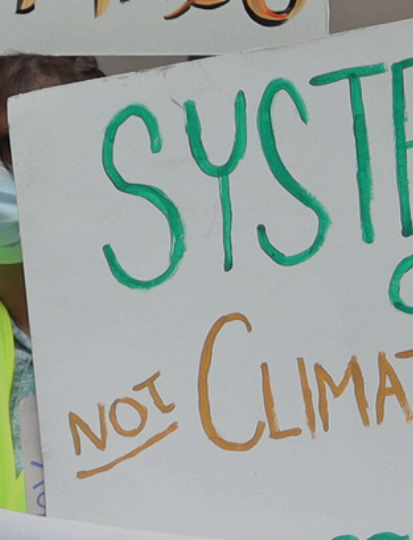


DROUGHT AND DELUGE

A PORTRAIT OF THE CLIMATE JUSTICE MOVEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

2022-2024

PRESENTED BY YOUTH
ADVOCATES FOR CLIMATE
ACTION PHILIPPINES



BILL TO: BIG POLLUTERS

ITEM	AMOUNT
ODETTE DAMAGES	\$1.02 BILLION

PREPARED BY PRCT



CONTEXTUALIZING THIS REPORT

The Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to the climate crisis, and one of the most dangerous countries for land defenders and environmental activists. Despite these facts, Filipinos continue to face ignorance towards a comprehensive, national understanding of the climate crisis' detrimental effects, as well as the risks faced when fighting for environmental and climate justice. Much less, scientific and concrete ways to adapt to these impacts and to include the voices of our environmental defenders when creating policies. Often, the experiences of defenders, especially women and youth, are belittled, ignored and not meaningfully included in creating policies.

The social and political landscape of the Philippines adds to the crisis character. A majority of the population depends on farming for their livelihood, but most farmers and farm workers do not own the land they till. Instead, they must pay high rent to landlords in order to till the land. In addition, they face low farmgate prices, usury when renting necessary equipment, and lowering of market prices due to an influx of imported produce. These conditions make crop losses due to climate impacts (be they typhoons or drought) much more difficult for farmers to overcome.

The specter of neocolonialism and imperialism also hangs heavy over the Philippines, specifically that of the United States of America. Unequal trade agreements prioritize U.S. interests and allow majority foreign ownership of important industries such as mines and factories. The export-oriented, import-dependent nature of production in the country allows foreign markets unfiltered access to the country's natural resources, and at the same time, stifles the country's ability to develop and industrialize. In recent years, the U.S. military has been increasing its presence in the Philippines, warmly welcomed by the Philippine government. Not only does this threaten the country's national sovereignty, but the increased number of troops and military bases drains the country's resources away from its citizens and toward supporting its former colonizer. The U.S. military also provides financial, material, and technical support to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), giving the AFP further ability to militarize rural communities.

These local contexts greatly inform the actions of Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines, and the creation of this report, which aims to outline the current state of the climate justice movement in the Philippines.



Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines

With the rise of the youth-led climate movement in 2019, Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP) was formed to fulfill the need for a broad youth-led alliance in the Philippines. The idea was born from the collaboration of the two founding organizations—Agham Youth and Saribuhay. In August 2019, in the lead up to the September 2019 Global Climate Strike, and afterwards, more organizations started joining the alliance and the group's prominence started to grow.

With an initial focus on organizations rather than individuals, the individual members were grouped together in one body regardless of their location. However, in 2020, during the pandemic, the alliance adapted, continued to grow, and more individuals expressed their interest to join. Soon the need for local chapters for individuals was clear, and the individuals were grouped into five different regional chapters. Now in its fifth year, YACAP continues to be a nationwide alliance of youth organizations, individuals, and student councils that advocates for immediate global climate action led by the youth. YACAP believes the youth, alongside the most impacted sectors of society, should now lead the ongoing global struggle against climate crisis for the survival of our planet. YACAP is the counterpart of Fridays for Future in the Philippines.

The organization rests on five points of unity:

1. Climate Justice. The organization recognizes that the ongoing climate crisis, if not averted, will lead to global catastrophe and must be urgently addressed. Therefore, it is imperative to demand justice for the climate from corporations and governments who have contributed the most to the degradation of the environment, whose accountability stems from their willful ignorance of the climate crisis and their wanton contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, and continued use of environment-damaging activities.

2. Urgency of Climate Action. The organization recognizes the urgency of climate action based on science and the need for informing and organizing the youth to lead the global action against the climate crisis. With the Philippines ranking as one of the most vulnerable places on Earth impacted by climate change, it is imperative to declare a climate emergency as defined by the people, and create concrete plans on how to address the detrimental, imminent effects of this climate crisis.

3. Youth-Led Collective Action. As a youth alliance, YACAP aims to unite the broadest sector of the youth. The youth will inherit the planet, but actively refuse to inherit a dead planet. In this regard, there is a need to mobilize and collectively sound the alarm to demand justice for the Earth. The historical victories of collective action have proven the need for the Filipino youth to stand united with the multisectoral, inter-generational struggle for the survival of humankind.



4. Defend Environmental Defenders.

Environmental defenders around the world suffer from thousands of human rights violations. With the Philippines as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for environmental defenders, the call to stop the persecution of those in the front lines of environmental defense must ring loud and clear. The call for climate justice must include justice for those in the front-lines of the fight for the planet.

5. System Change. The organization recognizes that the wasteful, profit-oriented global system is the main contributing factor to the ongoing climate crisis. Since the emergence of coal-powered industries, these industries have constantly heated the atmosphere leading to disastrous changes in the climate. With maximum profit as the goal, the reigning system of greed encourages corporations and governments to plunder the environment and generate massive amounts of waste. To prevent further global degradation, there must be a system-wide scale of change and action to transition to a pro-environment, pro-people, planned, and needs-based system.

