

VERDICT OF THE IRRI TRIBUNAL

Dear Friends,

The First Asian Peoples' Tribunal against International Rice Research Institute's (IRRI) held on April 4, 2006 in Quezon City, Philippines found the IRRI GUILTY of its crimes against the farmers and peoples of Asia in its 46 years of existence in Southeast Asia.

The Tribunal was sponsored by the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC) and the Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (PAN AP) and was organized by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and RESIST Agrochem TNCs.

The theme of the tribunal is "End Imperialist Control in Agriculture! Intensify the Struggle for Genuine Agrarian Reform!". It was attended by more than 400 people, mostly from peasants, scientists, academes and professionals coming from Malaysia, Pakistan and Philippines.

The IRRI through the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations since its beginning on April 4, 1960 at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna has restructured Asian farmers' sound traditional agricultural practices to become dependent and subjugated to chemical inputs that are products of TNC-controlled agri-business. IRRI's chemical dependent seeds and intensive capital input high yielding varieties (HYVs) have eroded continuously the traditional rice varieties (TRVs) of rice farmers, destroyed systematically the ecological system of agricultural lands, and put to great danger the life and health of farmers and peoples here and throughout Asia and the whole world.

Moreover, locally, the IRRI has been with impunity wantonly violating the rights of workers and peasants. IRRI has landgrabbed too some two hundred twenty two (222) hectares of farmers' land in Laguna, Philippines.

This is an Indictment brought by the Asian Peasants and Peoples – or the peasants, farmers, fisher folk, agricultural workers, peasant women, rural youth, indigenous peoples of Asia-- in solidarity with other oppressed and exploited peoples of the world -- as Plaintiffs, through the Panel of People's Prosecutors.

In solidarity,

APC Secretariat

**ASIAN PEOPLES' TRIBUNAL
DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY
PHILIPPINES**

ASIAN PEASANT COALITION (APC),
Complainant,

**FOR: VIOLATION OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS' RIGHTS, LANDGRABBING,
CHEMICAL AND PESTICIDE POISONING, INTRODUCTION OF HYV AND GE
SEEDS TO FACILITATE IMPERIALIST PLUNDER AND CONTROL OF SEEDS,
PESTICIDES, TECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE.**

-versus-

**INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IRRI, GEORGE W. BUSH AS
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, FORD AND ROCKEFELLER
FOUNDATIONS, GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO AS PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, ET AL.**

Defendants.

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V E R D I C T

Prefatory

The International Rice Research Institute's (IRRI) 46 years of existence merely serves as an instrument of imperialist plunder and control in seeds, pesticides, technology and agriculture throughout the world.

The IRRI through the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations beginning on April 4, 1960 at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna has restructured Asian farmers' sound traditional agricultural practices to become dependent and subjugated to chemical inputs that are products of TNC-controlled agri-business. IRRI's chemical dependent seeds and intensive capital input high yielding varieties (HYVs) have eroded continuously the traditional rice varieties (TRVs) of rice farmers, destroyed systematically the ecological system of agricultural lands, and put to great danger the life and health of farmers and peoples here and throughout Asia and the whole world.

Moreover, locally, the IRRI has been with impunity wantonly violating the rights of workers and peasants. IRRI has landgrabbed too some two hundred twenty two (222) hectares of farmers' land in Laguna, Philippines.

Parties

This is an Indictment brought by the Asian Peasants and Peoples – or the peasants, farmers, fisher folk, agricultural workers, peasant women, indigenous peoples of Asia-- in solidarity with other oppressed and exploited peoples of the world -- as Plaintiffs, through the Panel of People’s Prosecutors.

This Indictment is against INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IRRI), GEORGE W. BUSH AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, FORD AND ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATIONS, GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES, ET AL, who are acting, confederating, collaborating, cooperating or working with one another, and who participated or cooperated in the commission of the offenses herein described, or by their tolerance or inaction, despite knowledge thereof, allowed the commission thereof, hereinafter referred to as the “Defendants”.

