

Action Network Human Rights- Philippines

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Disclaimer: The news articles available in this review are only collated from local newspapers. They were not written by the Action Network Human Rights- Philippines.

The Action Network Human Rights – Philippines advocates the sustainable improvement of the human rights situation in the Philippines. Members are: Amnesty International, Bread for the World – Church Development Service, Misereor, Missio Munich, philippinenbüro e.V., the International Peace Observers Network (IPON) and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM).

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HEADLINES & POLITICS

InterAksyon.com, 13.06.2014

House to probe 'Tagum Death Squad'

By Lira Dalangin-Fernandez

MANILA, Philippines -- The House of Representatives will investigate the reported existence of a "death squad" allegedly created and supported by authorities in Tagum City, Davao del Norte that a human rights watchdog said has been responsible for dozens of extrajudicial killings.

House Resolution No. 1222 filed by Bayan Muna party-list Representatives Carlos Zarate and Neri Colmenares asked the committee on human rights to look into the operations of the so-called "Tagum Death Squad" "in order to craft appropriate legislative measures that put to end extrajudicial killings and restore law and order." [...]

Human Rights Watch, which exposed the death squad in a detailed report, welcomed the initiative.

"The congressional resolution is a welcome change from the willingness of successive Philippine governments to turn a blind eye to such brutality," Phelim Kine, HRW's deputy director for Asia, said.

The HRW report, "One Shot to the Head: Death Squad Killings in Tagum City, Philippines," claimed the unit was "organized, equipped and financed" by former Tagum City Mayor Rey "Chiong" Uy and elements of the local police and municipal government, and was responsible for 300 murders from 2007 to 2013.

Uy has denied the accusation.

In fact, said HRW, members of the death squad, which the watchdog said was patterned after a similar one in Davao City, were officially employed as members of Tagum's Civil Security Unit.

While the death squad mostly targeted petty criminals, suspected drug dealers, and street children, whom Uy referred to as "weeds" of society, its members continued to operate even after Uy stepped down as mayor last year, at times embarking on "freelance" work as hired guns. Among its victims was Tagum broadcaster Rogelio "Tata" Butalid, who was murdered last December.

"The impunity by which the TDS commit these murders show the utter disregard of government officials in the justice system," the Bayan Muna resolution said. [...]

Zarate and Colmenares said there would be "no need to create a death squad if the local police force do its job properly, that is, to keep the peace, arrest and prosecute the criminals and bring them to the bar of justice." [...]

The lawmakers said it was also disturbing that among the victims of the killings were children.

HRW has criticized the Aquino administration for failing to act on the killings. It urged the President direct the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct an investigation on the reported incidents. [...]

InterAksyon.com, 15.06.2014

3 indigenous people testify in CA vs Jalaur dam construction in Iloilo

MANILA -- Three indigenous people have testified before the Court of Appeals (CA) in connection with the case filed against the construction of the Jalaur Mega Dam in the province of Iloilo.

The three indigenous people come from the town of Calinog, Iloilo province, who are against the construction of the dam.

The case involves the petition for writ of kalikasan filed by former Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco, Jr. against the construction of the Jalaur Multi-Purpose Project Phase 2 (JRMP 2).

During the hearing, the three witnesses testified that they encountered many incidents of landslide in their area due to dynamite explosion, deep excavation, use of bulldozer and backhoes, which all contributed to the denudation of their forest.

The three witnesses also presented as evidence a letter signed by Calinog, Iloilo Mayor Alex Centena.

In the letter, they were summoned by the mayor to personally appear before him on June 11, 2014 to stop them from testifying in the trial of the case.

The three witnesses also testified that the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) also made them sign a "Special Power of Attorney" for NIA Director Gerardo Corsiga.

However, they noted that the document is written in English which they could not understand; many of them cannot read even in their own dialect.

Under the JRMP 2, the irrigation system in Iloilo province will be expanded to irrigate more than 31,000 hectares of farmlands, increase power supply through the construction of a 6.6-

Iloilo dam project finally endorsed

By Lydia C. Pendon

THE Iloilo City Council finally endorsed the National Irrigation Administration's (NIA) Jalaur River Multi-purpose Project Stage 2 (JRMP II).

NIA manager Gerardo Corsiga earlier sent a request for support letter saying JRMP II is envisioned to provide year round irrigation water to 23 towns and 2 cities in Iloilo. City Councilor RLeone Gerochi of the Committee on Environmental Protection said the project costs some P11.2 billion and is considered as the biggest dam outside of Luzon.

Gerochi said the dam is beneficial to Iloilo City due to its bulk water and energy supply components. [...]

The project is expected to generate a total of 9,500 additional hectares for irrigation services and rehabilitate 22,000 hectares of existing service areas.

Gerochi is hoping the endorsement of Iloilo City will start the immediate implementation of JRMP II.

