

Where Are We Now?

The State of Agrarian Reform and Rural-Agrarian Struggles in the Philippines from the Perspective of a Contemporary Agrarian Movement

Karlo Mikhail I. Mongaya  and Sheila Mae Pagurayan



Program on Alternative Development

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"Agrarian reform beneficiaries look on as police and officials dismantle the concrete-blocked gate of Hacienda Matias in San Francisco, Bondoc Peninsula, Quezon Province, on May 15, 2015, enforcing a DAR installation order after landowners fenced off the property to prevent peasants from claiming the land."

Photo from KATARUNGAN

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DISCUSSION PAPER

Cartography as Engagement: Spatial Narratives on Hazards and Community-Led DRR Alternatives in Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City

Where Are We Now?

The State of Agrarian Reform and Rural-Agrarian Struggles in the Philippines from the Perspective of a Contemporary Agrarian Movement

Karlo Mikhail I. Mongaya and Sheila Mae Pagurayan

Key Highlights

- Thirty-eight years after the signing of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), the quest to democratize land politics in the Philippine countryside remains fraught with persistent and developing challenges.
- This paper draws on participatory action research with Kilusan para sa Repormang Agraryo at Katarungang Panlipunan (KATARUNGAN), a national movement of peasants, farmworkers, fisher peoples, Indigenous Peoples, and other rural working peoples, to identify four challenges shaping rural-agrarian struggles in the Philippines today:
 1. Reform reversals and land reconcentration;
 2. Contestations over conflicting land laws and overlapping claims;
 3. Escalating capitalist land grabs and violence; and
 4. Worsening scissors crisis and loss of agrarian livelihoods.
- The movement's experience reveals that CARP's focus on land redistribution, while securing significant gains during periods of strong peasant mobilization and coalition-building with state reformers in the 1990s, has been undermined by neoliberal agricultural policies and aggressive reversals of land reform.
- These developments emphasize the limits of redistribution alone, especially without sustained state support for beneficiaries' economic viability and ecological regeneration.
- The paper argues that agrarian reform must transcend the traditional paradigm by grounding it in the holistic framework of the 4Rs: Redistribution, Recognition, Restitution, and Regulation.

Keywords: Land politics, Food Sovereignty, Agrarian Reform, Agrarian Movements, Agrarian Struggles

Introduction

Where are we now in terms of agrarian reform in the Philippines, 38 years since the enactment of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) on June 10, 1988 and 54 years since the signing of Presidential Decree No. 27 on October 21, 1972? Over five decades since its continuous implementation, the government claims that agrarian reform is almost concluded, with only 700,000 hectares remaining for redistribution (Villamiel 2026). Yet, this claim is questioned by reform-oriented and radical social movements in the face of intensifying corporate land grabs, criminalization, and violence against peasants, indigenous peoples (IPs), and other rural working people, as well as increasing land reform reversals and reconcentration (Tadem 2024). While recognizing significant but partial redistributive gains, they also point to neoliberal policies of liberalizing agricultural imports and slashing support services for farmers, as well as the encroachment of market-driven interests, bringing in new dynamics that challenge the gains made by earlier agrarian movements (Borras 2007a).



Photo 1. KATARUNGAN and the June 10 Land Rights Committee led 500 protesting peasants in a historic June 8–11, 2026 campout outside the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Central Office in Quezon City, filling Elliptical Road with tents and banners in a united call for land, food sovereignty, and climate justice. Photo from the authors.

This paper critically examines the current state of agrarian reform in the Philippines through the lens of agrarian social movements, particularly the Kilusan para sa Repormang Agraryo at Katarungang Panlipunan (KATARUNGAN, Movement for Agrarian Reform and Social Justice). Established in 2007, KATARUNGAN is a national movement of peasants, farmworkers, fisher peoples, IPs, and other rural working peoples working

for food sovereignty and the democratization of land politics. Our study shows land struggles and the challenges faced by agrarian communities under KATARUNGAN in engaging with the government's agrarian reform program.

We argue that the traditional framework for agrarian reform, which is primarily focused on redistributing agricultural land to enable industrialization, has been outgrown by new agrarian realities defined by intensifying crises in food, climate, energy, and global capitalism. Land politics in the 21st century have been profoundly reshaped by the unprecedented extent of urbanization, intensifying climate change, ballooning chronic hunger, and the rise of a large reserve of jobless or near-jobless precarious working people (Franco and Borras 2025). In the Philippines, about 50 percent of the population now lives in urban areas (FAO 2026). The past five decades have seen the rapid expansion of metropolitan areas like Metro Manila, which have increasingly absorbed rural land and labor for nonagricultural activities. Agricultural employment declined from 47 percent in 1965 to 33 percent in 2015 (Mongaya 2025), while the share of the overall value of agricultural production fell from 27 percent in 1975 to 9.4 percent in 2023 (World Bank 2026).

These shifting conditions have eroded the capacity of rural working people to sustain their livelihoods on the land, making dispossession a persistent reality. At the same time, they have broadened the fronts for land struggles to encompass not only rural-agrarian struggles but also rural non-agrarian, urban non-agrarian, and urban-agrarian struggles (Franco and Borras 2025). Our analysis identifies four challenges currently shaping the landscape of rural-agrarian struggles: reform reversals and land reconcentration; contestations over conflicting land laws and overlapping claims; escalating capitalist land grabs and violence; and worsening scissors crisis and loss of agrarian livelihoods. Although a more complete examination of each category in the contemporary conjuncture still needs further investigation, we nonetheless provide representative case studies from KATARUNGAN's work that illustrate these four challenges.

In view of these challenges and wider political-economic transformations from the past five decades, we argue for a rethinking of agrarian reform through the holistic framework of the 4Rs: Redistribution, Recognition, Restitution, and Regulation. This means not only guaranteeing equitable access to land but also recognizing the rights of diverse agrarian communities, including indigenous

groups, addressing historic injustices through restitution, and enforcing regulatory measures to ensure democratic control of land and ecological integrity (La Via Campesina 2026).

