

Securing Human Security

This volume of *Kasarinlan* is a sequel to volume 19, number 1 (2004), on human security in conflict situations. Part 1 of this theme focused mainly on the issues of ethnic conflict in Southeast Asia, a need for a human-rights approach to national security, the problem of small-arms proliferation, and the Mau Mau Revolution.

Part 2 pursues the concern of ethnic conflict but this time in the Philippines. Cheryll Ruth Soriano's "The Challenges of Relief and Rehabilitation Assistance in Ongoing Conflict: A Mindanao Case" examines the role of humanitarian assistance within the context of the roots of the Mindanao conflict. Focus is placed on the role of civil society and the manner in which it shapes relief and rehabilitation assistance in Pikit, North Cotabato, as contrasted to the manner in which the state carries out the same assistance. The essay emphasizes that in carrying out such an endeavor there should be focus on the development of a "culture of peace," and making use of local capacities that foster meaningful partnerships among stakeholders.

Like the previous issue, this one also looks into the human security aspect of a revolution, but this time on the ongoing communist insurgency in the Philippines. Nathan Gilbert Quimpo's "The Use of Human Rights for the Protraction of War" examines the feasibility of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Law (CARHRIHL), which has been signed by both the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front (NDF)-Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)-New People's Army (NPA). CARHRIHL basically calls on both sides to respect human rights and the principles of humanitarian law. For Quimpo, however, CARHRIHL

is inutile because both sides are not sincere in their efforts, with the Philippine government controlled by politico-economic elites who are deeply enmeshed in patronage politics and corruption, and the CPP-NPA-NDF still bent on overthrowing the government.

Part 2 also introduces a new dimension to human security—the role of capital flight and economic stability. Edsel L. Beja Jr.'s "Capital Flight and the Hollowing Out of the Philippine Economy in the Neoliberal Regime" explains how capital flight has had adverse effects on the country's ability to generate additional output and employment. Blame is placed on the financial policies of the country in particular, and neoliberalism as a philosophy of development in general.

The individual as a concern of human security is also examined in this issue. Cleonicki Saroca's "Filipino Women, Migration, and Violence in Australia: Lived Reality and Media Image" looks in particular on the relationship of the lives of Filipino women and Australian media images. The focus is on women migrants, i.e., mail-order brides, and how they are abused in intimate relationships. Saroca concludes that the media have aggravated such a conflict because, among others, they have not only adequately depicted the plight of Filipino women migrants but also contributed to the Filipina's vulnerability to male violence in Australia.

Women and human security are further explored in E. (Leo) D. Battad's "Gender Equality Legislation: Addressing Issues in Conditions of Work and Welfare Facilities (A Policy Review)." Battad's main concern is to look into how gender equality has been promoted by the legislative gains in women's rights, particularly in addressing gender issues in conditions of work and welfare facilities. She concludes that while milestones have certainly been attained in the promotion of gender equality, government still has to address shortcomings that include, among others, the persistence of gender inequalities in the home and in the workplace. A reality Battad points out is that the attainment of gender equality goes beyond legal reforms and that it will require the complete political, economic, and social transformation of society.

"Securing human security," therefore, involves examining the broad aspects of security concerns. For the Philippines, these include the Moro and Communist insurgencies at the macro level, while the focus is on the individual, particularly the plight of the Filipino woman, at the micro level. Moreover, it acknowledges not only the political dimension of human security (i.e., how to end a conflict and

how to empower women), but also its economic (i.e., the adverse consequences of capital flight as brought about by the shortcomings of a neoliberal philosophy of development, and the reality of poverty which drives Filipino women to pursue relationships with male “foreigners in search for a better life” with the risk of making themselves vulnerable to domestic violence) and sociocultural aspects. Although these five articles elucidate Philippine experiences, the narratives and lessons highlight a universal concern for the need to comprehensively secure human security by taking into consideration these various dimensions that traverse the macro and micro levels. ❁