Sun.Star.com, 24.06.2014

megawatt hydroelectric power plant, enhance supply of potable water, and provide jobs to 17,000 workers.

However, Syjuco said, about 17,000 indigenous people will be left homeless if the project pushes through.

Syjuco termed the project as a "killer dam" because based on the study of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), the area near the Jalaur River is prone to flooding and landslide and that there is also an active "fault line" there.

The respondents in the case are the NIA, Department of Agriculture (DA), National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and Senate President Franklin Drilon, who are the proponents of the said project.

ManilaStandardToday.com, 17.06.2014

UN sets probe on PH killings

By Christine F. Herrera

FOR the first time, the United Nations will send a delegation of

special rapporteurs to the Philippines to conduct independent

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probes on extrajudicial killings, escalating human rights violations, government neglect, forced evictions and extreme poverty. The special rapporteurs will also look specifically into the government's slow response to issues raised by survivors of super typhoon Yolanda, seven months after the killer typhoon flattened Eastern Visayas, said Karapatan secretary general Cristina Palabay.

Palabay was among those that represented the Philippine human rights delegation belonging to the Ecumenical Voice for Peace and Human Rights (EcuVoice) in the 26th United Nations Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva, Switzerland.

"In the first quarter of 2014, human rights group Karapatan recorded 21 victims of extrajudicial killings and 23 victims of frustrated killings under the... Aquino administration," Palabay told the UN council, which included Philip Alston, newly appointed UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

Alston expressed keen interest in looking into the new allegations after he learned that the Aquino administration had done nothing to implement his recommendations, several years after he came out with an official report, Palabay said.

In 2007, Alston, who was then the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, came to the Philippines to investigate the cases of extrajudicial killings under the Arroyo administration. [...]

Among the rapporteurs who will be coming to investigate are Chaloka Beyani and Gabriela Knaul, Palabay said.

Palabay said Beyani, UN special rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, is slated to conduct his official

visit this year.

Knaul has yet to secure an invitation from the Philippine government following her request to visit the Philippines, she added. [...]

During the UN conference, the EcuVoice delegation enjoined the independent experts to look into reports of forced evacuations due to military operations, forced evictions, the continuing displacement of typhoon Yolanda victims, and the attacks against human rights lawyers in the Philippines.

Knaul was to look into the independence of judges and lawyers and the attacks against them.

Lawyer Edre Olalia, secretary general of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL), provided updates for Knaul on the escalating tactics employed to jeopardize, not just the independence of lawyers and judges, but their very lives and personal security, particularly human rights lawyers.

He pointed out the continuing killings of lawyers and judges as well as various attacks like labeling, surveillance, hacking of phones and email, and filing of nuisance charges against rights lawyers.

The EcuVoice delegates also brought the issue of women detainees by highlighting the case of political prisoner Andrea Rosal, who was seven months pregnant when she was arrested and detained in March on the basis of dubious charges. [...]

EcuVoice asked the UN body to look into the case of Rosal for multiple violations of the 1955 UN Standard Minimum Rules on the Treatment of Prisoners and the 2010 UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders. [...]

Rappler.com, 19.06.2014

Philippines seeks speedy UN ruling on China sea dispute

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippines said Thursday, June 19, it would ask a UN tribunal to expedite its appeal to declare China's expansive claims to the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) invalid, as tensions over the contested waters worsen.

A formal request will be filed seeking a resolution on the case within the year or early 2015, foreign department spokesman Charles Jose said.

"We are consulting our legal team to present a request to the tribunal if it can hasten its process earlier, rather than later," Jose told Agence France-Presse. [...]

Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario separately said a speedier ruling was necessary "because the situation is getting worse by the day in the South China Sea".

China claims most of the South China Sea, including waters near the shores of its neighbors, which has led to escalating territorial disputes.

"The only mechanism that's out there right now ... is arbitration," del Rosario was quoted in local press reports as saying.

Alyansa Tigil Mina – Press Release, 27.06.2014

Cagayan rejoices mass black-sand mining suspension

The towns of Apari, Buguey and Lal-lo, Cagayan are celebrating after Mines and Geosciences Bureau National (MGB) office suspended the Minerals Processing and Sharing Agreement (MPSA) of mining companies which had been extracting black sand minerals in the area.

Suspension orders to Huaxia Resources Corp., Hao Ren International Mining Group Corp., Feiron Steel Inc., Global Express Mining and Dev't Corp., Nova International Cagayan KR Corp. and San You Philippines Mining Trade Ltd., were issued last April 28 and are still in effect as of to date.

"God is Good. After so many years of fighting, justice has been finally served." Said Rosbin Martin, leader of Alliance for Buguey Committed for Development Association (ALBUCODA), one of the people's organizations (PO) that

"So we hope to be able to get the arbitration in place, that will be the goal line for all of us," del Rosario said.