National Consultations

With the current elected President of the Philippines being the son of known dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr., activism has become more dangerous and the need for pro-people climate adaptation remains ignored. In order to campaign for climate justice that is based on the concrete reality of the Filipino people, YACAP held Sangguni: National Consultations, a series of consultations attended by 49 organizations across Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

These consultations focused especially on listening to the youth and environmental defenders such as Indigenous Peoples, small farmers, and small fisherfolk, but also the urban poor and workers. These consultations were designed to ensure that the perspectives of women from these key sectors were prioritized in order to learn and highlight the plight of women land rights defenders, the climate impacts they have faced, and their experiences in movement-building towards climate resistance. The organizations represented women, youth, and the sectors of peasants, workers, environmental advocates. The organizations present in these consultations have either a regional or national scope of concerns. The local community of the area where the consultations took place was represented.

The National Consultations took place in October of 2022 in Quezon City, Metro Manila for Luzon, Cebu City, Cebu for Visayas, and Davao City, Davao del Sur for Mindanao. The scope of this report is based on the information shared in the consultations by the represented organizations, supported by secondary scientific and popular sources.

Consultations with Youth Organizations

In 2023, YACAP held efforts to widen the scope of its concerns and better understand the youth actors in the local climate movement. With the aim to unite the broadest sector of the youth, the alliance wanted to identify the common campaigns that youth groups take part of, recognize the demographics of active youth participating in the movement and map out the distribution of organizations, to see the regions with or without climate organizing for the youth.



The creation of the Philippine Youth Climate Movement situationer involved the interviews of 14 youth environmental organizations, five of which have become members of the alliance. However, the interviews were limited to an online platform due to the capacity of YACAP. The interviews consisted of questions ranging from the best practices that youth groups do in engagement with their community to their perspective towards environmental and social issues. The interviewed organizations were mostly school based groups from the National Capital Region, Central Luzon, Southern Luzon and Western Visayas, ranging from highschool clubs to college organizations and were given an opportunity to express their opinions without the influence of their advisors.

The creation of this national report is the compilation of the efforts made by YACAP of the past two years to encompass the situation of the Filipino people regarding the goal of climate justice and may not contain the entirety of information regarding the topic. YACAP, as an alliance, hopes that this can serve as a document to strengthen campaigns and a reference for the climate movement in the Philippines.



DEFEND CLIMATE
FRONTLINERS
STAND w/ FARMERS

— YACAP —

STATUS

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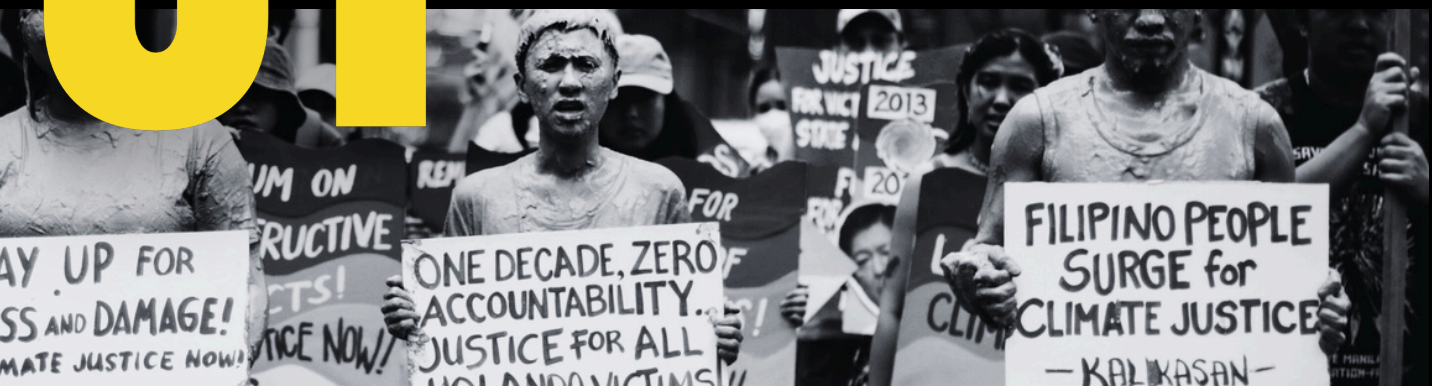


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Under the current climate crisis, the global temperature rise exceeds 1.5°C yearly, and is rapidly going beyond humanity's adaptive capacity. For the majority of the respondents, climate change is felt in the increasing temperatures, the sweltering heat their communities experience during summer, the increasing frequency of rain and consequently floods. The changing of weather patterns has been cited to be destructive to the production of small farmers, whereas the usual timing of planting and harvesting is now unreliable.

The consultations gave light to the vulnerabilities to climate change of different communities coming from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. Among those most vulnerable are women and children; especially from marginalized sectors and indigenous communities, whose full and effective participation in many climate-related discussions and decision making processes are hindered by elitist and patriarchal-customary laws.

Typhoons

Between 2000 and 2023, the Philippines experienced an average of 7.8 typhoons a year (EM-DAT - The International Disaster Database). During the same period, at least 21,000 people were killed and approximately 150 million people were affected by typhoons in the Philippines.

The deadliest event was Typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan), which struck the Visayas regions with record-breaking wind speeds and a devastating storm surge in November 2013. Scientists have determined that the intensity and impact of Typhoon Haiyan was driven by climate change (Sparks and Toumi, 2024).

Typhoons, or tropical cyclones, have been changing under human-caused climate change and are projected to increase in frequency and intensity in the coming years, bringing stronger winds and heavier rainfall (Arias et al., 2021). Without significant improvements in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, scientists expect the impacts of typhoons in the Philippines to increase as the climate crisis deepens.

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Some key issues that defenders faced were the destructive projects seen all over the country that directly harmed and made their homes and livelihoods more vulnerable. In coastal communities in Luzon and Visayas, reclamation projects force fisherfolk communities to relocate with the reasoning that their homes are in the danger zone. The issue is the areas of the relocation sites with no means for the community to make a living as they are separated from their source of livelihood that even if they live in the danger zone, they would rather risk it than be in a location with no other way to live.