Our paper focuses on rural-agrarian struggles, which have traditionally centered on peasants' calls for redistributive agrarian reforms. Within the rural-agrarian world, we deal mainly with peasant communities in lowland plains and rugged hilly terrain, mostly dedicated to coconut production, where the bulk of KATARUNGAN organizing is centered. Our methodology consists of reviewing all land struggles handled by KATARUNGAN and categorizing them by common characteristics. The data used in this paper are drawn from our active engagement with KATARUNGAN as volunteers since February 2025. Specific data sources include the proceedings of the organization's National Assembly in March 2025, field visits, interviews with farmers and leaders of local peasant organizations and cooperatives, and regular consultations with the National Secretariat. This approach draws from Borras and Franco's (2023) framework of scholar-activism in land struggles.



Photo 2. Peasant leaders present updates on the realities faced in their agrarian communities during the National Assembly and 17th anniversary celebration of KATARUNGAN, held March 15-17, 2025. Photo from KATARUNGAN.

The paper is structured as follows: The next section provides a brief review of the historical and institutional context of agrarian reform and agrarian social movements in the Philippines. This section is followed by an exploration of KATARUNGAN's origins, perspectives, and strategies as a national movement. The fourth section analyzes case studies that exemplify contemporary trends and challenges that define the current landscape of rural-agrarian struggles. The fifth section offers a critical reflection on the prospects for contemporary agrarian movements and renewal of agrarian reform in the Philippines through the 4Rs.

Agrarian Reform and Agrarian Social Movements in the Philippines

The origins of agrarian reform in the Philippines are deeply entwined with the nation's colonial history and the enduring concentration of land in the hands of a few. Colonial land policies imposed through agrarian violence, beginning with Spanish-era *encomiendas* and *haciendas*, later reinforced by American land laws, laid the groundwork for persistent rural inequality (Putzel 1992). Spanish colonization declared all lands to be the property of the Spanish crown, even as many indigenous communities continued to practice customary land tenure (Lynch 1982). In the latter part of Spanish rule, large tracts were granted to landed-merchant elites to establish *haciendas* for export agriculture. American colonial rule further transformed land resources into the state or public domain, while promoting private property through the Torrens System or the "Land Registration Act of 1902" (Vidal 2004, 55). After independence, successive Philippine governments upheld state ownership of untitled lands and encouraged private ownership over titled lands.

The struggles of peasant communities—often in alliance with other classes, such as workers, the intelligentsia, and state reformers—have long revolved around demands for the redistribution of agricultural land and the democratization of the countryside (Franco 1994). Several agrarian reform programs had been initiated, but had not substantively addressed these demands. Land resettlement initiatives in the early and middle 20th Century diffused peasant unrest by encouraging migration to land frontiers rather than implementing land redistribution (Abaya-Ulindang 2017). PD No. 27, issued by the dictator Ferdinand Marcos Sr. in 1972, aimed to redistribute rice and corn lands but was hampered by its narrow scope and persistent landlord

resistance (Tadem 2022). Social injustice in the countryside fueled the rise of the Huk peasant rebellion in the 1940s and 1950s and the communist armed insurgency in the 1970s and 1980s (Kerkvliet 2014; Putzel 1995; Tadem 2007). Founded in 1985, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, Philippine Peasant Movement) became an important vehicle for reviving the peasant mass movement during the repressive years of the Marcos dictatorship (Tadem 2023). CARP, enacted in 1988 and extended over subsequent decades, broadened the scope to encompass all agricultural lands and was acclaimed as an ambitious social justice project.

Significant yet partial redistributive gains from CARP were made possible by the emergence of autonomous peasant movements in the 1990s that applied pressure from below and by their interplay with reform-minded officials who intervened from above in what has been called the “bibingka strategy” (Borras 1998). Movement organizations such as the Demokratikong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (DKMP, Democratic Peasant Movement of the Philippines)—which split from the old KMP—and Ugnayan ng mga Nagsasariling Lokal na Organisasyon ng mga Mamamayan sa Kanayunan (UNORKA, Coordination of Local Autonomous Rural People’s Organizations) represented a decisive turn away from the national liberation era social movements that had subordinated land struggles to underground resistance (Putzel 1995), toward open mass movement and coalition politics. The Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (PEACE) Foundation, founded in 1977, played a key part in steering peasant politics towards new repertoires of struggles. UNORKA emerged as the biggest and most politically significant radical peasant movement in the Philippines during its heyday in the early 2000s (Franco and Borras 2009). This bibingka strategy allowed substantial gains, with nearly half of the country’s 13 million hectares of agricultural land redistributed and tangible benefits reaching three-fifths of all peasant households (Borras 2006).

By Jennifer C. Franco
Death on the Campaign Trail

Last April, as the "Erap Para Sa Mahirap" electoral phenomenon gained steam, another political drama was unfolding in the remote rural town of San Narciso. Nestled in the heart of southern Quezon province's impoverished Bondoc Peninsula region, San Narciso is a rugged redoubt of local authoritarian politics that survived the 1986 transition to national competitive elections. There, just three weeks before the May 1998 elections, a well-liked opposition candidate for mayor, known locally as a sincere friend of the poor, was gunned down in broad daylight by six unidentified men during an election sortie in a far-flung barangay.

Felicio "Citong" Medenilla had just concluded a campaign meeting in Sitio Nangka, Brgy. Vigo Central at about 3 p.m. on April 17 when he was approached from behind by two gunmen who fired on him at close range. Hit in the neck, he fell to the ground mortally wounded, as the small crowd looked on in horror. The gunmen then fired again at his chest to make sure he was dead, before fleeing on foot with four other armed companions. What had developed into a promising electoral campaign was over in a matter of seconds, leaving San Narciso's political landscape changed forever, marked by new uncertainties and a palpable fear in some villages that the town stands on the brink of a "reign of terror."

Brought to the attention of the national media by friends and allies of the slain candidate, the killing of Citong flickered briefly on the national political stage, before fading back into local oblivion. San Narciso's election-time troubles have long since fallen out of the national spotlight, yet for San Narciso residents, discomfiting questions surrounding Medenilla's death linger amidst an unsettling quiet. The murder remains unsolved, but for many, especially those from the ranks of the rural poor who have recently begun to assert their right under the government's comprehensive agrarian reform program to own land they till, who was behind it — and why — is no mystery.

The Official Story

To date, Citong's murder remains unsolved — not too surprising since an official investigation was never even launched. What appears to be one of the most high profile crimes ever committed in San Narciso in recent memory never even made it onto the town's police blotter. Indeed, some local officials appear conspicuously anxious to brush off the "incident" and move on with the business of ruling. Juanilo Uy, outgoing mayor of San Narciso,

The case of San Narciso highlights an aspect of contemporary Philippine politics: the persistence of local authoritarian enclaves despite the country's "transition to democracy" in 1986.