Charges and Violations

The Defendants are hereby charged by the Asian Peasants and Peoples of widespread and systematic VIOLATION OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS’ RIGHTS, LANDGRABBING, CHEMICAL AND PESTICIDE POISONING, INTRODUCTION OF HYV AND GE SEEDS TO FACILITATE IMPERIALIST PLUNDER AND CONTROL OF SEEDS, PESTICIDES, TECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE.

Allegations

The above-named defendants, conspiring and mutually confederating with one another committed the above-mentioned charges as follows:

1. LANDGRABBING

IRRI is also built on hectares of land illegally and immorally taken away from the farmers. In 1974, by virtue of Presidential Decrees (PD) 457 and 1046-A issued by late dictator Ferdinand Marcos under martial law, landowners and tenant-tillers were forced to sell their lands for less than their worth. To prevent unrest, IRRI duped the farmers by hiring most of the displaced tenant-tillers as field workers and promising them “security of tenure” that would extend to their children. These are in reality empty promises that are being breached wantonly by IRRI.

In actuality, by virtue of these outdated and immoral laws including PD 1620, coupled with the Philippine government’s unabashed coddling of IRRI, this imperialist institution has not only able to take away from the farmers some two hundred twenty two (222) hectares of farmlands but likewise relegated the poor farmers to a position of hapless tenants and farm workers that would have been quickly disposed of by IRRI after serving their productive years therein. Worst, IRRI is getting away from all liabilities because of stupid local laws that protect IRRI and grant this imperialist institution immunity from suit in the Philippines.

In the testimony given by Danilo Ramos which was directly collaborated by the statements of Aurelio Mercado, respondents IRRI, the government of the Republic of the Philippines, and the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, are proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt of land grabbing as consequence of forcible acquisition of lands by virtue of PD 457 and PD 1046-A.

2. VIOLATION OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS' RIGHTS

Using an immoral and unconstitutional Marcosian Decree (Presidential Decree 1620), IRRI has and continuously been subverting the rights of the Filipino workers by conducting union busting activities like massive harassment of unionist and their leaders, implementation of mass lay-off and dubious retrenchment program. Hundreds of Filipino workers were illegally and arbitrarily terminated.

Worse, some of these workers who were arbitrarily severed from work, were also suffering from work related illnesses or those directly brought about by chronic exposure to toxic chemicals and pesticides. A number of them have never recovered and died already of these work related illnesses such as cancer, liver ailments, Parkinson's disease, etc. They died without receiving anything by way of compensation and or benefits from their work or devotion of their productive years with IRRI.

These workers were subjected to IRRI's anti-worker policies and practices. IRRI has shrewdly used PD No. 1620 to give itself "immunity from civil and legal cases." Under PD No. 1620, the rights of IRRI workers and employees have been even more exploited, violated and repressed. What made things more miserable, the Philippine Supreme Court and the Department of Labor have callously sided with IRRI by unreasonably upholding this stupid and unwarranted immunity.

To date, more than 500 Filipino workers have already been forcibly retrenched by IRRI through its Staff Adjustment Program that started in 1990. The workers that objected to and fought this scheme were the first victims of this so-called "program". Many of them were members of the Brotherhood of IRRI Workers Support Services Group (BISSIG). Cases were filed at the Department of Labor (DOLE) but they were eventually dismissed because of PD 1620.

Based on given testimony as clearly established in the visual presentation, oral arguments and statements pronounced, and on documents at hands, IRRI is guilty of violation of workers and peasants rights as provided for in Section 3, Article XIII; Section 11, Article II; and Section 18, Article II of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.

PD 1620, which is constitutionally defective law, cannot be the basis for immunity since IRRI has no standing in international law and therefore cannot enjoy immunity from suit based on international law.