A main concern with climate impacts they experienced was with the health and well-being of children. A common issue brought up in the communities were floods and health risk, how these natural disasters bring disease to their families, exacerbated by the lack of access to healthcare and medicine. It was cited by women from the urban poor sector represented by Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (KADAMAY) that the problem of the worsening typhoons

yearly aggravates the situations of households with little means and the additional toll on children's schooling with disruption of classes. Similarly, the health of indigenous groups are gravely affected after the onslaught of Super Typhoon Karding (international name: Noru) in 2022 as it triggered contamination of their waters according to Kabataan para sa Tribung Pilipino (KATRIBU Youth). Several indigenous communities, including Dumagat communities experienced a diarrhea outbreak, where women and children were affected the most. This was the cause of multiple deaths with hundreds affected.

In Visayas, flash floods during the typhoon season continually increase, and are worsened by the insufficient response of government aid. This further aggravates the existing poverty crisis, in the form of lack of subsidies for local food production, as stated by Bayan Muna's Central Visayas Chapter.

In Mindanao, the occurrence of climate-related disasters leads to significant losses and damages. Communities face the devastating impact of storms, landslides, and other climate-induced events, necessitating comprehensive strategies to address loss and damage. Access to financial resources and international support is crucial for recovery efforts, as well as ensuring that subsidies are directed towards sustainable initiatives that contribute to long-term resilience.



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Drought & El Niño

The El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO), commonly abbreviated to El Niño, is a naturally-occurring climate phenomenon that contributes to extreme variations in the Earth's climate. There are two phases - El Niño, which drives warmer temperatures, and La Niña, which causes cooler temperatures. During El Niño phases, warmer temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean alter atmospheric circulations, which strongly influences global weather patterns. In the Philippines and other parts of Southeast Asia, El Niño phases, which typically last 6-12 months, create hotter and drier conditions, raising the risk of extreme heat waves, droughts, and wildfires.

Climate scientists do not have high consensus or confidence in declaring that the climate crisis is causing stronger, more extreme El Niño phases and impacts, because of the high natural variability of ENSO itself (Arias et al., 2021). However, there is evidence of more frequent strong El Niño and La Niña phases in recent decades, and projections of a doubling of extreme El Niño events due to faster warming of the Pacific Ocean over the next century (Cai et al. 2023). The 2023-24 El Niño event, one of the strongest on record, likely combined with climate change to break extreme temperature records across the region.

In Luzon, climate change comes in the form of extreme droughts which takes a toll on the food security and production especially in the provinces in Central Luzon that are affected. For many, the regular harvest of 100 cavan goes down to 31 due to the worsening drought.

Amihan, the National Federation of Peasant Women, cites that droughts bring anxiety to the families of farmers and causes disputes amongst the farmers as scarce water is shared among vast hectares of land. The need to keep up with the changing of seasons has pushed farmers to rent water pumps, which in addition to the cost of renting the pump itself, is charged with unfair prices starting with Php 31,000 for a mere 700 L of water.

Heatwaves

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), 2023 set a new record as the hottest year ever, with particularly alarming spikes in ocean temperatures. Extreme weather events and wildfires are no longer just predictions for the future; they have become a stark reality that many of us witnessed firsthand. Meanwhile, sea levels continue to rise steadily, posing severe threats to small island nations and low-lying coastal regions. All of these impacts result from over a century of human activities, including the burning of fossil fuels and the inequitable, unsustainable use of energy and land. The most recent report indicates that with each additional degree of warming, the dangers to our world will intensify. If warming exceeds 1.5°C, humanity will face new threats, including sea level rise, the thawing of permafrost, loss of biodiversity, water shortages, more extreme weather events, and increased food insecurity (Skea, 2024).

In the last few years, several cities in the Philippines have reported extremely high heat index in the past few years.



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Heat index is the combined effect of humidity and air temperature which is dependent on the hot or cold weather. Heat index in simple terms is the feeling of hotness that is felt by the body. It was reported in April 2024 that a 38.4°C temperature was recorded in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan. The humidity was 49% which peaked the heat index to 44°C which was considered in the danger category. Dagupan City, Pangasinan reached a 47°C heat index that was an extreme category. The erratic variability of weather and climate in the country is a sign that climate change is inevitable (Gutierrez, 2024a).

Due to the unprecedented heatwave, the country experienced power outages across regions. This is a manifestation of the surge of electricity consumption particularly in cooling and ventilation which has pressured and strained power grids. In April 2024, Luzon had a power availability of 14,568 MW, with peak demand reaching 13,941 MW, highlighting the narrow gap between supply and demand and emphasizing the critical need for better grid management and stronger contingency measures. The energy crisis was further worsened by outages and reduced capacities at several power plants (Baclig, 2024).

Advisories had been called for school closures as extreme weather continues to be a threat to public health. Students and teachers' concentration are affected as it is not conducive to learn and teach during such scorching hours (Gutierrez, 2024b).

The value of crop output, which made up half of the total agriculture and fisheries production, declined by 8.6 percent to P220.04 billion. Other crops also experienced a decrease in production value, including onion (-37.4 percent), tomato (-15.6%), mung beans (-14%), abaca (-12.4%), rubber (-7.5%), cassava (-7.2%), eggplant (-7%), sweet potato (-5.8 %), and bitter melon (-5.1%). This decline in domestic crop performance was anticipated due to the challenges posed by drier and hotter weather conditions brought on by El Niño (Arcalas, 2024).

Rising Sea Levels

The 2017 Philippine Climate Change Assessment reveals that the sea level in Manila has been rising by 2.6 centimeters per year, a stark difference when compared to the average 1.3 millimeters rate per year back in the 1900s (Cruz et al., 2017). These are consequences of climate change: (1) thawing icebergs, (2) rising heat, and (3) increasing demand for water consumption which leads to groundwater extraction, thus resulting in land subsidence in certain areas. This makes not only Manila, but the entire Philippine archipelago—about 60% of the country's population with 50% of it in the municipalities, Manila, and the coastal zones—vulnerable to flooding and extreme sea levels (Carias, 2024).