A Continuing Past: Local Authoritarian Enclave Par Excellence

Juanilo Uy has been a fixture on San Narciso's political landscape since 1977, when he was appointed mayor by then-president Ferdinand Marcos. According to the former KBL stalwart, he consolidated his hold on the mayoralty after defeating Isidro Aurecada, who ran under the opposition PDP-Laban banner, by some 1000 votes in the 1980 local elections. There he stayed until Marcos was overthrown in 1986, at which time he was replaced by

gal limit of three consecutive three-year terms, Uy would likely have run again in the last election. Instead, he did the next best thing. He put up his wife, Allen Uy, to run against former opposition vice-mayor, Felicio Medenilla. However, it became very clear early on in the race, according to local political analysts, that Mrs. Uy faced an uphill battle against the well-liked "Citong." So she "slid down" to the vice-mayor spot to make way for Victor Reyes.

Meanwhile, the opposition had discovered a serious problem. Just two days before he

Challenging the Dinosaurs:

LOCAL ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL CHANGE IN SAN NARCISO*

and his wife Allen Uy, incoming vice-mayor, contend that Medenilla's murder was most likely the result of a "personal problem," and the victim just happened to be on the campaign trail when it took place.

Medenilla supporters, especially among the rural poor, think otherwise, asserting instead that the popular oppositionist would have won the election by a landslide in a free and fair contest. In their view, he was killed because he posed a serious political threat to the status quo. Some recall that after Medenilla defeated the officialist candidate for vice-mayor in 1992, he was barred from serving as acting mayor whenever the elected mayor was absent, and even from holding office in the town hall. Whether true or not, it is widely believed that responsibility for the brutal slaying lies with the Uy-Reyes tandem that has ruled the town almost continuously since 1977, and whose bet in the race for mayor, Victor Reyes, went on to defeat his slain opponent's daughter, Jocelyn "Baby Lyn" Medenilla-Faner, who had stood in for her murdered father.



OIC appointee, Jesus Cortez. But Uy re-captured his old office in the 1988 elections. Running under a KBL-NP coalition banner, he won by a familiar margin of about 1000 votes. His 1988 victory was repeated in 1992, and again in 1995.

The outgoing mayor is proud of his nearly twenty years in office, saying that had the people of San Narciso been unhappy with his performance they would have voted him out a long time ago. If not for the le-

gal limit of three consecutive three-year terms, Uy would likely have run again in the last election. Instead, he did the next best thing. He put up his wife, Allen Uy, to run against former opposition vice-mayor, Felicio Medenilla. However, it became very clear early on in the race, according to local political analysts, that Mrs. Uy faced an uphill battle against the well-liked "Citong." So she "slid down" to the vice-mayor spot to make way for Victor Reyes.

continued on page 6

Photo 3. A June 1998 issue of *Conjuncture*, the publication of the Institute of Popular Democracy, features reportage on the agrarian struggles in San Narciso, Bondoc Peninsula, Quezon Province.

However, the capitalist and neoliberal context in which CARP had been implemented meant that these redistributive reforms have always been partial and contested. Landowners exploited legal loopholes to evade redistribution, resorting to leaseback arrangements, land-use conversions, and extended legal battles (Borras 2007b). CARP included an “endless list of exemptions,” landlord compensation at “fair market value,” and a “burdensome” amortization scheme for beneficiaries (Tadem 2024). The colonial legacies of agrarian violence also persisted amidst increasingly stiff landlord resistance to agrarian reform, exemplified by the public execution by landlord goons of Eric Cabanit, UNORKA Secretary General, in Davao del Norte on April 24, 2006 (Borras and De la Tierra 2026). Peasants seeking land by maximizing the openings made possible by CARP not only faced violence from landed elites but also from insurgents who saw the government’s agrarian reform as obstructing their efforts to win over the rural population to their armed struggle (Franco 2011).

Neoliberal policy shifts have prioritized market liberalization and reduced state intervention in the agricultural sector, exposing farmers to market vagaries. As a consequence, government support for smallholder farmers has been scaled back, leaving many agrarian reform beneficiaries without adequate access to credit, technical assistance, and essential agricultural services (Borras 2007a). The growing commodification of land has driven land-use conversions and speculative investments, making it difficult for peasants to retain and cultivate their land (Manahan 2018). At the same time, the rise of climate change has made the struggle for land inseparable from the struggle for ecological regeneration (Yaşin 2022).

The layered and fragmented structure of laws governing land tenure also complicates how different sectors of peasants and IPs assert their democratic control over land. CARP only covered the redistribution of agricultural land. Landless peasants seek ownership of redistributed agricultural land through the CARP and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), or pursue Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) agreements with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to occupy and cultivate forestland. Meanwhile, indigenous communities can apply for the recognition of their ancestral land through the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). The fragmented and overlapping nature of these land-related policies led to fresh challenges, as competing claims have sown division among agrarian communities (Mongaya forthcoming).

As earlier agrarian social movements like UNORKA and their supporting infrastructure, such as the PEACE Foundation, waned, new movement organizations, such as KATARUNGAN, have taken up the mantle. During its first decade, KATARUNGAN and allied agrarian movements played an important role in campaigning for the passage of the CARP Extension with Reforms (CARPER) in 2009. CARPER brought important reforms, including strengthening compulsory land acquisition, recognizing women as titleholders, and making amortization more accessible. However, anti-reform legislators successfully introduced loopholes that limited its impact, including provisions that allowed landowners to influence beneficiary selection and expanded exemptions (Tadem 2024). KATARUNGAN sharply criticized the Benigno Aquino III administration's failure to extend DAR's authority to issue notices of coverage beyond 2014, constituting a setback for agrarian reform. President Rodrigo Duterte had the opportunity to reverse the preceding administration's pro-landlord politics (Tadem 2016), but this promise faded as anti-reform and militarist voices came to dominate his administration (Tadem 2016).

Together, these trends have eroded achievements in land redistribution, facilitating reversals of agrarian reform, land reconcentration, and capitalist dispossession. It is also in this context that contemporary agrarian movements like KATARUNGAN emerged, experimenting with new repertoires of action and forging alliances that reflect the increasingly complex terrain of rural-agrarian struggles in the country today.

