decrease in

the number of fully immunized children also belies the success of the BS Aquino government's social protection program, infant immunization being one of its conditionalities.

## **Child Labor**

The country's semicolonial and semifeudal system and the backward, non-industrialized economy is unable to generate enough jobs for the country's constantly growing labor force. Land grabbing practices in the countryside which have pushed more peasants out of their lands prevail. The ensuing poverty suffered by millions drives more children to engage in labor. Children in the Philippines engage in the worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.

The 2015 National Database on Child Poverty records that there are still more than two (2) million children engaged in child labor which only shows that the "Batang Malaya" campaign of the BS Aquino regime, was a dismal failure. The Batang Malaya (Free Children) campaign, launched in 2011, was a campaign to eliminate child labor in the country.

A six-month study conducted in 2014 by the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research (EILER) on child labor in plantations and mines cited that child labor is prevalent in rural areas particularly in agricultural plantation and mining sites. The existence of a large pool of unemployed and underemployed is exploited by capitalists to intensify wage depression and deprive workers of their basic rights. Exploitation is intensified with child laborers who receive lower wages, no benefits and no protection, leaving them more vulnerable to abuses and violations and very little chance of having a future. They are deprived of their inviolable right to education and right against economic exploitation.

EILER's study, which was funded by the European Commission, found that children as young as five (5) years old are already engaged in labor. In some cases, children working in mines are made to use drugs to enable them to withstand up to 16 hours of work. The research said that child labor incidence in mining communities is 14.2%, of which 93.75% are boys and 6.25% are girls.

The study also bared instances of child labor in sugarcane plantations where children are brought to areas far from their communities, and made to stay there from two (2) weeks to a month without their parents. They sleep in makeshift tents and receive very meager wages. Sugarcane production is considered one of the most dangerous types of work for children in the country.

Child workers are often exposed to extreme weather conditions, long working hours, hazardous chemicals and often handle dangerous tools without personal protective equipment.

## **Child abuse**

Eight (8) in 10 Filipino children and young people have experienced violence in their lifetime, according to the findings of the National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children (VAC) made by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and UNICEF and released in October 2016.

GABRIELA, a progressive women's organization, notes that cases have been on the rise. Since 2010 up to the third quarter of 2014, GABRIELA documented 42 cases committed by PNP members, 30 by AFP members, 14 by local government officials, 13 by politicians, nine (9) by US military personnel and two (2) by Presidential Security Guards (PSG).

According to the group, no 'person of authority' has been brought to justice because of the reigning impunity in the country.

## **Human Trafficking and Cyber pornography**

The Philippines is considered to be a hotspot for modern day slavery. From overseas enslavement to cybersex trafficking, children are a prime commodity. According to data from the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index, one (1) in 250 or at least 400,000 persons in the Philippines are estimated to be trapped in modern slavery, including trafficking.

Because of extreme poverty, tens of thousands of children are being exploited by human trafficking and cyber pornography rings. Children as young as two (2) years of age have been rescued from cybersex trafficking rings, as reported by globalcitizen.org in June 2016. Research indicates that the Philippines is a top global internet source of the commercial sexual exploitation of children, which is a billion-dollar industry.

Exploiters pay US\$20 to US\$150 for a live "sex show." Of the 15,000 tips received by the Philippine justice department's Office of Cybercrime in 2015, up to 80% had to do with child sexual exploitation.

Children, primarily girls, are also trafficked domestically from rural communities to urban centers and tourist destinations for the purpose of domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.

In addition, children are coerced into performing sex acts for live internet broadcast viewed by paying foreigners and local Filipinos. This usually takes place in small internet cafes, private homes, or windowless dungeon-like buildings commonly known as “cybersex dens.”

The number of child victims of online exploitation identified by the Philippine National Police Anti Cybercrime Group (PNP-ACG) has increased from 51 in 2013 to 136 cases in 2015, an increase of 160% over two years. This can be partly attributed to the increased attention for the subject and a stronger commitment to spot victims and identify perpetrators.