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Environmental Destruction

Across the Philippines, communities are grappling with a range of environmental issues that pose significant threats to their livelihoods and well-being. Among these challenges are reclamation projects, land grabbing, construction of large dams, large-scale mining, and recent oil spills, all which have detrimental effects, particularly on rural communities.

Reclamation initiatives, often driven by rapid urbanization and industrial expansion, result in the conversion of coastal areas and marine ecosystems into land for commercial and residential purposes. This not only disrupts the delicate balance of coastal ecosystems but also displaces fishing communities, depriving them of their primary sources of income and sustenance.

Land grabbing, another pressing concern, occurs when powerful entities or individuals seize control of lands traditionally owned and cultivated by indigenous communities or small-scale farmers. This both undermines their human rights and disrupts their traditional way of life, leading to social and economic dislocation.

The construction of large dams, while aimed at providing water supply, flood control, and hydroelectric power generation, often come at a high cost for rural communities. Displacement of communities, loss of fertile agricultural lands, and disruption of river ecosystems are among the detrimental effects associated with large dams. Additionally, these projects can exacerbate social inequality and disregard the rights and well-being of affected communities.

Large-scale mining operations have environmental impacts including deforestation at the mining site and contamination of nearby rivers and seas. The Philippines has witnessed some of the most severe consequences, such as the Marcopper mining disaster of 1996, which released two to three million tons of mining waste into the Boac River in Marinduque. This incident led to flash floods and had a profound effect on agriculture and fisheries in the region (De La Cruz, 2017).. Additionally, the ongoing operations at the Rio Tuba mine in Palawan have been linked to adverse effects on the health and well-being of local indigenous communities, including respiratory and skin conditions, water pollution, and diminished food security (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 2023).

In Mindanao, open-pit mining, particularly in the Tampakan deposit and its adjacent coal plants, causes great destruction to the environment and to the surrounding municipalities. The logging that came with the presence of the mining project leads to consequences such as flash floods in Koronadal, that of which displaced hundreds of families and the cause of multiple deaths, according to local organizations consulted in 2022.

There have also been two major oil spills in the Philippines since Marcos Jr. took presidency. In February of 2023, the MT Princess Empress capsized off the coast of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro, spilling its cargo of 800,000 liters of oil into the surrounding waters (Yu, 2023). In July of 2024, the MT Terranova, which was carrying 1.4 million liters of industrial oil, capsized near Limay, Bataan (Gozum, 2024a).



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In response, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources imposed fishing bans, devastating the livelihoods of local fisherfolk. Both tankers were chartered by subsidiaries of San Miguel Corporation, which has so far been able to avoid repercussions.

State Repression

For eleven years in a row, the Philippines has held the record of “Most Dangerous Country in Asia for Environmental Defenders” (Gozum, 2023a). The threat of red-tagging continues under the Marcos Jr. administration, with the active participation of Vice President Sara Duterte, and elements of the armed forces tagging progressive student groups as “NPA recruiters” in school forums. Indigenous leaders and environmental activists continue to be red-tagged under the current administration, putting their lives and communities in danger. The different groups targeted by state forces are groups that stand at the forefront of defending our environment. The government’s continued disregard for human rights is in conflict with any commitments the government has made toward addressing the climate crisis. In the two years since Marcos Jr. was elected, multiple cases of harassment, illegal detention and enforced disappearances of environmental defenders have taken place.

The cases of intimidation and harassment is prevalent in the Southern Tagalog region, with the Secretary-General of Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) -Cavite and coordinator of Bayan Muna- Cavite as an example. Aries “Ariana” Soledad was subjected to state surveillance in September 2022, with state elements visiting and

asking them to “clear” their name on the state’s watchlist, while the communities that they serve have reported that the state elements have repeatedly visited asking them for any information about Ariana. Ariana is a queer fisherfolk advocate and an environmental defender and has long been a human rights defender who organizes in fisherfolk communities.

Illegal detention because of resistance can be seen in the case of Rowena “Owen” Dasig and Miguela “Ella” Peniero who are health workers and environment advocates. They were illegally arrested in July 2023 by the 85th Infantry Battalion while they were conducting community research on the impacts of the proposed combined cycle turbine power project and liquefied natural gas terminal plant operated by Atimonan One Energy Inc. (A1E) in Atimonan, Quezon. Rowena Dasig was reportedly released from Lucena City District Jail on 22 August 2025, but her legal counsel has not seen or heard from her since. In Rowena Dasig’s instance, this has turned into a case of enforced disappearance.

In April of 2023, two Cordillera activists, Dexter Capuyan and Gene Roz Jamil “Bazoo” De Jesus were abducted by state forces in Taytay, Rizal. The two are indigenous rights activists and have been tagged as terrorists weeks prior. Not long after that, in September 2023, two young environmental defenders, Jonila Castro and Jhed Tamano, were forcibly disappeared in Bataan by state forces. The two are part of the network AKAP KA Manila Bay, a network organizing to stop reclamation in Manila Bay. Nearly three weeks later, they were presented by the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict



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(NTF-ELCAC) in a press conference, where they were accused of being “surrendered” of the New People’s Army. During this press conference, the two environmental defenders revealed that they were abducted by the NTF-ELCAC and subjected to interrogations and death threats. Because of this, they were charged with grave oral defamation. The two have since been denied writs of amparo and habeas data by the Court of appeals.

In March of 2024, environmental human rights defenders Francisco “Eco” Dangla and Joxelle “Jak” Tiong of Pangasinan People’s Strike for the Environment (PPSE) were abducted by state forces in Barangay Polo, San Carlos City, Pangasinan. Four days later, they were discovered bruised but alive through the efforts of local progressive groups. The two advocated for the protection of Lingayen Gulf against destructive projects such as black sand mining and the construction of six nuclear power plants in the province of Pangasinan.

