

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Movements > Asia (Movements) > IIRE Manila (Movements, Asia) > **Philippines: Twelfth Asian Regional School about to end but no sign of ending**

# Philippines: Twelfth Asian Regional School about to end but no sign of ending

Thursday 23 May 2024, by [IIRE-Manila](#) (Date first published: 2 May 2024).

**After the four-year since the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Asian Regional School was held again - face-to-face (April 13-May 3, 2024) amidst wide-ranging challenges. The 12<sup>th</sup> ARS is attended by progressive women, youth, LGBTQIA, peasant and labor leaders and organizers from Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Australia, The Netherlands and The Philippines.**

Contents

- [LABOR DAY 2024 JOINT STATEMENT](#)
- [To send donations via ESSF](#)

From the indoor lectures to all-women meeting to public seminar on Palestine and Myanmar, solidarity visit to Palestinian refugees, exchange with urban poor and working class community, museum cooling down to May Day 2024 immersion... What a month?! - an inspiring intergenerational and intersectional exchange among 18 participants.



The 12<sup>th</sup> ARS participants also released a joint May Day 2024 statement with Philippine workers and progressive organizations (read below).

Tasks have been put forward: Asian Women and Asian Migrant Workers Conferences. Keep supporting the efforts in providing spaces for Asian and Global grassroots activists, progressives and researchers! Donations to help the work of IIRE Manila can be made via ESSF.

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## LABOR DAY 2024 JOINT STATEMENT

**Workers in the Philippines and progressive organizations in Asia**

Labor Day 2024 is marked by intense heat in the Philippines, highlighting one of the most severe impacts of the climate crisis on the country. Yet, this scorching heat doesn't deter the workers in construction, transportation, non-air-conditioned factories, delivery riders, farmers, women and men vendors, and many others. They continue to toil because when workers stop working, hunger awaits their families.

Such efforts and sacrifices remain inadequately acknowledged and rewarded by the capitalist system. Living on own account is also unsupported by the government, with aid, delivery and improvement of public services lacking.

Workers bear the brunt, while capital enjoys broad incentives such as corporate tax breaks and the ease in doing business through free trade, free markets, and price deregulation. These policies exacerbate the burden on Filipino families due to inflation or rising prices of goods and essential services like water, electricity, healthcare, education, and housing. This plight is common across regions — in Asia, Africa, South America, as well as in imperialist countries and regions like the US, Western Europe and Australia.

Workers in the Philippines demand a wage increase of at least P150.00 and a change in the wage system to achieve the constitutionally mandated living wage. Problems of low and eroding wages were echoed by workers in Northern Mindanao, BARMM, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, and Indonesia, as reported by their representatives at the ongoing Asian Regional School here in the Philippines.

Moreover, reports similarly depict relentless repression of unions and progressive movements in these countries, contributing to the decline in trade union density and making freedom in organizing even more difficult.

It's clear that in every corner of the world and among our neighboring countries, the plight of workers is the same. It's one condition, one struggle - a fight against the continued destruction of human livelihoods due to capitalist exploitation, war, and environmental destruction.

We stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle for justice, dignity, and self-determination. We condemn the on-going genocide and systemic oppression faced by Palestinians including the exploitation and violation of their human rights and labor rights.

We also call on all democratic and progressive groups in the world to stand in solidarity with the Peoples of Myanmar in their struggle against the Military Junta dictatorship and for genuine emancipation.

Therefore, today we stand united, pledging to continue the fight for the rights and welfare of the working class, and in saving our planet and humanity from the destructive capitalist system. Labor Day will always be a day of protest for all of us. So, with the days beyond. ###

#laborday  
#LaborDay2024  
#LaborDayPH2024

Signed by:

Partido Manggagawa (PM)

LABANKababaihan, Mindanao

MindaNOW, Mindanao

All Nepal Peasants Federation (ANPFa)

Bangladesh Krishok Federation

Perempuan Mahardhika, Indonesia

United Labor Federation, Sri Lanka

HKP, Pakistan

**IIRE MANILA**

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**P.S.**

- Source: IIRE Manila [Facebook](#).