Reports have noted that victims are becoming younger and the violence, more extreme. In 2016, the National Bureau of Investigation’s CyberCrimes Division (NBI-CCD), PNP-ACG and PREDA Foundation reported that the majority of victims and rescued minors are young women and girls ranging from seven (7) to 16 years old.

That victims are getting younger since 2013 is also becoming evident in practice. In the documentary film entitled “Children of the Webcam” based on a case in Iligan City, one of the children rescued was five (5) years old.

There are alarming reports about the more extreme nature of some of the live stream “shows” and the violence that child victims have been exposed to, as in the really disturbing case of “Daisy’s Destruction”. Australian sex offender Peter Scully recently stood trial in the Philippines for numerous crimes, including child molestation, the murder of an 11-year old Filipina girl and the torture and sexual abuse of at least eight (8) girls, including an 18-month old infant. His partner and accomplice in crime, 23-year old Leizyl Margallo was arrested on Malapascua Island in Cebu.

## **Children and Disasters**

Typhoon Pablo (international name: Bopha) hit Mindanao, particularly Davao Oriental and the Compostela Valley, in 2012. It was the strongest cyclone experienced in Mindanao in two decades. It claimed more than a thousand lives and caused devastation to the forests of Mindanao and the homes and livelihood of thousands of Filipinos, particularly the Lumads.

Typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) which made landfall in November 2013 was one of the most powerful tropical storms on record. It brought flooding, landslides and widespread damage, particularly in Eastern Samar and Leyte Provinces.



Haiyan affected more than 14 million people including 5.9 million children. Up to 4.1 million people were displaced from their homes, including 1.7 million children and over 6,000 people were killed.

Almost 5.9 million workers lost income sources, with agriculture and fishing communities worst affected. A total of 571 health facilities, 2,500 schools and 2,500 day care centers were damaged or destroyed. Many children in relocation sites and urban centers stopped going to school in the aftermath due to the distance from their original schools, lack of transport and children's reluctance to attend new schools.

Schools were also used as evacuation centers and classes had to be subsequently canceled.

Several years later, there are still thousands of households affected by both Typhoons Pablo and Yolanda. Many disaster victims are still without any permanent housing and have not received any support from government for rehabilitation.

## **Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL)**

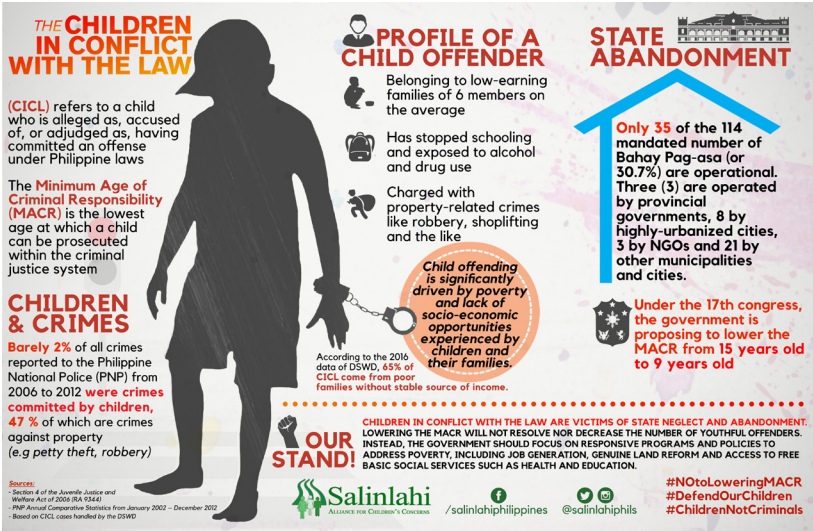
The continuing economic crisis and the dominant decadent culture make children, especially in urban poor communities, vulnerable to committing petty crimes and other anti-social activities. When caught, they are often jailed with hardened criminals. Worse, they have become vulnerable targets of further exploitation by the adults – both in jail and by the police.