KATARUNGAN: Building a Movement for Democratic Land Control and Food Sovereignty

KATARUNGAN unites landless peasants, smallholders, farm workers, small-scale fisher peoples, and Indigenous Peoples into a national movement to democratize land politics and advance food sovereignty in the Philippines. Founded on November 7, 2007, KATARUNGAN emerged from the collaborative efforts of peasant organizations and advocates, especially those from PEACE Foundation, UNORKA, and PADAYON, in response to the retreat of earlier radical agrarian social movements. Its formation stood as both a reaction to the limitations of past agrarian reform efforts and an assertion of the continued relevance of agrarian social movements and rural-agrarian struggles for social change.

The movement organization's vision and mission are threefold. First, organize and support the struggles of rural working peoples for democratic control over land, water, forests, and territories. Second, initiate agroecological production systems as part of a food system transformation. Third, build solidarity with other oppressed sectors across the rural-urban divide (KATARUNGAN 2025b). KATARUNGAN is currently aligning its rights-based, pro-poor approach for radical changes in land control with the 4Rs framework: Redistribution of land from elites to peasants and working people; Restitution for historical injustices; Recognition of diverse agrarian communities' rights (including IPs); and Regulation to ensure democratic and ecological land management.

KATARUNGAN has recently adopted the principle of food sovereignty, which affirms the right of working people to define their own food, agricultural, and land-use systems, rejecting corporate-led industrial models in favor of sustainable, culturally appropriate, and localized food systems that are controlled by those who produce and nurture the land. The movement has also begun to incorporate the ideas of land sovereignty and territorial sovereignty as key foundations for achieving food sovereignty. Land sovereignty stresses the right of working peoples to effective access to, use of, and control over land and its benefits, challenging elite and corporate domination. Territorial sovereignty asserts the right of indigenous peoples, peasants, and rural working groups to reclaim territories as living, socioecological spaces that express their identity, historical memory, and ways of knowing (KATARUNGAN 2025b).

The movement critically engages with the state to push for radical reforms, following the "bibingka strategy." It unites with other progressive forces to build coalitions of parties, organizations, and individuals advocating broadly pro-poor and democratic politics. These efforts have included participation in elections and engagement with the national bureaucracy. The movement's politics are defined by a socialist vision of placing land and the means of production under democratic control to meet people's needs rather than profit. Its vision of democracy centers on political power residing with the people: peasants, workers, indigenous groups, women, youth, and all rural working peoples. KATARUNGAN believes that genuine democracy must be pluralistic, or inclusive of different viewpoints, and go well beyond periodic elections or the protection of civil rights. The movement likewise upholds internationalism by building unity with working peoples' movements globally to pursue equality, justice, and the defeat of capitalist exploitation (KATARUNGAN 2016).

Organizationally, KATARUNGAN is structured through chapters at barangay, municipal, city, provincial, and national levels, with farmers' associations and cooperatives as affiliates. A national secretariat supports program coordination and daily operations. The movement services land struggles of peasants, IPs, and other rural working people through legal and human rights education and the empowering of their local associations and cooperatives. KATARUNGAN, moreover, undertakes research to inform its work and raise public awareness on its advocacies. Finally, the movement promotes sustainable rural livelihoods by supporting agroecological farming practices that prioritize local markets and address community needs (KATARUNGAN 2025b).

Over the past decade, KATARUNGAN's efforts have contributed to redistributing more than 20,000 hectares of land to around 10,000 farmers, supported indigenous land claims, and campaigned for the decriminalization of over 300 land claimants. An important milestone in these land struggles is the redistribution of the 2,000-hectare Hacienda Matias in San Francisco, Bondoc Peninsula in Quezon Province. The peasant struggle on the ranch began in the early 2000s but came to a head after a month-long campout at DAR in Quezon City in 2014, which pushed the awarding of land titles to the farmers. The landowners fenced off the entire property and poured concrete over its only gate to block the DAR order for their installation in Hacienda Matias. The walled-off gate was dismantled on May 15, 2015, as peasant mobilization pressured the national government to intervene and implement land redistribution in the estate (Atienza and Beringer 2015).



Photo 4. Agrarian reform beneficiaries look on as police and officials dismantle the concrete-blocked gate of Hacienda Matias in San Francisco, Bondoc Peninsula, Quezon Province, on May 15, 2015, enforcing a DAR installation order after landowners fenced off the property to prevent peasants from claiming the land. Photo from KATARUNGAN.

KATARUNGAN has also been active in supporting the electoral campaigns of progressive partylist groups and candidates, as well as participating in national progressive alliances such as the Save Agrarian Reform Alliance (SARA). Its foray into electoral politics includes supporting the independent senatorial run of scholar-activist Walden Bello in 2016, the campaigns of Magsasaka Partylist in 2019, the Laban ng Masa in 2022, and Kamanggagawa Partylist in 2025 (Valte et al. forthcoming). In spite of challenges, KATARUNGAN continues to advance its vision of a new agrarian reform and food sovereignty, fighting for further land redistribution, the full recovery of the PHP 200 billion coco levy funds, and the genuine empowerment of rural working peoples.

Four Challenges in Contemporary Rural-Agrarian Struggles in the Philippines

A comprehensive review of the land struggles in which KATARUNGAN is involved reveals four challenges that characterize much of contemporary rural-agrarian struggle in the Philippines. In many parts of the archipelago, peasants, farmworkers, fisher peoples, IPs, and rural workers contend with a convergence of renewed land reconcentration and reform reversals, intensifying land disputes over conflicting laws and overlapping claims, escalating capitalist land grabs and violence, and worsening scissors crisis, resulting in the loss of agrarian livelihoods. The following cases handled by KATARUNGAN illustrate the contours and complexities of these land struggles.

1. Reform Reversals and Land Reconcentration

Some of the hard-won redistributive gains under CARP and CARPER are now steadily eroding due to the growing use of legal loopholes, land reconcentration, exploitative arrangements, and the aggressive encroachment of corporate and real estate interests. These developments have undermined the tenure security and progress once promised to Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs).