3. CHEMICAL AND PESTICIDE POISONING

The life and health of Filipino workers and employees in IRRI were shamelessly forsaken in the name of greed and profits. Farmers have been enormously exposed to chemicals and pesticide and become victims of toxic chemicals and pesticides being used in the experimental fields.

Because of this, eight IRRI workers have already died of dreaded diseases as consequence of exposure to chemicals and pesticide during their employment with IRRI. These hapless field workers died without seeing the dawn of social justice in the name of rice research.

The IRRI management did not even bother to look into these cases of rampant death and illnesses directly resulting from use of chemicals and pesticides. On the contrary, IRRI has even tried to whitewash the truth, despite the fact that several television stations have already uncovered and featured the real story behind IRRI and this IRRI-work related chemical and pesticide poisoning.

Outside IRRI, the effects of chemical and pesticide being applied to seeds and crops are equally being experienced by farmers who were programmed to use these toxic chemicals and pesticides into the IRRI designed seeds and crops. In turn the consuming public would have eaten these crops produced out of these toxics and poisons. This is a local and global scenario directly attributed to this IRRI program of toxics and poisons.

The studies on Health Effects of Pesticides on Former IRRI Workers in 2000 fervently manifested the ill-effect of experiments conducted by IRRI. The oral testimony of Dr. Romeo Quijano further reveal the adverse effect of chemicals and pesticides on health and life of IRRI workers. Therefore, IRRI is guilty of chemical and pesticide poisoning.

4. GREEN REVOLUTION AND GENE REVOLUTION TOWARDS CONTINUING IMPERIALIST PLUNDER AND CONTROL OF SEEDS, PESTICIDES, TECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE ALL OVER THE WORLD

Corollary to this, in 1966, IRRI released its IR8 rice seed - it spread in Asia so fast and it was nicknamed “miracle rice.” Unfortunately, the IR8 IRRI’s high-yielding varieties (HYVs) required vast amounts of pesticides and fertilizers, jacking up the cost of production and destroying the environment. The native snails, frogs and crabs being used by farmers and their families as naturally abundant free viands disappeared from the rice fields.

The Green Revolution ended harshly and hazardously. It destroyed farm lands and crops. It left millions of farmers hungry and landless. It poisoned our foods, destroyed biodiversity and threatened food security, our health and the environment.

IRRI crimes do not stop there. It is continuous. IRRI is now involved in the second generation of transgenic crops or genetically engineered seeds (GE seeds). Or what is now called “Gene” Revolution and we are again being made to believe that it will end hunger. But the GE being driven by agrochemical TNCs and strongly supported by the US government is a global drive to open new markets, gain dominance and control over the world’s food, seeds and agriculture.

Worst, the World Trade Organization (WTO)'s Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) was even more designed to promote biotechnology, TNCs corporate farming and industrial agriculture. The Gene Giants have tactically used the WTO to open up restricted markets and GE played a major role in this WTO strategy.

These were done through funding of intensive agricultural biotechnology research and development no other than by seed companies and agro-corporations. Globally, western countries have infused some US\$6 billion annually to aid research and development, over US\$7.5 billion a year is spent on in-house biotechnology programs.

The seed – which contains all the hard work of farmers and the culture instilled on it brought about by centuries of local farming tradition – is being manipulated to serve the interest of these TNCs. Right now, the Philippine government is also raging high profile propaganda moves for people to accept its thrust for biotechnology in rice.

The government, through the IRRI and its local counterpart Philippine Rice Research Institute (PHILRICE) are trying the people to accept introduction of transgenic rice such as the hybrid rice and the BB (Bacterial Blight) rice.

The Philippine government - thru the help of agrochemical TNCs-funded institutions and research bodies such as the IRRI, the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications or ISAAA, also based in Laguna (whose mandate is the transfer and delivery of biotechnology products in developing countries), the World Bank base and funded Consultative Groups on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), among others – continue to conduct research and development and science and technology programs aimed under the framework of the “free market” and globalization.