In Metro Manila alone, records of the Philippine National Police (PNP) show that there were 2,462 cases of CICL between 2012 and 2015, and nearly 40,000 nationwide.

The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2013 (amended from 2006) spares CICL from being put in prison and refers them instead to centers designed to rehabilitate them. These centers are called Bahay Pag-Asa (House of Hope).

Many of these centers are dilapidated and unsanitary and no different from prison cells, where children are deprived of basic needs like clothing and food. Their emotional and mental needs are likewise neglected.

Of Metro Manila's 16 cities and one municipality, only two cities have facilities for CICL accredited by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in 2015. The rest failed to comply with the DSWD's standards for operation. Four cities and one municipality did not even have such specialized centers, only separate holding areas for CICL.



Infographic of Children in Conflict with the Law | By Salinlahi Alliance for Children's Concerns

In its 2016 submission to the 3rd Periodic Report of the Philippines to the UN Committee Against Torture, the NGO Child Legal Rights and Development Center (CLRDC) and the World Organization Against Torture reported various cases of ill treatment of children in these centers, including non-compliance with the requirement to provide the children with four sets of new clothing and basic toiletries upon their arrival. The children are dressed in tattered clothes, do not have towels and even have to share a toothbrush.

The children in these centers have no scheduled activities. The monotony is partly due to the lack of staff. As opposed to the ideal ratio of one social worker for every 25 (1:25) CICL (international standard is 1:15), the actual ratio is as high as one is to 56 (1:56). At the same time, the lack of meaningful or substantial rehabilitation programs increases the rate of recidivism.

Proposed revisions to the New Criminal Code (Book 1) in 2014 call for lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 15 to 13, a move objected to by child rights advocates as contrary to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## II. SITUATION OF CHILDREN IN AREAS OF CONFLICT

Children have long been targets of the reactionary government’s brutal counter-revolutionary campaigns. The widespread militarization of the countryside designed to crush the revolutionary forces and suppress local opposition to the incursion of gigantic logging, mining and agri-business firms into the ancestral lands of the Lumad people as well as areas long cultivated by settlers has claimed the lives and violated the rights of children.

The human rights group Karapatan (Alliance for the Advancement of People’s Rights) documented 31 killings of minors under the BS Aquino regime.

On the other hand, the NDFP-nominated section in the Joint Secretariat (JS) of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) has monitored a minimum of 15,149 individual child victims of 231 human rights violations under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) based on the complaints filed against the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) covering incidents from 2012 to 2016 and news reports from various sources, including Ang Bayan (AB), the official publication of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and statements issued by a number of regional New People’s Army (NPA) commands during the period 2012-2016.

This number does not include the children who were also affected by the forced evacuations and massive displacements caused by bombings and other military operations of hundreds of rural communities nationwide. The NDFP-JS also recorded a minimum of 1,513 families with an undetermined number of children who were affected by such evacuations.

Among the complaints filed with the JMC in this period (2012-2016) involving children victims are the following:

Threat/Harassment/Intimidation	119 cases	Forced Evacuation/Displacement	33
Coercion	45	Use of Public Places	31
Frustrated Killing	41	Killings	28
Violation of Domicile	33	Indiscriminate gunfire	19

Of special mention are the 10 cases of rape and 14 cases of torture involving child victims.

The most widespread violations of children's rights in the countryside are the escalating attacks on Lumad schools in Mindanao. These schools were accused of spreading subversive ideas and recruiting national minority youth into joining the NPA. The constant military repression of Lumad communities, including the conduct of air strikes and food blockades have caused fear and hardship in the localities, especially among children, and have led to forced evacuations.

The attacks on Lumad schools actually form part of a nationwide pattern of repression and persecution. From July 2010 to June 2016, Karapatan documented 82,123 victims affected by the use of schools, medical and religious facilities all over the country for military purposes, an act that violates international humanitarian law (IHL).