All these harassment and intimidation have cemented the long been motions of the State to endanger its own people who have been working to protect the environment. The prevalence of State repression through constant fear and harassment stands as a symbol of the State’s incapacity to cooperate with the people to which it should be serving. All the smear tactics are a manifestation of the justice system which sides with the ones that hold seats made out of materials which are exploited from our collapsing environment and natural resources.

Consequences of Imperialism

Imperialism shapes the socio-political landscape of the Philippines, including that of environmental exploitation, the climate crisis, and the country’s ability to adapt to climate change.

For example, despite being the fifth most mineral-rich country in the world and supplying 14% of the world’s nickel in 2020, mining accounts for less than 1% of the country’s gross domestic product (Cabico, 2023a). This is because a majority of mines in the Philippines are owned and operated by foreign companies and investors, which is allowed under the Mining Act of 1995, the primary law governing mining in the country. According to Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment (KPNE) in their statement on the 29th anniversary of the Mining Act of 1995 (Magallon, 2024), Marcos Jr. continues to operate the mining industry under this law, leading to continued environmental plunder and destruction. In this statement, KPNE points out that Marcos Jr. has allowed more mining operations under the guise of “renewable energy transition,” specifically for nickel, copper, and other rare earth elements.

Another example is the involvement of the Dutch corporation Royal Boskalis Westminster NV in several reclamation projects in Manila Bay. This includes the 265-hectare Pasay Harbor City reclamation project of Pasay Harbor City Corporation (PHCC), and the 360-hectare Pasay reclamation project of SM Prime Holdings (Gozum, 2023b). Boskalis is also contracted for the dredging, reclamation, and construction of the New Manila International Airport (NMIA) in



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Bulacan, a contract worth 1.5 billion Euros (Global Witness, 2023). Foreign companies like Boskalis profit hugely from development projects, while local communities lose livelihoods and homes.

Imperialism also manifests in the financial debt the country owes to international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). As of June 2024, the Philippines owed 128.7 Billion USD in external debt, almost half of which (50.7 Billion USD) is owed to multilateral and bilateral creditors like the IMF and WB (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, 2024). For the fiscal year of 2025, the Philippine government is proposing to put Php 876.7 Billion toward debt repayment, which is greater than the budget put toward social welfare, transportation, and agriculture combined (Department of Budget Management, 2024). This debt payment to institutions like IMF and WB, as well as to First World countries like the United Kingdom and the Netherlands severely hampers the Philippines's ability to develop, and to adapt to the climate crisis. Funds that could be put toward social safety nets or enhancing the agricultural sector instead go toward debt repayment.



02



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RESPONSE OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT

Existing Policies & Implementation

In response to the global crisis of climate change, the Philippine government released the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), covering the period of 2011-2028, and establishing the Climate Change Commission (CCC). According to the introduction of the NCCAP, its framework emphasizes adaptation and mitigation, providing a mechanism to “manage risks, adjust economic activity to reduce vulnerability and to improve business certainty.” Although the NCCAP was created in 2011, over ten years before Marcos Jr. would be elected to the presidency, it remains the current framework of the Philippine government to tackle climate change (Commission on Audit, 2024).

The 2024 performance audit report on the NCCAP, performed by the Commission on Audit, remarks that the implementation of the NCCAP is still in its first stage (mainstreaming climate actions at the policy and system level) in 2023, even though this stage was intended to be completed by 2016. The report also emphasizes several other deficiencies: a lack of an institutionalized results-based monitoring and evaluation system, a lack of systematic vulnerability assessments, and insufficient efforts in policy integration and coordination with local government units.

In line with the NCCAP and CCC, Republic Act 10174 of 2012 established the People’s Survival Fund (PSF) with the intent to “provide long stream finance for adaptation projects of local government units and local/community organizations aimed at increasing resilience of communities and ecosystems to climate change” (Climate Change Commission website, retrieved 15 Aug 2024). As of November 2023, Php 889.6 million of the original Php 1 billion budget allocated to the PSF has been utilized (Department of Finance, 2023), but as of 2024, this has translated to only six approved climate change adaptation projects out of 176 submitted proposals (Commission on Audit, 2024).

In addition to national policies, the Philippines has also committed to a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in April of 2021 as part of the country’s participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement. And while this was submitted a year before his presidency, Marcos Jr. has signaled his intent to uphold the country’s commitment to the Paris Agreement in October 2023 (Bajo, 2023) and January 2024 (Radyo Television Malcañang, 2024). In this NDC, the Philippine government committed to reduce its carbon emissions by 75% by 2030, although 72.29% of this reduction is marked as “conditional,” meaning it is dependent



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on assistance (that is financial) from other countries and institutions.

Despite making promises of climate action since the beginning of his term (Cabico, 2022), the Marcos Jr. administration has yet to release a comprehensive plan on how it will achieve this NDC. Instead, as is discussed later in this report, the NDC is used as a grounds for implementing anti-people legislation, such as the PUV Modernization Program. On the international stage, Marcos Jr. and other government officials act as if the Philippines is involved in “transformative climate action” (Philippine News Agency, 2023). They say all the right words, demanding that “developed countries must do more” (Romero, 2024) to rectify climate injustice. Locally, however, there has also been little headway in advancing a national program for tackling climate change, be it in terms of mitigation and adaptation, or minimizing the country’s carbon emissions. Marcos Jr.’s posturing on climate is, at best, empty promises, and at worst, intentional greenwashing done to make themselves look better while continuing business as usual.

Disaster Response

Adaptation is key in building resilience to climate change, but President Marcos Jr.’s administration has failed to implement effective adaptation strategies. Vulnerable communities are left without adequate infrastructure, early warning systems, and support mechanisms to withstand and recover from climate-related disasters. This negligence puts lives and livelihoods at risk, particularly in areas prone to typhoons, floods, and sea-level rise.