"Hopefully since China is not participating perhaps we can get a quicker resolution from the tribunal," said del Rosario.

Manila lodged an appeal in March with the United Nations tribunal to rule the claims illegal, but China has resolutely refused to participate in the proceedings.

Del Rosario has said he backs a US proposal for a fresh regional dialogue for a freeze on actions that could provoke tensions in the South China Sea amid fears that Beijing has increasingly become aggressive in staking its claims.

In recent months, the Philippines filed protests after it monitored reclamations in a number of outcrops in the sea region that are within its exclusive economic zone but are occupied by China. [...]

Apart from the Philippines, China also has overlapping South China Sea claims with Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam, as well as with rival Taiwan.

spearheaded the fight against mining in Buguey, Cagayan.

Martin has been fighting the mining operations in the area since 2008 with other POs [...].

She recounted the event that led to their victory that was in an Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) convention in Ortigas last March 25, 2014.

With the help of national anti-mining group Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM), representatives of local POs from Cagayan, including Martin got a chance to personally talk to MGB national director Leo Jasareno and exposed the illegal mining operations in Buguey, Lal-lo and Apari.

"We showed Dir. Jasareno photos of mining operations that were happening in our area and at first he couldn't believe it because as far as MGB was concerned, they already ordered



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these mining companies to stop dredging our coastal areas and river banks." Martin recounted.

As a result of ATM and the POs' talk with Jasareno, MGB made a site visit in Cagayan on April 8 which resulted to the issuance of the mining companies' MPSAs suspension.

"MGB representatives saw with their own eyes the continuous mining operations in our respective areas. They saw the adverse effects black -sand mining was doing to our environment." Said Martin.

According to POs, black sand mining in Cagayan affected at least 53,684 hectares of coastal lands and foreshore areas. It also caused erosion of northern coastline and the riverbanks of

InterAksyon.com, 28.06.2014

EU to PH: enforce law vs torture, punish culprits, stop impunity

By Pots de Leon

MANILA - The Philippine government may have chalked up gains in the implementation of the anti-torture law in the country, but the European Union's top representative in the country says a glaring gap in its efforts lies in the fact that many of those responsible for torture cases remain unaccountable.

Speaking at a forum this week, EU ambassador Guy Ledoux said that while he recognized some positive work done by the Aquino administration, "much more needs to be done" to fully enforce the Anti-Torture Law. [...]

He pointed to a recent horrible example of torture in the Philippines that involved police authorities: the so-called "wheel of torture" game at a Philippine National Police (PNP) detention facility in Binan, Laguna, where detainees are allegedly tortured by authorities. [...]

Stop impunity; torture a tragedy

He said perpetrators of torture must be brought to justice to end the culture of impunity and to encourage stakeholders to heightened their efforts to stop the practice. [...]

Meanwhile, he cited efforts of the Commission of Human Rights and civil-society organizations in monitoring the torture cases and in addressing the legal and medical concerns of torture victims.

Still, while something is being done directly to address human rights issues at the grassroot level, it is also important to strategically engage national institutions to prevent the rising incidents of torture in the country, said Ledoux.

The EU together with other stakeholders, like the Medical Action Group, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Philippine National Police, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and other non-government organization agreed to collaborate to 1) increase access to civil and criminal justice system; 2) make the criminal justice system more efficient and effective; and to strengthen the tools to measure the justice

Rappler.com, 30.06.2014

Agrarian reform deadline: 78,000 hectares not yet covered

By Pia Ranada

MANILA - On the 3rd deadline to complete the distribution of lands to farmers, the Philippine government has yet to put more than 78,300 hectares of land under the agrarian reform program, according to the latest government data.

These landholdings still lack Notices of Coverage (NOCs), the documents that jumpstart the process of land distribution and officially puts parcels of land under the government's agrarian reform program.

Monday, June 30, was the last day the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) could issue NOCs, based on the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) law.

The accomplishment rate as of June 30 was still being tabulated by the DAR and would only be available on July 2, DAR Under-

Cagayan River.

Black-sand mining in the area had been also blamed for the depletion of fisheries, worsened flooding in coastal and riverside communities, and salt water and chemical intrusion into the freshwater that caused shrinking of rice fields which resulted to huge drops in harvest.

The suspension orders according to Martin "give the people of Cagayan a chance to live in a safe and sustainable environment." She also said that "the victory of Cagayan is an eye opener to mining-affected communities, that nothing is impossible with an empowered and unified people." [...]

system's performance and the mechanisms for its regular "external" assessment.

The EU and other stakeholders plan to set up information centers in every local government unit to empower people to seek legal remedy; to conduct training for justice providers and law enforcers for more efficient services to people; and monitor cases of torture, among others.

The EU has provided an additional grant of EUR10-million or P600 million to support the Philippine government effort to achieve the aim of making justice accessible for all Filipinos.