1.1 Hacienda Luisita

The case of Hacienda Luisita epitomizes the long-standing challenges of agrarian reform in the Philippines. After a long and torturous struggle for land redistribution, Hacienda Luisita now also faces renewed threats of reform reversals and land reconcentration. Originally acquired by the Cojuangco family in 1958 with government loans under the condition of subsequent

land distribution, the hacienda remained undistributed past its 1967 deadline (Joaquin 1983). Despite court orders in the 1980s to transfer the estate to farmworkers, the Cojuangcos used the Stock Distribution Option (SDO) under CARP to deny farmworker beneficiaries actual land ownership in favor of stock shares (Reyes 2018). Widespread discontent culminated in a 2004 strike that ended tragically with the massacre of seven farmworkers (Dynchiu 2010). By 2013, over 4,000 hectares had finally been distributed to thousands of farmworkers in accordance with Supreme Court orders issued in 2011 and 2012. Yet a DAR validation program in 2017 exposed the fragility of the hacienda's historic redistribution. The findings were sobering: only 21 percent of the 5,031 beneficiaries interviewed were still directly cultivating their land. A 2017 research further revealed that the majority of beneficiaries had become ensnared in the *arriendo* system—an illegal and informal practice of pawning, mortgaging, or leasing out agrarian reform lands (Reyes 2018). Lacking access to capital or needing urgent cash for family needs, many ARBs were compelled to loan or sell their land rights, despite this being prohibited under CARP. In these arrangements, *arriendadores* took over cultivation of the land, with original beneficiaries often returning as hired laborers or ceding control entirely if they were unable to repay debts.

1.2 Negros Island

The case of Negros Island, the heartland of sugarcane production since the 19th century, sharply illustrates the complex legacy of agrarian reform. While CARP set out to dismantle old plantation structures, implementation has been turbulent, accompanied by strong landowner resistance. *Hacenderos* have frequently sidestepped reform through tactics like land conversion, legal loopholes, and questionable land transactions. By 2007, provincial government data showed that 41 percent of surveyed ARBs had entered lease, mortgage, or sale agreements, effectively surrendering the control CARP promised (Rutten 2018, 109). Landowners also used the *arriendo* system to retain effective control over awarded lands. In this system, *arriendadores* offer ARBs cash rentals for their land and sometimes wage employment, while mortgage and outright land sales are increasingly common (Rutten 2018). For example, some ARBs in Negros have held land titles since 2015 but have not been installed because the land remains under a 50-year *arriendo* that will only expire in 2037. This arrangement, coupled with the broader political economy of sugarcane, makes it difficult for farmers to shift to other crops or alternative farming models. Despite obtaining assistance and legal remedies, beneficiaries face bureaucratic resistance, as some authorities have reportedly stated that

these arriendo arrangements are “perpetual” (KATARUNGAN 2025c). Despite formal redistribution, many Negros ARBs remain trapped in cycles of debt, precarity, and dependence. Ironically, the fragmentation of land control that accompanied the official redistribution of the haciendas has drawn thousands of cash-strapped, income-insecure agrarian reform beneficiaries into a massive land-lease market. These developing dynamics also facilitated class differentiation: many have lost control of their land, some struggle as small farmers, and only a minority have joined stable cooperatives or become successful individual farmers (Rutten 2018).

1.3 Sariaya, Quezon Province

In Sariaya, Quezon, over 6,000 hectares of agricultural land were redistributed to more than 5,000 farming families, mostly via voluntary offer-to-sell arrangements. Largely completed by 1997, the awarding of CLOAs to peasant families who gained legal ownership and tenure over land they had long cultivated dramatically improved their livelihoods. Sariaya developed into a productive agricultural hub, supplying vegetables and coconuts across Southern Luzon and Metro Manila as peasant households improved agricultural production, increased harvests, and attained greater prosperity for the community. This outcome stands in contrast to other areas nationwide where ARBs remained mired in poverty or were eventually forced to sell their land. However, legal and political reversals gradually undermined these gains. The 1982 Sariaya Zoning Ordinance, which had reclassified certain lands for non-agricultural use even before CARP, became the basis for contesting the legality of redistributing these lands. A 2020 Supreme Court ruling cited the said ordinance to justify excluding these lands from agrarian reform, despite decades of cultivation by the farmers. In 2023, hundreds of CLOAs were canceled, stripping farmers of their long-held land security and exposing them to new threats of dispossession. This rollback was reportedly enabled by pressures from big corporations eyeing eco-tourism, industrial, and business ventures in the area (Mallari 2026). Recent developments, including the rapid consolidation of landholdings, inspections and surveys of coconut farms for potential clearing, new infrastructure proposals, and the mounting threat of displacement, have only deepened the insecurity faced by Sariaya’s farming communities.

2. *Conflicting Laws, Overlapping Land Claims*

As Tan (2004) argued, the fragmented and overlapping legal structure overseeing land tenure in the Philippines has a powerful effect on how landless peasants, indigenous peoples, and other rural working peoples pursue land claims. Landless peasants can assert rights over agricultural land through CARP; indigenous peoples can apply for recognition of their ancestral territories through the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA); and peasants in forestlands can seek to sign CBFM agreements with the DENR. Multiple, often contradictory laws and agencies have continued to produce legal ambiguity and fuel overlapping claims not just between big landowners and capitalists vis-à-vis small land claimants, but also among the latter.

2.1 Busuanga Pasture Reserve, Coron Island

The Busuanga Pasture Reserve (BPR) is a prime example. In February 1975, then-President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. issued Presidential Proclamation 1387, placing 40,000 hectares in Coron Island, Palawan, under the control of the Yulo King Ranch (YKR). This land grab resulted in the forcible displacement of the Tagbanua people (Manapat 2020, 117). The fall of the Marcos dictatorship and the subsequent sequestering of the BPR did not restore the Tagbanua's indigenous territories to their control. Instead, much of the land under the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) fell idle and was later occupied by migrant farmers from areas such as Mindoro and Southern Luzon. In response, Tagbanua organizations such as the Narunotan yang Pagsarasan yang Boses Tagbanuang Coron may Busuanga (NPBTACBU, Council of the Voice of the Tagbanua of Coron and Busuanga) attempted to assert ancestral claims by applying for Certificates of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) over portions of the reserve. However, the NCIP has been slow to validate these claims, while state and private projects in the area have proceeded without meaningful consultation. In 2019, Duterte's Executive Order No. 75 initially appeared to be a beneficial intervention for NPBTACBU members, as it authorized the redistribution of idle public lands to land claimants. Yet, its hasty and inconsistent implementation exacerbated overlapping land claims, fueling poor-on-poor conflict in the BPR and complicating rather than clarifying the Tagbanua's pursuit of restitution (see Mongaya forthcoming). Confronted with these overlapping claims and bureaucratic delays, the NPBTACBU initiated land occupations and intensified advocacy for the formal recognition of their ancestral lands.

