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Philippines

In solidarity with the Filipino left

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The situation in the Philippines is currently dominated by the question of war. Whether on Afghanistan, 'anti-terrorism' or Iraq, the Philippine presidency has aligned itself with Washington's bellicosity. It has also authorized the direct intervention of US forces in the country, at the risk of considerably aggravating the tensions in the south of the archipelago, where the Muslim communities live.

In this context, the power of the army has incessantly grown and constitutional rights are threatened. It is very important that the international anti-war movement takes up the demand for the withdrawal of US forces from the Philippines and affirms its solidarity with the movements fighting for peace in Mindanao, in the south of the archipelago. Unhappily, the existence of a lively and pluralist left in the Philippines is not only threatened by the repressive measures of the regime or the remilitarization of the country. On January 23, 2003, the Philippine Communist Party (PCP) and the New People's Army (NPA) assassinated Romulo 'Rolly' Kintanar, a former leader of the party. Responsibility for this assassination was officially claimed by the PCP in terms that do not leave any doubt on the gravity of the event.

After having been one of the best known political-military leaders of the PCP and the guerrilla movement, Romulo Kintanar broke with this Maoist party in the early 1990s. His subsequent political evolution is the subject of controversy inside the Philippine left. He worked as a security consultant for the national electricity company and for the immigration service. He also collaborated with political personalities in the bourgeois parties. He nonetheless continued to help activists in the revolutionary organizations up until his assassination. He had perhaps retained some influence inside the PCP's guerrilla movement, many of whose cadres he had trained. However, Kintanar's political evolution is not the problem. In its official communiqués, the PCP leadership stressed that he had been condemned to death for the first time in 1993, or immediately following the crisis that shook the party in 1991-1992 (and which culminated in expulsions and splits); well before he had worked for the administration, then.

What we already know has been clearly confirmed in the PCP communiqués that followed the murder of January 23. Other former party leaders were condemned to death in 1993. In its recent declarations, the party leadership threatens to carry out these death sentences; it names militants who are today members of several political organizations and promises that all these 'traitors' will pay one day. Since the crisis of 1991-1993, the PCP leadership has been responsible for the deaths of numerous cadres of 'dissident' revolutionary organizations. However, this is the first time since 1993 that it has killed a nationally known personality who is legal and not clandestine. Ten years after the splits of 1992, far from being abandoned, the PCP's policy of assassinations has got considerably worse. Cadres of legal left political organizations are openly threatened. The PCP does not accept the fact that it has lost the monopoly of popular representation in the Philippines. It seeks to obliterate the development of a pluralist progressive and revolutionary left. The situation is very serious. With other political forces, we have supported the PCP and its president, Jose Maria Sison, against Washington and we have mobilized against their being placed on the EU's 'terrorist' list. We have always rejected the right of the CIA and these governments to draw up such a list. But precisely because we have defended the PCP and Jose Maria Sison on these occasions, we should reaffirm with all the more strength today that the assassinations perpetrated in the Philippines are in no way tolerable. The PCP must change its policy, for the sake of the future of the whole Philippine left.