"Like its precursor, the new EU-Philippines Justice Support Programme or EPJUST 2 has a special emphasis on addressing the issue of impunity in extra-judicial killings and other worst human rights violations," Ledoux explained.

EU poured in P360M for human rights campaigns

Since 2006, the EU has provided more than €6 million (P360 million) to support civil society's efforts to address human rights issues in the Philippines, notably projects by Medical Action Group and Task Force Detainees.

Through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) facility, Filipino human rights defenders were provided direct assistance such as legal representation, psychological counselling, material and sanctuary support.

"Among them are 137 human rights defenders under our Defending the Defenders Project with a church group," he said.

[...] On Thursday, the EU and civil society organizations renewed their commitment in a forum to end cruelty during the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

The forum meant to yield concrete solutions to implementing substantially the Anti-Torture Act of 2009. The findings discussed were based on a report by the United Against Torture Coalition, a network of civil society organizations. [...]

secretary for Legal Affairs Anthony Parungao told Rappler. [...]

'CARPER lives'

Lawmakers and executive officials say agrarian reform [does not end with the June 30 deadline](#).

"The implementation of CARP as amended will continue after June 30, 2014. CARP lives," said Representative Teddy Baguilat, chairman of the House committee on agrarian reform.

He and other government officials stress that only the power of DAR to issue NOCs ends on June 30.

But there are movements to amend CARPER in such a way that allows the DAR to put landholdings under NOCs even after June 30, 2014. The amendment extends this ability of DAR for another two years - until June 30, 2016.

President Benigno Aquino III [certified as urgent](#) bills in the



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House and the Senate that would make such an amendment. [...]

Facing the landlords

Despite [calls for DAR to issue all pending NOCs by June 30, 2014](#), Parungao admitted they were unable to live up to such a demand. [...]

The biggest cause of delay, he said, were the certification of the Land Registration Authority (LRA) of 1,200 land titles in Negros Occidental, the loss of documents in Leyte due to Typhoon Yolanda (international name Haiyan), and the incomplete database of land which should be put under CARP. [...]

There are more than 500,000 hectares yet to be awarded to farmers in the form of Certificates of Land Ownership Awards (CLOAs). [...]

But when the amendment is passed, a bigger challenge awaits DAR, said CARPER law co-author, Akbayan Representative Walden Bello.

By DAR Secretary Virgilio delos Reyes' admission, a bulk of the land still awaiting distribution, around 450,000, is private land. [...]

New 'revolutionary' DAR chief needed

CALAMITIES & CLIMATE CHANGE

Inquirer Visayas, 02.06.2014

P65-B rehab plans OKd for 'Yolanda'-hit areas

By Carmel Loise Matus

CEBU CITY – The Office of the Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery has approved P65.2 billion in rehabilitation plans for areas devastated by Super Typhoon "Yolanda" in Tacloban City and Samar, northern Cebu and Leyte provinces.

But typhoon survivors living in tents, particularly in Tacloban [...] will have to wait for at least six [...] months before they can be relocated to their permanent homes.

National Housing Authority (NHA) general manager Chito Cruz said the agency was targeting about 6,000 to 7,000 permanent housing units in Tacloban by year-end, about half of the total target of 14,000.

In the meantime, those in tents will be moved within the month to nipa houses as their "transitional houses" • while waiting for the NHA to finish constructing the permanent houses, said Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman. [...]

Soliman admitted that building the transitional houses would mean double in expenses for the government, especially because the construction of permanent houses is on the way.

"But the welfare of the people cannot be compromised because [...] we are putting the people in a dangerous situation," • she said in a text message to the Inquirer. [...]

Presidential Assistant for Rehabilitation and Recovery Panfilo Lacson, Soliman, Cruz and other Cabinet secretaries were in Cebu City on Friday afternoon for the presentation of the rehabilitation plans for Cebu, Leyte, Tacloban and Samar [...].

[...] The budget breakdown is as follows: P25 billion for Tacloban City, P22 billion for Leyte, P6 billion for Samar and P12.2 billion for northern Cebu.

"We did a bottoms-up approach. We encouraged local government executives to formulate and craft their own rehabilitation plans," • Lacson said in a news conference after the meeting. He said they were still waiting for the plans of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Biliran, Negros Occidental and Palawan provinces.

Manilastandardtoday.com, 15.06.2014

'Aid misused'

By Maricel Cruz

Several lawmakers led by members of the House Independent

[...] "The last 5 years have been 5 years wasted by a lumbering bureaucracy headed by an uninspiring, timid secretary for agrarian reform," said Bello.

He [Bello] blamed the Delos Reyes for always hiding behind the "excuse" of technical delays when the real obstacle to the fulfillment of CARPER is landlord resistance, an obstacle the DAR chief has no political will to overcome. [...]

"Under Delos Reyes, the DAR has failed to accomplish even 70% of its targets annually," he [Danny Carranza, secretary-general of Katarungan (Kilusan Para Sa Repormang Agraryo at Katarungang Panlipunan)] said.