There has been a notable lack of both preparation and response for climate-related catastrophes. The beginning of the 2023-2024 El Niño was formally declared by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) in July of 2023 (Rivera & Cabrera, 2023), but the Marcos Jr. administration failed to respond until January of 2024, when the El Niño taskforce was reactivated via Executive Order despite Marcos Jr. announcing the reactivation of the taskforce a month prior (De Leon, 2024). Despite this, actual concrete aid was late and lacking. Aid was distributed almost a year after the initial declaration of El Niño, with Php 9 Billion provided by the administration, including Php 700 Million under the Presidential Assistance to Farmers and Fisherfolk (PAFF) program (Presidential Communications Office, 2024).

Marcos Jr personally visited several areas to distribute aid, including Bacolod City, where he distributed Php10,000 cash aid to 8,315 families dependent on farming and fishing in the Negros Occidental area (Delilan, 2024). Local groups decried this action as performative and gimmicky, saying that the response was insufficient, late, and selective (Delilan, 2024). Similarly, Marcos Jr handed over Php 210 Million in aid to local governments in Mindanao, with the Department of Agriculture also distributing seedlings, fertilizer, and agricultural equipment (Relativo, 2024).

The aid provided is better than nothing, but it reveals the Marcos Jr administration to be reactive rather than proactive. The El Niño taskforce was only reactivated six months after the declaration of El Niño. Aid was only distributed nearly a year after the onset of El



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Niño, when farmers had been experiencing drought and crop losses since the latter half of 2023. The El Niño task force itself is cause for concern. When the task force was first created by former president Gloria Macapaga-Arroyo in 2001, it was headed by the Department of Agriculture Secretary (Punongbayan, 2024), but Marcos Jr.'s version is headed by the Department of National Security Secretary and co-chaired by the Department of Science and Technology Secretary (De Leon, 2024). This is indicative of the Marcos Jr. administration's skewed priorities and perspectives. While yes, food security is an aspect of national security, the two cannot be addressed with the same tactics. The Department of National Security Secretary, Gilberto C. Teodoro Jr., also has no background in agriculture or the environment.

The administration has also been lacking in preparedness and response to typhoons. In his 2023 State of the Nation Address (SONA), Marcos Jr. commented that the country is "overprepared" for natural disasters (ABS-CBN, 2023) but gave no evidence to back up this claim. In his 2024 SONA, he stated that over 5,500 flood control projects had been completed and more were in the works around the country (Rappler, 2024). The day after he delivered the 2024 SONA, Super Typhoon Carina (international name Gaemi) and the enhanced southwest monsoon (also known as habagat) caused major flooding throughout Luzon (France-Presse, Brown, & Aljibe, 2024), proving these flood control projects ineffective.

False Solutions

Despite the Philippines being a signatory to the Paris Agreement and committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, President Marcos Jr.'s administration has shown minimal commitment to mitigating climate change. Fossil fuel consumption and dependence continue to prevail, while allowing only foreign investments in renewable energy sources and disregarding the needs of communities. The concept of a "just transition" has been embraced by the government, but it remains hypocritical in its actions. The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines the concept as "greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities, and leaving no one behind." Yet by parading the construction of renewable energy in rural areas, and the implementation of the Public Utility Vehicle (PUV) Modernization program and branding it as a "climate solution", it is leaving thousands of Filipinos behind. Current projects are simply false solutions as they do not actually address the problem of the climate crisis and only serve the interests of the private companies that are behind it.

One example of this is the 2,000 hectare floating solar panel project in Laguna De Bay, the largest lake in the Philippines. The project is being developed by three companies, Sun Asia, Singapore-based Vena Energy, and ACEN, the last of which is owned by the Ayala Group conglomerate (Gozum, 2024b). The project is set to be completed between 2026 and 2028 (Leyco, 2024). However, the livelihood of over 800 fisherfolk along the bay is at risk as the project



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will possibly block their fishing boats and their docks will be destroyed in place for the floating solar panels. This project did not go through any consultations nor have any consideration of the livelihoods across the different towns of the Bay. The demands of fisherfolk group PAMALAKAYA-Bay is inclusion over the project, in the construction and decommission process of these floating solar projects as they know better on where solar blocks should be placed since it hamper navigational routes, their fish pens, and cages.

Similarly, there is a wind farm project being built inside the Masungi Karst Conservation Area, a national park, wildlife sanctuary, and game preserve located in central Luzon. According to the project banners at the site, the wind farm is a project of Rizal Wind Energy Corporation (RWECC), which is owned by the Filipino company 7 Balboa Energy Holdings, Inc., of which Vena Energy holds a 25% stake (Arevada, 2024).

Hydropower through megadams is another source of renewable energy popular even before the Marcos Jr. administration. As of June 2023, there are 16 commercially-operated hydropower facilities in the Cordillera region alone, with another 80 in pre-development and development stages (De Vera, 2023). Under his “Build, Better, More” program, Marcos Jr. continues green-lighting the construction of more dams, ostensibly to provide for the country’s water needs and provide electricity. One example is the Jalaur River Multipurpose Project Stage II (JRMP II), otherwise known as the Jalaur Megadam, in Iloilo, which is expected to generate 6.6 megawatts of power once completed in 2025 (Herrera, 2024). The Jalaur Megadam is one of the

194 priority infrastructure projects under the “Build, Better, More” program. However, is bigger really better? According to the Water for the People Network (WPN), megadams only displace human settlements and drive communities away from their source of livelihood, without producing the expected rated capacities. WPN states that this can be observed with existing large hydropower dams such as Ambuklao, Binga and Magat which are underused due to the difficulty brought by the large size of the dam. (IBON, 2017). Environmental group Kalikasan PNE also critiques megadams as causing large-scale environmental damage on top of violating indigenous peoples’ rights (Cabico, 2023b).