2.2 SPLIT Project

The Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) project, jointly implemented by the World Bank (WB) and DAR, has introduced further complications into the landscape of land claims in the Philippines. While earlier land redistribution efforts under CARP, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s, frequently relied on issuing collective Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) to agrarian reform beneficiaries to expedite distribution, SPLIT was conceived to shift toward individual land titling. The project was approved in 2019 with a USD 370 million WB loan from a total budget of USD 473 million, and its implementation is set to conclude by 2027. Its stated objectives encompass strengthening tenure security, expanding farmers' access to credit, and facilitating ARBs' access to support services. SPLIT's parcelization process aims to make land transactions more straightforward and, in essence, enable land market activity, while some technocrats also expect increased revenue from real property taxes on individually titled parcels (Galang 2022). However, research conducted by the Land Rights Research Consortium (LRRC), of which KATARUNGAN is a member, highlighted that parcelization under SPLIT has created new risks and harms for ARBs. The process has disrupted integrated farming systems and cooperative arrangements, weakened farmers' organizations and cooperatives, and undermined the sustainability of coordinated farming activities. Furthermore, the move towards individual titling has caused conflicts over overlapping boundaries, fueling disputes within agrarian communities and opening the door to renewed reconcentration by landlords. Financially vulnerable ARB households are now more susceptible to distress sales and informal leasing of their land titles, amplifying the risk of dispossession and fragmentation within the agrarian sector.

3. Escalating Land Grabs and Violence

Corporate-led land grabbing has intensified rapidly, driven by urban expansion and the capitalist penetration of the countryside. These processes reshape rural and peri-urban landscapes, often at the expense of peasants, IPs, and fishing communities. As investors and real estate companies increasingly target agricultural land for commercial, residential, and industrial projects, the capitalist drive for urban development has rendered it increasingly challenging for farming communities to defend their lands and livelihoods.

3.1 Sumalo, Hermosa, Bataan

In peri-urban areas surrounding Metro Manila, such as Central Luzon, aggressive land banking by large developers is displacing long-settled farming communities. A vivid case is that of the Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Mamamayan ng Barangay Sumalo (SANAMABASU, Association of the United People of Barangay Sumalo), a group of farmers in barangay Sumalo, Hermosa, Bataan. For decades, farmers lived off the land quietly until the textile firm Litton & Co. began asserting a reconstituted land title it had bought in 1979 for just PHP 11,285.54 during the Marcos dictatorship. In 1988, 23 Sumalo farmers received CLOAs under CARP, but Litton & Co. successfully deferred the registration of these CLOAs in exchange for a Voluntary Offer to Sell (VOS), which they later further replaced with a petition for land conversion. The company then transferred its claim to Riverforest Development, which was still led by the Litton heirs. By 2011, guards were deployed and gradually fenced off farmland, killing livestock and blocking residents' access (Pastor 2026). One landmark in this struggle was the 100-kilometer Lakbayan from Sumalo to the national capital (Gil 2020). Despite favorable Supreme Court rulings for land distribution, implementation has been slow and fraught with violence and intimidation. In 2023, syndicated estafa charges were filed against nine SANAMABASU members, including eight women. Some hid with allies for months, while others eventually surrendered to the Department of Justice on International Working Women's Day in 2024. These charges were dismissed in January 2025, but the Sumalo farmers' struggle for land continues (KATARUNGAN 2025a).

3.2 Hacienda Dolores, Pampanga

Similarly, in Hacienda Dolores, Porac, the struggle for land has been met with intense repression. According to Tran (2022), Hacienda Dolores has been eyed by the Ayala Land Inc. for commercial development projects since 2005. Local farmers sought protection of their rights through CARP, but their 761-hectare land was declared exempt from CARP coverage without prior consultation or notice (Focus on the Global South 2015). This controversial exemption was granted by a former DAR regional director on the grounds that the land was supposedly unsuitable for farming, despite Dolores having supported farming communities for nearly two centuries (Tran 2022). The Supreme Court ordered the land distributed, but the implementation has stalled for years. Farmers organized under the Aniban ng Nagkakaisang Mamamayan ng Hacienda Dolores (ANIBAN, Alliance of the United People of Hacienda Dolores) have endured systematic harassment, violent evictions, and criminalization. On January 13, 2014, private security guards shot and

killed 34-year-old ANIBAN Secretary General Arman Padino as they were on the way to their farms (Cervantes and Sapnu 2014). Then, Dolores Barangay Captain Antonio “Ka Tonying” Tolentino, a key leader of ANIBAN, was unjustly detained on fabricated charges on April 16, 2014 for his role in a citizen’s arrest by local farmers of one of the security guards who killed Padino (Tran 2022). Another ANIBAN leader, 57-year-old Menelao Barcia, was also shot dead by motorcycle-riding hitmen on 2 May 2014 (Briola 2014). Ka Tonying has recently been freed, but the luxury development in the area has already been completed, leaving the farmers relegated to its margins.

3.3 Occidental Mindoro

Land frontiers beyond the urban fringes of Greater Metro Manila share similar experiences. For example, on December 14, 2024, Gerriel and Josephine Tadeja, officers of the Federation of Free Farmers and local KATARUNGAN affiliates in Alacaak, Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro, was ambushed by motorcycle-riding gunmen, resulting in their deaths. The Tadeja spouses had been awarded 70 hectares of a 307-hectare estate for redistribution under a DAR decision, but faced grave threats and escalating harassment from the landowner, who sought to undermine the implementation of land reform. These included violent attempts to encroach on the awarded land, the use of armed men and machinery to intimidate and displace farmer-claimants, and surveillance designed to instill fear and insecurity among the community. The killing of the Tadeja is not isolated. For instance, a peasant community in Pitogo, Rizal, Occidental Mindoro, also faces legal cases for forcible entry and for damages arising from asserting access to a contested property that government records had classified as public timberland. The community has been subjected to intimidation, including bounties on peasant leaders, death threats, and demolition threats to community-built infrastructure. The presence of communist-led armed insurgents in the general area has also made life more difficult for land claimants, whose militancy — including its initiation of protests and land occupations — is unjustly linked to the insurgency. These cases tragically underscore how violence and impunity continue to haunt agrarian communities in provincial frontiers (Franco and Carranza 2014).