If the CARPER extension is granted, the DAR aims to have distributed 694,181 hectares to more than 400,000 farmer-beneficiaries by June 2016.

This is not the first time that agrarian reform deadlines have not been met. CARPER is itself an extension of an extension of past unsuccessful agrarian reform programs.

The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) was signed into law in 1988 during the presidency of Corazon Aquino and was supposed to be completed in 1998. [...]

Declaration' on disaster- readiness

MANILA, Philippines - A new international disaster risk reduction and management framework called the "Tacloban Declaration" will be launched during an international conference to be held in Manila from June 4 to 6.

The forum, called the [Asia-Europe Meeting \(ASEM\) Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management](#), was initiated by President Benigno Aquino III and announced in the previous ASEM Summit in 2012.

The "Tacloban Declaration" will detail new policies and principles for dealing with and preparing for calamities. It seeks to take the place of the decade-old Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) which ASEM adopted as a standard approach to DRRM. The HFA is set to end in 2015.

New strategies

Delegates at the conference will discuss how to apply new technology and innovations into disaster risk reduction policies. How to strengthen the state and other stakeholders in dealing with calamities is another topic in the agenda. The forum will explore ways to improve the international response to disasters through coordination and specialization. There will also be discussion on rehabilitation disaster-struck communities and building back better.

High-ranking officials from international agencies, world leaders and heads of state are expected to grace the ASEM forum.

[...] Around 150 national and local government officials, scientists, business leaders, non-governmental organizations and members of international organizations from 36 countries in Asia and Europe are expected to attend.

Ramler.com. 02.06.2014

Abad said P65.2 billion would be taken from the [budgets](#) for recovery and reconstruction under the General Appropriations Act of 2014. He said they were expecting the total rehabilitation cost for Yolanda-devastated areas to reach at least P105 billion.

[...] To monitor the spending, Abad said the Department of Budget and Management had opened a portal on their website where the public can check the progress of the rehabilitation projects and how the funds are used.

Cruz, however, admitted that their main obstacle was acquiring the lots for resettlement sites because they had to clear it first with the Environmental Management Bureau and the Department of Science and [Technology](#) to ensure that these were located in safe areas. [...]

Minority Bloc are pressing for a congressional probe of the

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mishandling of donations and food aid intended for victims of super typhoon Yolanda which have been coursed through the Social Welfare and Development department.

At the same time, the Bloc's leader Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez of Leyte expressed dismay over the failure of the House leadership to act on bills and resolutions filed by his group that would speed up the government's rehabilitation and rebuilding efforts for Yolanda-ravaged areas.

"It is only disappointing though that most of our bills have not been even scheduled for deliberations in the committee level. Considering most of these measures are focus on the plight and condition of our countrymen who suffered from the wrath of natural calamities; typhoon Yolanda, onslaught of floods caused by Habagat, the 7.2 magnitude earthquake which destroyed billions of properties in Bohol and Cebu provinces, the siege of Zamboanga which left homeless hundreds of families there, and so on," Romualdez said.

Romualdez's renewed call for the probe drew the support of Makabayan bloc's Rep. Terry Ridon who nudged the Aquino administration to respond to the needs of the survivors of the killer typhoon.

Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. on Saturday vowed to take action on the probe and other measures when session would

resume in July.

Due to time constraints, Belmonte said, the leadership was not able to act on the bills and resolutions that called for stepped-up efforts on rehabilitation of areas destroyed by Yolanda. [...]

One of the bills filed by the Bloc was the proposed P25 billion additional calamity and rehabilitation fund for the Yolanda survivors.

[...] House Resolution 1155, Abakada party-list Rep. Jonathan Dela Cruz called on the House committees on social services and on food security to investigate the mishandling of the donations from public and private donors, local and overseas, which were coursed through the DSWD.

He cited reports that have indicated that some donations are still in storage, some already expired and no longer fit for human consumption and others finding their way into private hands and even public markets.

[...] He said reports of non-distribution, loss, defective storage and even misuse of said donations specially food and other in-kind and perishable items have been noted.

"Part of the food aid for super typhoon Yolanda victims have reportedly been left to rot without being distributed by the DSWD," the solon said.

INSTITUTIONS

Inquirer.net, 09.06.2014

Lawmakers decry FOI exemption on police operations

By Marc Jayson Cayabyab

MANILA, Philippines — Militant lawmakers decried a provision in the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill that exempts from disclosure all information that would compromise police operations against criminal activities.

This as the public information committee hearing on Monday approved the exemption on information that "unduly compromise or interfere with the prevention, detection or suppression of criminal activity, the effective implementation of immigration controls and border security."

During the technical working group hearing, Bayan Muna Representative Carlos Zarate said the provision is too "broad" for a full disclosure bill.