The Marcos Jr. administration has also embraced liquified natural gas (LNG) as an alternative to coal-fired power plants. In the province of Batangas, there are plans to make it the hub of LNG in the Philippines. This is said to be the solution for the looming energy crisis to secure replacement fuel from Malampaya according to the former energy secretary Alfonso Cusi. This shift towards importing and processing LNG is also said to assist in the transition to clean energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Salazar, 2023). Liquified natural gas however is in no way clean energy. It is simply natural gas that is in liquid form, which is still a form of fossil fuel which is what is being burned in normal fuel. These LNG projects are in Batangas which is right beside the Verde Island Passage (VIP), a marine biodiversity conservation corridor. Many environmentalists and marine scientists warn against the construction of the LNG projects that would occupy shorelines and the negative effect of it to the marine ecosystems (Davey, 2024).



RESPONSE OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT

The gas-to-power trajectory has steadily continued into 2024. The first integrated LNG plant in Batangas, which is a 3.3 billion USD initiative, is a collaboration between our countries leading energy powerhouses that have continuously overlooked and disregarded environmental concerns, namely, PowerGen (MGen), San Miguel Corporation (SMC), and Aboitiz Power (AP) (Daiss, 2024).

International Loss & Damage Fund

In July 2024, it was announced that the Philippines won the bid to host the board of the Loss and Damage Fund. (United Nations Climate Change News, 2024) According to Finance Secretary Ralph Recto, "Hosting the LDF Board will unlock more opportunities for the Philippines to accelerate its access to climate finance and investments, which are critical for future-proofing our economy and ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth."

The Loss and Damage Fund is a finance mechanism that aims to support developing countries, like the Philippines, who face the brunt effects of the climate crisis. This was the positive outcome of the UN Climate Summit Conference of Parties 28 in Dubai last year. It is a start for countries most affected by climate change to have a mechanism to demand reparations from the Global North. Despite this, countries such as the United States and countries from the European Union have given only pennies compared to how much they invest and profit from fossil fuel industries (Umil, 2023).

Now with the fund being hosted in the Philippines, it is only right for the people to

demand as well what is needed for genuine climate action. This is a country where the head of the state is typically abroad and has only approved policies that only benefit corporations and the rich few who are in power. This is the country where environmental activists are detained, silenced, and even killed by state forces. In a land where economic development is much more important than the lives of every Filipino—civil society questions the credibility of the Philippine Government to host such a crucial stage of climate action.

In the 2024 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Climate change and Human rights, there was a clear statement to hold the current government accountable for the criminal negligence that has worsened the losses and damages experienced by the Philippines when it comes to climate impacts such as typhoons and drought. The fact of the matter is that the lack of government services and support to communities worsens the chances of people adapting to climate impacts. Despite the development of financial instruments to address the costs of damages, the support is not felt by communities.



03



RESPONSE & RESISTANCE ON THE GROUND

Grassroots Initiatives
The Youth Perspective

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RESPONSE & RESISTANCE ON THE GROUND

Grassroots Initiatives

A form of resistance found especially in the organizations built from grassroot communities are the campaigns they hold to reach concrete gains. Based on the 2022 National Consultations, campaigns that oppose destructive projects that worsens the effects of climate change are the meat of the work that communities do from educational campaigns to actual lobbying to local governments and petitions.

For example in Luzon, people's organization of rural women, Amihan or the National Federation of Peasant Women, held an education campaign entitled *Kanin at Isda, at iba pang lihka ng bansa, ldepena* (Defend Locally-Produced Rice, Fish and other agricultural products) holding community discussions with the fisherfolk organization PAMALAKAYA and the urban poor areas with KADAMAY. In Mindanao, Panalipdan Youth organizes youth and holds the campaign against Waste to Energy Incineration, known to cause environmental and health hazards by lobbying and petitioning against its construction.

Groups that oppose coal-fired power plants and destructive mining projects are led by the communities that are directly affected by these projects.

The consultations highlighted the importance of collective action against the large projects that have the support from political and military powers. People's organizations are formed from communities and campaigns are stronger with the support and alliance with different groups.

We can see this in the formation of the recently-established Save Cebu Movement, launched to oppose reclamation projects and other destructive coastal development projects. Collective aid also comes in the form of alliance building and organizations, such as the responders for the disease outbreak which came from the work of multiple organizations and indigenous group advocates.

Through the national consultations, vulnerabilities of indigenous groups and women were highlighted. And despite the shortcomings of the government in its aid and adaptation towards the effects of the climate crisis, the resistance of the masses continue to shine through. In all islands of the Philippines, women are the leaders that take initiative to orient their community and start lobbying efforts to their local government. Strong efforts to campaign against the issues of their communities come from the organizations with recommendations and calls that demand improvement of disaster response and empowerment for women and youth.



RESPONSE & RESISTANCE ON THE GROUND

The Youth Perspective

Environmental advocacy among the youth has its roots with the direct connection of the environment to the personal lives of young people all over the Philippines. Based on the interviews for the Philippine Youth Climate Movement situationer, interaction with the natural world is what many youth organizations in the Philippines center their environmentalism on. School-based organizations are taught to start small: to implement individual actions such as reduce, reuse, recycle, conserve water, to not litter, and to do tree planting.

This was the common starting point of many youth groups, especially those coming from high school clubs. College-based organizations however, take on a bigger picture approach, finding the root cause of the environmental and climate crisis in order to resolve it.

There is a stark difference between the initiatives of groups where the leadership and decisions are led by the youth. High school mandated organizations such as the Youth for Environment in Schools Organization (YES-O) in schools have similar activities of ornamental planting and clean up drives as per recommendation of the Department of Education. While in youth-led organizations such as Agham Youth and Oikos Ecological Movement, they mainly participate in mobilizations with other mass organizations, partner with community organizations, lobby petitions, and conduct educational discussions as their actions.

Other examples of youth-led organizations that are college-based is UP Los Baños Zoological Society (OZOOMS),

where the main activities are webinars, exhibits, film showings, symposia, and online publications during their Zoology Week to engage the youth in a citizen science approach towards biodiversity conservation.