In 2015, the Save Our Schools (SOS) Network, a campaign organized by various human rights and child rights organizations and advocates to take action against the ongoing violation of children's right to education, particularly those in the context of militarization and attacks on schools, documented 33 cases of human rights violations affecting 231 individuals and 124 households. The violations include military encampment in civilian households, churches and schools, threats and harassment of students, teachers and parents of Lumad community schools as well as the threat of being delisted from 4Ps to coerce parents not to enrol their children in Lumad schools. It likewise documented cases of forcible evacuation and displacement.

For a long time, the military invoked the DepEd's Memorandum No. 221 s. 2013 or the "Guidelines on the Protection of Children during Armed Conflict" which allows the use of schools as camps or barracks.

Even the United Nations has noted with great concern the high number of attacks on schools and teachers committed in indigenous communities since 2015 in the context of the military operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) against the NPA, with increased involvement of "allegedly pro-government armed groups " or paramilitary.

The UN particularly noted that, many teachers and students working for private schools run by non-governmental organizations operating in indigenous communities have been publicly accused of being supporters or members of the NPA and subsequently harassed, threatened, physically attacked or killed.

According to the Report of the UN Secretary General on Children and the Armed Conflict in the Philippines from 2012 to 2016, the country task force verified the killing of one school director, the maiming of one teacher, threats of attack against 40 teachers and the burning of one school in 2015 alone.

*On September 1, 2015, school children and other members of their community in Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur were made to witness the murder of Emerito Samarca, executive director of Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development*



*Massacred Emerito "Tatay Emok" Samarca, ALCADDEV Executive Director*

*Samarca was killed along with two other Lumad leaders. In a striking example of impunity, the leaders of the Alamara paramilitary group who killed them have yet to be arrested and held accountable by state authorities.*

*Meanwhile, the harassment and Red-tagging of the school, its teachers and students as well as the community leaders in Diatagon persist. Trumped-up criminal cases, including child abuse and child trafficking have been filed against teachers of ALCADDEV and Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao del Sur (TRIFPPS) which also runs a number of Lumad schools in the province. Charges have also been filed against 15 leaders and members of organizations that provided assistance to the Lumad evacuees who took refuge at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)-run Haran Compound in Davao City.*

*On February 24, 2016, five of the evacuees, including two children were injured when suspected elements of the Alamara paramilitary group burned the makeshift houses where the Lumad were staying.*



## People's Resistance

Human rights must be defended by the people themselves, especially the victims of poverty, hunger, exploitation, repression.

People across the country responded defiantly to these atrocities. Families of victims, affected communities, religious institutions, lawyers' groups, people's organizations and NGO's protested through various means the oppression and repression spawned by the BS Aquino regime.

First and foremost, the people's movement campaigned for a sustainable poverty alleviation program geared towards genuine land reform and national industrialization that will create decent jobs and livelihood especially for poor families other than the beneficiaries of the 4Ps.

Mass organizations and national democratic centers are also actively involved in campaigns on issues affecting children. As part of their commitment to uphold children's rights and welfare, they have filed cases against agents of the reactionary state that have violated children's rights. The cases have both been filed in local courts and projected globally through various international mechanisms and platforms.

Youth and student organizations were at the forefront of the protests against the repeal of the K-12 law, even filing a case at the Supreme Court

to stop its implementation. Congressional resolutions by progressive and patriotic lawmakers were filed at the House of Representatives.

The efforts of some organizations, in collaboration with Lumad communities in Mindanao to establish self-help schools for Lumad children is noteworthy to mention. These Lumad schools, elementary and high school levels, were established to respond to the lack of government educational facilities and resources in Lumad communities. These are the schools that are being attacked now and a nationwide and international campaign has been mounted to “save our schools”.

A wide network of health professionals and workers and patients and their families also mounted a campaign against the privatization of government hospitals, particularly the Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital, the Philippine Orthopedic Center and the Philippine Children’s Medical Center (PCMC). These campaigns were able to halt the privatization efforts of the government. Many organizations also set up community-based clinics and conducted medical missions and trainings to bring health care and emergency relief to the urban and rural poor, especially in times of disasters or in militarized communities.