He cited the pork barrel investigation by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) of which information may no longer be disclosed due to the exemption.

"So the NBI can invoke that they cannot disclose information because they can always say they have yet to conclude investigation?" Zarate said. [...]

Akbayan Rep. Barry Gutierrez disagreed [...], saying the provision would protect a person from trial by publicity.

"If it is disclosed to the public, (there could be) disadvantages to a person who is ultimately innocent... It could lead to trial by publicity which we want to avoid here," Gutierrez said.

Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat added that the provision is "important... so that the person being tried has a right to a fair trial."

Even committee chairman Misamis Occidental Rep. Jorge Almonte said the exemption is necessary because "government should also protect that right (to fair trial)."

For his part, Police Chief Superintendent Generoso Cerbo Jr., who is Deputy Director for Intelligence Operations, said it is important to exempt information that would compromise their operations. [...]

The House is stuck at Section 7 of the FOI, of which as much as 24 versions would need to be consolidated by the technical working group.

The FOI bill, which ensures transparency and accountability in government transactions and data, continue to languish in the lower chamber even as its Senate counterpart has approved its version.

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 16.06.2014

Martial law victims duped again

By Marlon Ramos

MANILA, Philippines—Victims the second time around.

Some unscrupulous individuals have been collecting fees from people seeking reparations from the government for the abuses they suffered during the Marcos regime, the chair of the Human Rights Victims Claims Board said on Sunday.

Lina Sarmiento said the board discovered the scam during its caravan to Angeles City last week where claimants told them that fixers had been going around their communities selling application forms for P300 each.

She said the con artists also promised those who bought the application forms that they would be included in the final list of claimants.

"We still have to find out how they were able to sell these forms. We were told that one of them has been claiming to be an employee of the Commission on Human Rights," Sarmiento told

reporters.

Sarmiento, a retired police director, said she had sought the assistance of the Philippine National Police in identifying and arresting individuals collecting money from the claimants.

She reiterated that the application forms were being distributed for free by the board, which was created by law to distribute the P10 billion in compensation that a Swiss court had awarded to martial law victims in 1997. [...]

The board launched the provincial caravan after only a small number of human rights victims from 1972 to 1986 applied for compensation for the suffering they endured during the dictatorship of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

Since the filing of claims started on May 12, Sarmiento said that fewer than 500 martial law victims had submitted the required documents.



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Over 9,000 individuals are entitled to receive part of the P10-billion fund from the recovered ill-gotten wealth of the Marcos

family.

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 24.06.2014

Palace aware justice system needs fixing, says exec

By Christian V. Esguerra

MANILA, Philippines – Malacañang acknowledged [...] the need to reform the whole criminal justice system following complaints that senators detained for their alleged involvement in the pork barrel scam were getting special treatment.

Communications Secretary Herminio Coloma did not respond directly to complaints detailed by John Silva of the Ortigas Foundation Library in his “open letter” now circulating on social media.

“We acknowledge that we continue to deal with a criminal justice system that needs to be overhauled and reformed in order to be truly fair and equitable,” Coloma said. “We are determined to pursue these reforms and with the support of a

vigilant and enlightened citizenry, we may be able to achieve significant gains.”

Coloma said the Palace was “hoping that the Sandiganbayan will conduct a fair and speedy trial that will ensure the triumph of truth and justice.”

In his open letter to President Benigno Aquino, Silva demanded an explanation why Senators Jose “Jinggoy” Estrada and Ramon Revilla Jr. were staying in “huge comfy jail cells.”

[...] Revilla has been detained since Friday while Estrada joined him at the PNP Custodial Center in Camp Crama three days later. [...]

Hustisya – News Release, 21.06.2014

Rights group denounces “UP outstanding alumnus on peace and cohesion award” to AFP chief Gen. Bautista

UP DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY – Rights group Hustisya strongly denounced the award given today to AFP chief Gen. Emmanuel Bautista as UP outstanding alumnus on peace and social cohesion.

In a protest action [...] families of victims of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances expressed dismay that Gen. Bautista receives such award [...].

“Gen. Bautista is the brains behind Oplan Bayanihan, the Aquino government’s counter-insurgency program. Because of Oplan Bayanihan, extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances continue. [...]” said Hustisya secretary general Cristina Guevarra.

[...] From June 30, 2010 to present, there were 199 victims of extrajudicial killings, 202 victims of frustrated extrajudicial killings, 21 victims of abduction and enforced disappearances, and 94 victims of torture. There are also 489 political prisoners [...] charged with trumped-up cases. [...]

Oplan Bayanihan is the counter-insurgency program of the

Aquino government which replaced Oplan Bantay Laya. According to Hustisya, thousands have been affected by military operations under the guise of Oplan Bayanihan’s “peace and development teams.” Almost 40,000 individuals in communities of farmers and indigenous people in different parts of the country forcibly evacuated because soldiers occupied their homes, lands, schools and even churches. They were under constant threat of surveillance and harassment because they are accused by the military as supporters of the New People’s Army. [...]