3.4 Sicogon Island, Iloilo

Coastal grabs have become an increasingly prominent feature of dispossession on rural frontiers, in the context of what has been described as an “emerging coastal squeeze” (Matorres et al. 2026). A vivid example is Sicogon Island in

Iloilo, home to around 1,100 fisherfolk families, where a four-decade-old land conflict between fisherfolk and a local elite family escalated after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. The landowners, in partnership with Ayala Corporation, leveraged the post-typhoon devastation to push forward a long-delayed high-end tourism project, offering residents either a cash payout or relocation to the mainland in exchange for relinquishing their land claims. These market incentives, combined with the urgent need for relief and the use of humanitarian language of creating “safe and secure settlements” for typhoon-affected fisher peoples, forced many fisherfolk to give up their homes and livelihoods (Uson 2017, 25). Notably, the DAR had previously initiated land redistribution in Sicogon, but the process was ultimately sidelined. KATARUNGAN’s grassroots work indicates that this pattern of coastal grabbing is not unique to Sicogon. Across many coastal communities, capitalists use both legal and extralegal tactics to dispossess fisher peoples. Increasingly, such enclosures are justified in the name of climate change adaptation and mitigation, using the language of environmental protection and disaster risk management to facilitate corporate land grabs. This phenomenon has increasingly been referred to as “green grabbing” and often ties in with processes of “disaster capitalism” (Al Jazeera 101 East 2018).

4. Worsening Scissors Crisis and Loss of Agrarian Livelihoods

Neoliberal policies that integrate the Philippines deeper into the global market and withdraw crucial state support for agriculture have resulted in the sector facing worsening impacts of the climate crisis, higher production costs, low farmgate prices for agricultural products, massive agricultural imports, and deepening rural poverty. Agrarian communities are caught in a hostile “scissors crisis” — a term originally used in early 20th-century economic history to describe a structural divergence between the fall of agricultural prices and the rising costs of industrial goods, leading to unsustainable livelihoods for rural producers (Preobrazhensky 2023). Today, Filipino peasants and other rural working people face the same phenomenon: the growing gap between what they must pay to produce and what they earn from the harvest directly translates into the loss of agrarian livelihoods and the deepening of rural precarity. In Nueva Ecija, for example, rice farmers are reeling from skyrocketing fuel and fertilizer prices, such as urea, while farmgate palay prices remain stuck at PHP 15.00–16.00 per kilo. Farmers are operating at a loss and are becoming increasingly dependent on debt. They are often forced to sell immediately after harvest to pay off debts because the National Food

Authority (NFA) fails to intervene effectively. Media reports from April 2026 indicate that farmers in several regions are abandoning their harvests due to soaring fuel costs and crashing farmgate prices, rendering agricultural production unsustainable (Dizon 2026). Farm output also declined in the first quarter of 2026, according to official data, reflecting mounting pressures on agricultural producers (BusinessWorld 2026). These developments point to a general trend affecting agrarian communities across the country that requires deeper investigation and urgent policy attention.

Renewing Agrarian Reform in the Philippines through the Four Rs

CARP achieved notable gains in land redistribution during periods of strong peasant mobilization and effective coalition-building with state reformers in the 1990s. However, these achievements were increasingly undermined as neoliberal agricultural policies and capitalist interests in the countryside led to more aggressive land reform reversals. Rural-agrarian struggles in the Philippines today are shaped by four challenges: reform reversals and land reconcentration; conflicting laws and overlapping land claims; escalating land grabs and violence; and the worsening scissors crisis, with the loss of agrarian livelihoods.

These four challenges are deeply interconnected, each reinforcing and amplifying the others. For instance, in Negros and Hacienda Luisita, the cycle of land reconcentration is driven not only by legal loopholes and arriendo arrangements, but also exacerbated by the scissors crisis, which pushes indebted farmers to pawn or sell their land, making them vulnerable to reconcentration and even violence. In Sariaya, Quezon, the rollback of agrarian reform through conflicting zoning laws has paved the way for corporate encroachment and threats of violence against farmers. Similarly, in Sicogon Island and Hacienda Dolores, the conversion of land for commercial interests is enabled by both weak enforcement of land rights and the deepening economic precarity of peasants and fisherfolk, who are pressured to accept buyouts or face eviction. These interlocking processes show that addressing any one challenge in isolation is insufficient.

These four challenges underscore the inherent limits of redistribution alone. Without sustained state support for beneficiaries' economic viability and ecological renewal, land redistribution is easily undermined or reversed. Meaningful agrarian reform today requires a holistic approach that recognizes and responds to the mutually reinforcing nature of these crises.

1. The Four Rs of Redistribution, Restitution, Recognition, and Regulation

An emerging global coalition of social movements, progressive academics, and advocates supports the idea that 21st-century agrarian reform must go beyond land redistribution alone and be grounded in the comprehensive 4Rs: Redistribution, Recognition, Restitution, and Regulation. Redistributing large estates is essential to rectify deep-seated historical inequalities and dismantle elite control over land, ensuring that landholdings are suited to the needs of landless peasants and other rural working people. At the same time, protecting land access in the Philippines requires recognizing customary tenure systems, the territorial rights of Indigenous communities, and the distinct land rights of women and youth, especially amid growing threats from land commodification and extractive industries. Restitution must address both past and ongoing displacements, whether from land grabbing, forced evictions, or conflict, and provide meaningful reparation for losses suffered. Finally, effective regulation is crucial for setting limits on land accumulation by individuals and corporations, widening access for the landless, and supporting the livelihoods of those whose survival depends on the land (Cartagena Declaration 2026).

