

Moro National Liberation Front  
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Press Release  
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Pata Island is once again in the grips of Philippine colonial aggression and genocide.

Three days ago today, the Philippine colonial Armed Forces launched another military offensive against the Island, causing untold suffering and casualties among the people and the Bangsamoro Mujahideen and inflicting enormous losses to properties.

Pata is located South-East of the Island of Jolo, the first capital of the sovereign and independent Bangsamoro Sulu Sultanate (1450-1946) and one of the main strongholds of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Save for the occupation colonial forces, the population is totally Muslim.

Just last February through May this year, Pata was the scene of one of the worst massacres since the start of the present campaign of genocide in March 1968. Based on the official communique from Manila, the number of colonial forces used in the attack was nearly 20,000 strong.

In this incident, several thousands of civilians were massacred and the whole island, which is barely 12 by 6 kilometers in size, was literally reduced to ashes by enemy bombs, artillery shellings and incendiaries. Some eyewitnesses estimated the casualties of Muslim civilians at over five thousands and many more wounded.

This latest Pata tragedy came just on the heels of last week's simultaneous attacks in the island provinces of Tawi-Tawi, Lupah-Sug and Basilan which are largely liberated by the MNLF freedom fighters from the hands of Filipino colonialism. This three-pronged attack lasted for three days.

Meanwhile, heavy fighting has broken out in the island of Palawan facing South China Sea since September this year and is continuing without letup until now. The MNLF forces are fighting heroically and inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. Hundreds of colonial forces have died in the process and scores are falling everyday as several thousands are helplessly entrapped in the quagmire in their vain attempt to contain the sprawling influence of the MNLF in this mineral-rich island.

In consequence of this new colonial gamble, Marcos' strategic genocidal offensive in the rest of the Bangsamoro Homeland has been stymied and brought to a complete disarray. While the New People's Army of the Communist Party of the Philippines, along with the Philippine

Social Democratic Party and other armed oppositions, have gained tremendous political and military advantage to better prepare themselves for the final coup d'grace against the Manila regime in Luzon and the Visayas. Furthermore, the huge indebtedness of the Marcos' regime to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and other lending institutions, amounting to nearly 15 billion U.S. dollars by the end of June this year according to official declaration, will sour up irretrievably adding more burden to its already deteriorating economy.

Meantime, the genocidal campaign is steadily escalating in various parts of Mindanao, the largest island of our ten-million people and the seat of the Bangsamoro Republik. Millions of innocent people are dislocated and impoverished, while many are dying of hunger and sickness, not to mention those victims of indiscriminate enemy bombing and shelling.

These atrocities confirm the pattern of genocidal campaign of the unlawful and repressive colonial regime under Marcos.

In the name of our oppressed people and humanity, we would like to urge condemnation of this mass murders and brutalities and request immediate investigation of the perpetrators of the crimes.

Already Marcos and his regime have been judged in absentia by the Permanent People's Tribunal at Antwerp, Belgium (November 3, 1980) for committing a crime of genocide, while the right of our nation to self-determination and independence has been upheld by the same court. Other international organizations, including the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, have similarly condemned the atrocities of Marcos and his regime and expressed their recognition of the right of our people to self-determination.

The MNLF believes that there is absolutely no way out of this situation except the total liquidation of Filipino colonialism in the Bangsamoro Homeland and the recognition of the just and legitimate demand of our people for self-determination and independence by the civilized nations of the world.