“What peace and social cohesion is there when Gen. Bautista and his troops bring unpeace to communities, their existence threatened, and their livelihood destroyed?” Guevarra said.

Aside from being Oplan Bayanihan’s brains and operator, Gen. Bautista replaced Gen. Jovito Palparan as head of the 702nd Infantry Brigade of the 7th Infantry Division of the AFP in 2008. It is the same military unit that abducted Empeño at Cadapan. Bautista then became head of the Philippine Army in 2011 and finally AFP chief in 2012. [...]

Selda – News Release, 25.06.2014

SELDA calls for congressional probe on inhuman jail conditions

Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (SELDA) called on lawmakers to investigate the inhuman prison conditions which most inmates, political prisoners and common criminals alike, are subjected to.

Amidst the VIP treatment of detained senators Revilla and Estrada who face plunder charges, SELDA challenged the BS Aquino government to comply with the Minimum Standards of Treatment of Prisoners. SELDA is outraged with the double standard the BS Aquino government giving to plunderers while common criminals and political prisoners are suffering from inhuman conditions.

“We hear Sen. Revilla complaining about his hot detention cell, with rats and cockroaches. But actually, regular detention cells are far worse than his,” Roneo Clamor, SELDA national coordinator said. “A 3x5-meter cell meant for two inmates is cramped with six to 10 detainees in regular jails. Even the lavatories are used as sleeping quarters,” Clamor described. “Prisoners usually

have limited supply of water, suffer from poor ventilation, and receive no proper medical attention,” Clamor continued.

Clamor cited the condition of Benny Barid, a political prisoner who has been in and out of the New Bilibid Prisons hospital because of his illnesses. “He is all skinny, as in *buto’t balat* (skin and bones), because of his chronic asthma. His skin is full of allergies. Instead of releasing him on humanitarian grounds, he remains in the NBP hospital without proper medical attention. He becomes susceptible to more infectious diseases inside the hospital and in their cramped cells,” said Clamor.

“Despite the many exposé and complaints on the conditions of jails in the country the BS Aquino government has not done anything to improve the situation. But it has ensured the comfort of plunderers like Janet Lim-Napoles and senators Revilla and Estrada in their own rooms while supposedly in prison,” Clamor said.

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In a message dated June 8, Eduardo Sarmiento, detained peace consultant for the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), shared the plight of the 489 political prisoners detained in different detention centers in the country. "Political prisoners, like common criminals, suffer arbitrary and discriminatory regulations such as curtailment of visiting rights... harassed by corrupt prison guards, who punish them and put them in isolation for no reason," said Sarmiento.

"Worst, the political prisoners are made to face several trumped up criminal charges for practicing their political beliefs which is a right of every person," Clamor added.

Lastly, SELDA called to release all political prisoners especially those who are ailing and elderly based on humanitarian grounds. "The plunderers should take their place in jail."

Hronlineph.com, 28.06.2014

Social movements celebrate historic vote at the United Nations Human Rights Council

June 26th, 2014, Geneva – After weeks of negotiation and furious lobbying from Northern countries to avoid the creation of an intergovernmental working group to discuss binding human rights obligations for Transnational Corporations, the United Nations Human Rights Council voted on a resolution to initiate this process. The tense debate surrounding the resolution that was introduced in September 2013 with by 85 countries mostly from the African group, the Arab group and Alba countries, came to an end today with 20 votes in favour, 14 against and 13 abstentions.

When the resolution was presented on Thursday morning, Ecuador, China, South Africa and India passionately called for it to move forward and create a binding treaty that could provide access to justice for the victims of human rights violations by Transnational Corporations. Despite the strong and expressed opposition from the United States, who called for the vote, and from the EU, Japan and the UK, who strongly encouraged other Council members to oppose the resolution, it passed and was welcomed by a spontaneous applause from the floor, an unconventional and rare sign at UN meetings.

After observing the vote from the floor of the Palais de Nations in Geneva Brazilian activist Diana Aguiar said that "arguments based on threats from the EU mission that binding rules would impact investments by TNCs in countries of the South and from the US representative that corporations should be included in any discussion on business and human rights are an expression of the institutional politics that do not differentiate the public good from the defense of private interest." She added that "the Northern States' multi-stakeholder approach is a disguise for

CURRENT CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Karapatan – Urgent Alert, 04.06.2014

Another fair trade staff gunned down in Janiuy town, Iloilo province

In the morning of May 28, 2014, **Dionisio Garete** was on his way to deliver sugarcane to the muscovado mill of the Janiuy-Badiangan Farmers Association (Jabafa). Garete was driving his pick-up truck behind a Jabafa cargo truck driven by fellow farmer. [...]