The concept of the 4Rs was crystallized during the debates and discussions of the Second International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD+20) and its parallel Social Summit and Academic Conference held in Cartagena, Colombia, in February 2026 (Borras 2026). These spaces brought together a broad spectrum of actors from contemporary agrarian movements, academics, scholar-activists, policymakers, and advocates who collectively reflected on the limits of earlier agrarian reform efforts and the urgent need for a more holistic approach. The 4Rs emerged as a synthesis of these deliberations, which also drew from prior articulations by transnational agrarian movements such as La Via Campesina (La Via Campesina 2026) and the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty (2026), as well as research and advocacy work by NGOs like the Transnational Institute (Borras

and Franco 2018). Through these overlapping processes, the 4Rs gained traction as both a rallying point for movement building and a policy agenda for transformative agrarian reform today (Cartagena Declaration 2026).

The 4Rs respond to the fragmented form of land governance, which has taken shape in the Philippines as a separate set of policies and institutional mechanisms for distinct actors to claim land rights. The absence of an overall land-use policy in the Philippines and the often overlapping jurisdiction of existing laws governing land along sectoral lines ignore the systemic character of many problems confronting various rural working people. Land redistribution for landless peasants in the Busuanga Pasture Reserve, for example, has been made at the expense of ensuring the restitution of dispossessed Tagbanua communities (See Mongaya forthcoming). Meanwhile, efforts to recognize existing land property arrangements without any form of redistribution or restitution only reinforce the property rights, wealth, and power of big landowners and capitalists (Franco and Borras 2021). Any of the other Rs, without regulating capitalist profit motives, makes it hard for reform beneficiaries to attain either economic or ecological sustainability and paves the way for reversals of reforms. As Rojas Herrera (2025) argues, redistribution without restitution, recognition without redistribution, restitution without regulation, and any other such combination have fallen prey to the divide-and-rule schemes of those in power, effectively aggravating poor-on-poor conflicts.

At the same time, renewing agrarian reform through the 4Rs also brings contemporary agrarian movements from the Global South and the Global North closer together. Its framing transcends the classical agrarian question's emphasis on breaking landed monopolies as the basis for national industrialization, underscoring the relevance of agrarian reforms in the peripheries of global capitalism (Mongaya 2025). In a truly internationalist turn, the 4Rs asserts the necessity of addressing not just land grabbing in the Global South but also historical processes of enclosure, settler colonialism, and dispossession that forcibly evicted peasants, Indigenous Peoples, and other rural working peoples in what is now the Global North (La Via Campesina 2026).

Taken together, the 4Rs offer a holistic framework for democratic land control, yet the realization of their transformative potential hinges on the demand for an agroecological transition that secures the ecological sustainability of land use, ensuring that beneficiaries are not only landowners but also capable stewards of the land. Without such a transition, and without the full realization of the 4Rs, food sovereignty, understood as the right of peoples to define their own food systems, remains unattainable.

2. Consolidating Democratic Land Control

The ground-level practice of KATARUNGAN has begun to move in this direction by paying attention not only to land redistribution for landless peasants but also to issues of recognition and restitution for IPs, as well as to coastal grabbing against fisher peoples. KATARUNGAN has also become increasingly attentive to the imperative of securing homelots — not merely farm plots — for ARBs, thereby broadening the conceptualization of land from a mere site of economic production to a vital foundation for social reproduction and community life. Since the pandemic, the movement organization has also adopted food sovereignty as a rallying call and has pushed for initiatives and experiments in agroecological transitions within selected local movement affiliates where democratic control of land has been consolidated. KATARUNGAN has also begun exploring partnerships with urban advocates and labor-based organizations to bridge agrarian communities and urban consumers through a solidarity economy.

Across regions and provinces organized by KATARUNGAN, peasants and other rural working peoples are forming cooperatives to strengthen collective production, access government support services, and reclaim their rights. Some agrarian communities are beginning to experiment with agroecological production, organic farming, and other ecologically sustainable practices despite limited state support and the lingering threat of dispossession. In these areas where democratic land control has been consolidated, the central struggle shifts to encompass not only socio-economic but also ecological sustainability. This phase of the struggle necessarily entails efforts to achieve food sovereignty, including moving away from conventional, synthetic chemical-based agriculture, shifting cultivation by smallholder farms, and building linkages between agrarian communities and urban consumers, or a combination of these (Borras and Franco 2010a, 113-114).



Photo 6. In the last week of January 2026, KATARUNGAN joined small indigenous farmers of the Pamayanang Katutubong Tagbanua ng Decalachao (PKTD) for an agroecology training with knowledge sharing and hands-on practice in Purok 1, Brgy. Decalachao, Coron, Palawan. Photo from KATARUNGAN.

Gaining control over the land does not automatically translate into an agroecological transition. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, with each agrarian community facing distinct ecological, economic, and social realities. Yet these challenges need not prevent contemporary agrarian movements from promoting the idea of food sovereignty and the agroecological transition necessary for its realization. Only in this way can democratic land control be truly consolidated. Following Borras and Franco (2010a), the task of spearheading experiments and initiatives grounded in this vision will eventually confront the challenge of scaling up these scattered, localized initiatives, and of promoting the idea of food sovereignty to a broader range of agrarian communities that have attained relatively secure control over land but are not directly connected to contemporary agrarian movements. Borras and Franco (2010a, 114) further underscore that addressing these challenges necessarily entails engagement with the national government to ensure that the policies and programs for such are carried out on a “society-wide” scale.

KATARUNGAN’s organizing work, currently covering about 30,000 peasants and other rural working people across 18 provinces, does not encompass all rural-agrarian struggles nationwide. However, we believe their experiences are fairly representative of broader trends confronting rural working people, especially in the lowland and foothills. Future research would provide a broader picture if it encompassed other contemporary agrarian movements across ideological divides and lowland and upland landscapes. More work is also needed to deepen our understanding of each of the four challenges we identified in the current conjuncture.

Ultimately, forwarding rural-agrarian struggles today also requires transcending the constraints of being “merely agrarian” and reaching a wider critical mass across the rural-urban divides to bring agrarian reform back onto the public agenda (Borras and Franco 2023). The coming together of different movement organizations under the June 10 Land Rights Committee for a four-day campout protest from 8 to 11 June 2026 at the DAR Central Office is a step in this direction (Mongaya and Pagurayan 2026). Only through a broad-based, multi-sectoral mobilization that unites peasants, Indigenous Peoples, both rural and urban working peoples, consumers, and other sectors around a shared vision of food sovereignty and the 4Rs can agrarian reform be renewed as a living process of climate justice, ecological regeneration, and popular empowerment.

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