Children organizations such as Salinlahi continuously campaigned and lobbied for:

- Higher budgetary appropriations that follow global standards for basic social services such as health, education and housing, that shall directly benefit poor children and their families.
- Strict and consistent enforcement of laws and policies on the prohibition of child labor and further exploitation of children.
- An overhaul of the current rehabilitation/intervention program of the government meant for children in conflict with the law, with a sufficient budget for the improvement of its facilities and human resources.
- The institutionalization of mechanisms, such as legislation on the operations of barangay councils for the protection of children, that would protect and promote children’s rights at the most basic level.

Other organizations dedicated themselves to providing direct services to the child victims of violence, including those in detention centers, by providing support services (educational, nutritional and medical) and psycho-social

services, organizing fund drives for children evacuees, be it of disasters or of militarization and conducting psycho-social first aid missions to children where there is armed conflict.

A number of progressive institutions likewise provide patriotic, mass-oriented and scientific education and organize children's organizations and cultural groups, recognizing fully the role of children in society. The members receive age-appropriate levels of political education and actively perform in cultural presentations during political activities and mass mobilizations.

These children's organizations have highlighted the plight of Filipino children through their campaigns and services and continue to do so even under conditions of political repression.



### III. WHAT THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT HAS DONE TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

The following section will give a general overview on how the NDFP protects and promotes the interests of children in general, and especially of children in their areas.

The revolutionary movement has long stood for the rights and welfare of children, especially of the toiling masses. It believes that children are part of the struggle to change the decadent semicolonial and semifeudal society and are capable of playing relevant roles in their communities and in society, in general. The revolutionary movement believes that even at an early stage, children can be developed into becoming responsible participants in the effort to build a better society.

As the national democratic movement with a socialist perspective is being advanced, children are protected and guided to become part of a truly nurturing society.

Agrarian revolution whose minimum program involves campaigns and struggles to reduce land rent, eliminate usury, and raise agricultural production by promoting mutual exchange of labor and other forms of cooperation, as well as through scientific farming greatly benefit the masses. Aside from slowly eroding landlord power and strengthening the farmers’ collective unity and support for the national democratic revolution, agrarian revolution raises the incomes of peasant families and enables them to provide a better quality of life for their children. This is a key program that directly addresses the primary need of the farmers and their families.

In areas where the implementation of the agrarian program has progressed, small self-help projects have been initiated to increase land productivity such as the building of an irrigation system made from traditional knowhow and natural resources.

***In the Sierra Madre and Cordillera Mountain ranges, organized communities, together with the New People’s Army are harnessing rivers for mini-hydro projects that provide electric power and water services to the community. Children assist their parents by helping to monitor the mini-hydro plant.***

Children also used to be malnourished in these areas. Because of the gains of the agrarian revolution being waged in guerrilla fronts, they now have healthier diets and are no longer malnourished.

Where the revolutionary movement maintains a strong and influential presence, children and youth associations are organized under the auspices of the NDFP.

They are closely linked to the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) and the Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA), where the children's parents are members. PKM and MAKIBAKA are both allied organizations of the NDFP.

These organizations, together with the NPA, have built schools and developed a curriculum that molds children and the youth with patriotic mass-oriented and scientific education.

Children as well as adults, benefit from the health services, sanitation campaigns and literacy programs launched by the revolutionary mass organizations and the NPA.

They have also become the first responders in times of major calamities such as Typhoon Pablo in 2012 and typhoon Yolanda in 2013. Even before both the national government and LGUs could react, the NPA, together with the NDFP's allied organizations, led rescue operations and provided immediate medical attention and basic services to numerous villages. These organizations continue to lead and assist in the rehabilitation of the devastated areas.