Moreover, the national sovereignty of the Philippines is blatantly and shamelessly being violated by IRRI. With the help of imperialist puppet government like the Arroyo Government IRRI continuously plunders the genetic resources and patrimony of various countries particularly in Asia.

Likewise, IRRI would definitely benefit on the Charter Change being pushed by the Arroyo government that will allow 100% foreign ownership of land in the Philippines, making IRRI stay in the country for ever.

The oral testimony of Dr. Shahid Zia further reveal that Basmati rice in India and Pakistan was patented by IRRI including the Jazmine rice in Thailand and each government found it difficult to challenge the patenting because of the TRIPS in WTO.

In another testimony of Sarojeni Rengam, she testified that IRRI's research agenda is for profit and working with the grassroots will truly determine what kind of research and technology should be done among the farmers in Asia.

Therefore, the Philippine government of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, Ford and Rockefeller foundations, US President George W. Bush, and IRRI are guilty of plunder, control of seeds and agriculture as clearly manifested by the testimonies.

Evidence

These general and specific allegations shall be substantiated and proven before the Asian Peoples' Tribunal through testimonies of victims, material witnesses, and their relatives and documentary and object evidence including videos, PowerPoint presentations, publications, fact sheets, affidavits, fact-finding mission reports, judicial records; and the reports and/or studies of the organizations who are participating in the Asian Peoples' Tribunal.

The peasants and the People in general will establish that the Defendants, despite their knowledge of the atrocities and their corresponding obligation under the Constitution and international laws of their responsibility to protect and observe the rights of the peasantry, the farmers, the farmworkers, and the peoples, not only failed to prevent the commission of such crimes but on the contrary committed, tolerated, abetted and encouraged the same.

Call to Action

The Asian People and the peasantry, after establishing the guilt of the defendants in the crimes charged, respectfully recommend to the Asian People's Tribunal the following penalties, sanctions and measures: That –

1. The IRRI be abolished and the imperialist institutions behind it be banned from operating in the Philippines and elsewhere;
2. The local laws upholding and protecting IRRI, especially P.D. 1620 be repealed and or scrapped;
3. The government of the Republic of the Philippines be made to answer also for its complicity to these IRRI crimes on the local peasants, workers and people, and be pressed to decisively take steps that will abolish IRRI and halt IRRI atrocities;
4. The findings of this Tribunal be invoked among solidarity groups and individuals locally, regionally, and in the international community to support the Asian peasants and rural peoples' struggle;
5. The Defendants be made to pay compensation and indemnification for the victims' rehabilitation, restitute their material and moral damages, and issue a sincere public apology to the people as well as to the other oppressed and exploited peoples;
6. Local and international pressure be exerted on IRRI and the United States of America to desist from these criminal acts, imperialist plunder and control of seeds, biotechnology, land and agriculture, particularly of the Asian Countries;

7. The Defendants be further charged or complaints be filed with the United Nations and its pertinent committees and Special Rapporteurs, the International Criminal Court (ICC) under the Rome Statute, the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC), the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC);

8. The Tribunal to further demand the creation of a legitimate and independent body to try crimes committed in furtherance of the immoral and illegal IRRI programs here and in other Asian Countries;

9. The Government of the defendant United States of America be admonished and pressed to renounce and stop its other imperialist policies and actions; and

10. The concerned Defendants other than IRRI, having been notified and given an opportunity to be heard and after a rendition of a Guilty Verdict by a College of Jurors to be constituted under the authority and supervision of a Presidium of Judges, be forcibly ousted or overthrown from positions of power and perpetually and absolutely barred from holding any public office;

OTHER RELIEFS, as may be deemed proper under the premises, are likewise sought and prayed for

University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. April 4, 2006

PANEL OF PEOPLES' PROSECUTORS:

Dr. AZRA SAYEED
Pakistan

Dr. GIOVANNI TAPANG
Philippines