The growth of the perspective from an individual-based solution to a collective action solution can also be observed through the different environmental protection campaigns the youth organizations initiate and take part in. Volunteerism for proper solid waste management and tree-planting as part of preservation of the environment are examples of the main concerns of highschool-based youth groups as the identified main cause of environmental issues is human behavior and lack of discipline. While in college-based groups that partner with community organizations have campaigns on socio-economic issues in the community, such as resolving the Mindoro Oil spill of 2023, reporting typhoon damages, anti-reclamation campaigns and promotion of science and technology for the people. There is a recognition that the main cause of environmental issues is a neoliberal, profit-based system with the negligence of the government that allows destructive projects in the name of “development”.

Despite the difference of perspectives, there is a common recommendation that there is a need for educational campaigns on climate and involvement among the youth. Proposed solutions from the youth involve the use of social media and empowering the youth to engage in environmental issues. Awareness campaigns, training for research and discussion to address the concerns of young people are mentioned as concrete activities that all youth groups can take action on.



04



TOWARDS GENUINE CLIMATE JUSTICE

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TOWARDS GENUINE CLIMATE JUSTICE

In the face of a government intent on co-opting climate justice for its own gains, worsening state repression, and attacks on the country's sovereignty, grassroots and youth movements remain committed to fighting for genuine climate justice. What would that entail?

People- and Planet-centered Adaptation & Mitigation

Adaptation and mitigation projects must center the needs of local communities and impacted sectors. Local communities and relevant sectors must be included, from discussion to planning to implementation. Similarly, policies for adaptation and mitigation need to prioritize the well-being of the Filipino people. When it comes to the protection and restoration of key ecosystems, such as forests, mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs, efforts must be scientifically sound and implemented with community involvement.

Real, Pro-people Solutions

Moratoriums on the extraction and burning of fossil fuels must be expanded and implemented. The existing moratorium in the Philippines does not cover the operation of existing coal-fired power plants, nor does it cover the operation, creation, or expansion of power plants that use liquefied natural gas. All forms of power reliant on the burning of fossil fuels must be regulated more strictly, with the goal of phasing them out completely.

In line with this, there must be a clear plan to transition the Philippines away from fossil fuels and to renewable sources of energy. The term "just transition" has been thrown about by the government to describe their climate initiatives, however there is no true justice in these initiatives. True "just transition" does not come at the cost of the citizenry, and must be shouldered by large corporations and the state. This transition must prioritize the rights and well-being of the Filipino citizenry. The construction of solar and wind farms cannot be done at the cost of displacing farmers, fisherfolk, and the urban poor. The financial burden of this transition must be shouldered by the government and by corporations responsible for burning fossil fuels, not by the citizens.

The onus of fossil fuel phase-out must be on large corporations, such as San Miguel Corporation and Aboitiz Equity Ventures. These corporations must be held accountable for their CO2 emissions, pollution, and environmental destruction. They must make reparations toward communities negatively impacted by their mines, oil spills, and infrastructure.



TOWARDS GENUINE CLIMATE JUSTICE

Uphold Human Rights & Demilitarize Communities

Human rights violations must end. Land and environmental defenders, including indigenous peoples, small farmers and fisherfolk, and community organizers, act only to protect their land, livelihood, and future. In response, they are tagged as terrorists, imprisoned on trumped-up charges, disappeared, or killed. The Anti-terror Law of 2020 and the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict embolden state actors to commit human rights violations. As such, they must be abolished.

In addition, the Visiting Forces Agreement, the Mutual Defense Treaty, and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement allow the United States Military free reign to terrorize local communities and destroy the environment. The support of the United States allows the Armed Forces of the Philippines to have greater presence in rural communities, leading to the same. The logistical requirements to support war games and training exercises, and to maintain the presence of US armed forces in the Philippines produces untold waste, including CO2 emissions. The presence of the US military in the Philippines is wholly destructive, and wholly unnecessary. It must be removed, and all policies that allow it must be repealed.

System Change Now!

We recognize that it is the system of imperialism that drives the climate crisis. Under imperialism, global monopoly capitalism demands the boundless extraction of fossil fuels, minerals, and other natural resources. It results in the overproduction of commercial products, made as quickly and cheaply as possible, creating needless amounts of waste. But it is the specific character of imperialism that extracts specifically from the Global South for the consumption and benefit of the Global North.

In the Philippines, imperialism manifests concretely in the export-oriented nature of production, the liberalized importation of basic goods driving down local production, the export of literal garbage from first world nations to the Philippines, and the country's inability to break free from U.S. control - be it economic or political.

Solving the climate crisis is not merely a matter of properly implementing projects, or creating (and keeping to) timelines and roadmaps. These are necessary, for sure, but without addressing the root cause of why over extraction and overproduction occur, the climate crisis will remain. To genuinely solve the climate crisis in a way that is just and fair, we must move away from capitalism as an economic system, and end imperialism.





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WHO ARE WE

Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP), convened in 2019, is a nationwide alliance of youth organizations, individuals, and student councils that advocates for immediate global climate action led by the youth. As of 2022, YACAP is a SEC recognized organization and is now officially YACAP Inc. We believe the youth, alongside the most impacted sectors of society, should now lead the ongoing global struggle against climate crisis for the survival of our planet. YACAP is the counterpart of Fridays for Future in the Philippines.



With the rise of the youth-led climate movement in 2019, YACAP was formed to be the broad youth-led climate alliance in the Philippines. The idea was born from the collaboration of the two founding organizations – Agham Youth and Saribuhay. In August 2019, in the lead up to the September 2019 Global Climate Strike and imminently afterwards, more organizations started joining the alliance and the group's prominence started to grow. With an initial focus on organizations, rather than individuals, individuals were lumped together in one group regardless of their location. However in 2020, during the pandemic, the alliance adapted, continued to grow, and more individuals expressed their interest to join. Soon the need for local chapters for individuals was clear and the individuals were grouped into five different regional chapters. YACAP has chapters across the Philippines, representing different regional clusters as defined by our current membership demographic. As our alliance grows, we hope to have chapters in the regional, provincial, and even city level.





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