In the Samahan ng mga Batang Makabayan (Patriotic Children's Association/SBM), an organization for children aged 9-12 years old, children become aware of the roots of their poverty and the need to arouse, organize and wage struggle to defend the oppressed and exploited people. Cultural programs are organized so children learn about the root causes of their problems through song, dance and theater.

They take part in socio-economic programs and activities, including agricultural production, cultural work, and the defense of their communities and ancestral lands. Children are also taught to plant and care for herbal gardens and how to use medicinal plants to cure malaria and dengue.

The urban revolutionary mass movement has also taken efforts to organize the SBM in communities in conjunction with building MAKIBAKA chapters

and implementing the latter's programs. They have programs that provide education on the history of the Filipino people's struggle against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. They employ various creative means to help children, at a young age, understand their situation and relate it to Philippine social conditions.

The revolutionary movement has also been endeavouring to build an anti-imperialist formation of child rights advocates to consolidate the various means and programs to resist imperialist attacks on children worldwide.

In the context of the peace negotiations being conducted by the NDFP with the GRP, the NDFP's draft of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) includes provisions that call for free education and health services which are key to children's full development; and advance the rights and welfare of children to pave the way for a society that enjoys genuine equality and nurtures the welfare and rights of children, especially those from the toiling masses.

As part of the NDFP's commitment to make decisions and implement measures to protect the children from the adverse consequences of the armed conflict, it adheres to the 1988 decision of the Political Bureau of the CPP's Central Committee stipulating that the NPA may recruit only persons who are 18 years old and older as armed fighters for its combat units even as Article 77, paragraph 2 of the 1977 Protocol 1 Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts legally permits the recruitment of children 15 years and above as soldiers.

The policy setting the minimum age of 18 for the recruitment to the NPA was reiterated in 2002 by the 11th Plenum of the CPP Central Committee in a resolution addressed to the NPA. The CPP recognized and commended the faithful adherence of the NPA to the policy. It discussed and reviewed the implementation of this policy in the field, the disciplinary measures that may be imposed on NPA commands as well as the responsible Party units in case of any violation and the participation of the organs of political power and mass organizations in various areas and communities in ensuring strict implementation.

The SOPC shall continue to organize educational programs within all allied organizations of the NDFP on children's rights and encourage the formation of child protection units under the auspices of the organs of political power and mass organizations, especially of children, youth and women.

It shall also continue to monitor and report on the situation of children in the Philippines in relation to the armed conflict.

The NDFP, specifically its SOPC, remains committed to advancing its programs that uphold the rights of children, protect them and promote their welfare.

# ANNEX

## Child Population 2015

Child Population	Both Sexes	Male	Female
All Ages	100,979,303	51,069,962	49,909,341
Under 1	2,076,015		
1—4	8,742,916		
5—9	10,842,920		
10—14	10,493,942		
15—17	6,208,091		
0—14	30,079,778		
% of total population			
0—17	38,363,884		
% of total population	38%		

## Inequality

Under BS Aquino's regime, the net worth of the richest Filipinos in the country was at 24% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015, a huge increase from 2010 with only 14% of the GDP. The gross revenue of the top 100 corporations also rose from 59% of the GDP in 2010 to 69% in 2014. Meanwhile, the net income of the 25 richest Filipinos is placed at \$44.1 billion. This is equivalent to the combined income of the poorest Filipinos. (Ibon Foundation, July 1, 2016)

## Unemployment

According to IBON Foundation, an average of 692,000 jobs were generated annually in the period 2011-2015, which was much lower than the 858,000 over 2001-2010. 80% of the population were surviving with Php120 (US\$2.40) or less per day. The lack of jobs and the low wages drove Filipinos to work abroad and over 5,000 overseas Filipinos leave daily to work abroad.

In 2015, underemployment also increased by 543,000, exposing the reality that there were more temporary and low-paying jobs available. Sixty-three percent (63%) of the employed were in the informal sector, contractual jobs or were unpaid family workers.

## Child Labor

### Working Children 2015

Ages	Both sexes	Male	Female
5-14 years old	634.0	374.0 (59%)	260.0 (41%)
15-17 years old	1,205.0	789.0 (65.5%)	416.0 (34.5%)
TOTAL	1,839	1,163.0	676.0

Source: National Database on Child Poverty, PSA

### Working Children by Major Occupation Group: 2010-2015

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen	3.9	3.7	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.5
<b>Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers</b>	15.4	17.6	19.9	20.4	22.4	24.1
Trade and Related Workers	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.3	1.9	2.1
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.7
Laborers and Unskilled workers	76.0	73.4	72.6	71.2	70.0	67.9
Others	2.1	2.7	2.2	2.7	2.4	2.7

Source: National Database on Child Poverty, PSA

## Street Children

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights estimated that 1.2 million Filipino children are homeless with 70,000 of them living in the streets of Manila.

A non-government organization, ChildHope Philippines, reported that in 2013, 1-3 % of children and youth in major cities in the Philippines are streetchildren. It estimated that the nationwide number of streetchildren is at 250,000. Most are boys aged 7-16 years old. The organization has also identified the top six (6) causes for children leaving their homes and choosing to live in the streets.

<b>Top 6 Causes for Children leaving their homes</b>
1. Poverty
2. Large Families
3. Unemployment
4. Underemployment
5. Limited Access to basic social services
6. Breakdown of Family Structures

Meanwhile, the UN Children’s Rights and Emergency Relief Organization reported that there are 1.8 million abandoned children. This is almost 1% of the total population. The organization has attributed this phenomenon to the following reasons: extreme poverty, natural disasters and armed conflicts.

## Debt

<b>Education</b>	<b>= 490 billion (16.3%)</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>= 125.48 billion (4.2%)</b>
Public Debt Transactions	= 419.3 billion (14%)	Defense	= 100 billion (3.4)
Interest payment (debts)	= P392.8 billion	AFP Modernization Program	= 10 billion

Source: PSA 2016

## Health

### Infant, Fetal and Maternal Mortality

Year	Maternal Deaths	Fetal Deaths	Deaths Under 1	1-4 years old	5-9 years old	10-14 years old
2012	1,447	7,862	22,254	9,237	5,098	4,766
2013	1,522	7,474	21,992	9,526	5,391	4,708
2014	1,765	7,664	21,856	9,920	5,388	5,011

Source: PSA 2016

PSA statistics on infant and maternal mortality from 2012-2014 reflect fluctuating numbers. A slight decrease in the number of deaths were recorded in 2013 from 2012 but the numbers increased in 2014 (no available data found for 2015/2016). The 2013 NHDS reported that in 2013, one (1) in 32 children born in the Philippines died before reaching the 5th birthday.

**The following are reported as the top causes of infant deaths in 2012 and 2013:**

Cause	2012	2013
Bacterial Sepsis of Newborns	3,156	2,731
Pneumonia	2,738	3,146
Respiratory Distress	2,497	2,347
Disorders Related to Low Birth rate	1,422	1,466
Disorders Related to Low Birth rate	1,422	1,466





## Basic Education

The gross enrolment rate remains to be high, especially at the primary level. However, cohort survival rate is relatively lower and compared to SY 2010-2011, it has not made any significant improvement despite the 4Ps program which intended to keep children in school. In the report, "Education for All 2015 national review Report: Philippines", which was submitted to the World Education Forum, there were around 26% of pupils who did not finish their six years of elementary, while around 25% of the students did not complete their high school.

The APIS survey of 2015 cites that the most common reasons for not attending school were:

Employment/looking for work	25%
High cost of education/financial concern	22.9%
Marriage/family matters	18.7%
Lack of personal interest	14.2%

The 2016 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey reported that there are 3.8 million out-of-school children and youth (OSCY), aged 6-24 years old or 10% of the total 39 million school age population. Of these, 7.7% belong to the 12-15 age range while 5% belong to the 6-11 age range.







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