Eric Nonato, driver of the cargo truck, heard gunshots and the horn of Garete's pickup blowing. [...] Aware that the perpetrators may still be on site, Nonato and his companions waited for a few minutes before rushing to help Garete.

Andrea Rosal sues BJMP warden, doc, lawyer

Andrea Rosal, the detained daughter of the late communist spokesman Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, on Friday filed contempt charges against a jail warden, doctor, and a lawyer from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) for "forcibly" taking her out of the hospital and back to the Taguig City Jail inside Camp Bagong Diwa. [...]

According to Rosal, she was "forcibly" taken out of the Philippine General Hospital in Manila by BJMP authorities and guards by virtue of a court discharge order from the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 266.

From the hospital, Rosal was brought to the Taguig City Jail. Rosal said her transfer was done after office hours and without prior notice to her, her attending physician and her counsels.

Rosal said BJMP lawyer Awe had informed her that she would be transferred back to the city jail at 5:30 p.m. but the detainee insisted that her lawyers be informed about it first. [...]

"I was shoved to a wheelchair, which forced open my birth stitches. They transferred me against my will. [...]" Rosal added.

The court's discharge order was issued based on medical findings by [Jail Senior Inspector Dr. Jaime] Claveria. But Rosal insisted she had never seen Claveria before. The only time she saw and met the doctor was during her "forcible transfer."

Rosal also filed separate complaints against Claveria with the Philippine Regulatory Commission and the Philippine Medical Association, asking that the physician be imposed with proper disciplinary penalty. [...]

Rosal, who earlier gave birth to Diona Andrea, is suspected to be a leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines and New People's Army.

Her baby later died at the Philippine General Hospital due to oxygen deficiency in the blood. Militant groups have blamed prison authorities for the baby's death, citing "unreasonable delays" in bringing Rosal to the hospital.

Rosal was arrested in Caloocan last March 27 based on a warrant of arrest issued in Mauban, Quezon, for the non-bailable cases of kidnapping and murder. She has denied the charges.

GMA News, 20.06.2014

deep corporate capture of governments that puts investor interest above the rights of people."

Before the vote, both Ecuador and South Africa emphasized the unprecedented support of hundreds of civil society organizations and social movements for the resolution. In the words of the Ecuadorean Ambassador, "we have to thank the more than 500 civil society organizations that formed a coalition to demand remedies for victims and to support our effort" adding that "without their work none of this would have been possible." The Global Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power has been engaged in this process since September 2013 when Ecuador first announced its initiative to push for binding codes.

"One of the main demands of the Global Campaign to Campaign to Dismantle Corporate Power has been to build a binding treaty that would provide victims of systematic violations committed by TNCs with access to justice," said Brid Brennan of the Transnational Institute. "We welcome the adoption of this resolution and we are committed to ensuring that the process within the UNHRC will lead to a framework for human rights based on social and environmental justice. The vote split between northern and southern countries shows who is willing to defend the interests of transnational capital and who defends the rights of the victims of human rights violations."



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and Katilingban sa Mangunguma sa Dabong (Kamada), affiliate organizations of the Panay Fair Trade Center (PFTC). Kamada is an association of small farmers, and a major producer of muscovado sugar sold at the fair trade market through the PFTC.

On March 15, PFTC executive director and former political prisoner Romeo Capalla was gunned down at a public market in Oton town, Iloilo.

Last January 2014, Garete received a “warning” from a member of the Revolutionary Proletariat Army – Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB), allegedly for “being too active in the other side.” Another relative reported that suspected RPA-ABB members were tailing Garete.

The RPA-ABB is a paramilitary group under the auspices of the Philippine Army.

On May 29, Karapatan conducted a fact-finding mission on the

killing of Garete. The Janiuary police officials expressed helplessness in dealing with the RPA-ABB. According to the police officials, there are some 80 charges against the RPA-ABB members in Janiuary. However, when the police arrest RPA-ABB members, they would get a call from Malacanang ordering their release.

Rosel Caololan, Jabafa chairperson, said that the killing of Capalla and Garete is part of the scheme to sow terror on their members and supporters, and an attempt to demolish their organization and the fair trade network.

Karapatan joins the Garete’s family, colleagues, local human rights groups and sectoral organizations, in calling for justice for the killing of Dionisio Garete, and to end the terrorism and impunity perpetrated by the State-sponsored RPA-ABB.

Inquirer Northern Luzon, 07.06.2014

Pangasinan town mayor shot dead

By Gabriel Cardinoza

DAGUPAN CITY—Two armed men shot to death Urbiztondo town Mayor Ernesto Balolong Jr, his police escort, and an electrician at 8:50 a.m. on Saturday [...].

The slain mayor was at the back of the town’s convention center building when armed men drove up in a vehicle and opened fire, police said. Balolong was inspecting the venue for his wedding anniversary, as well as the wedding of his son, Councilor Voltaire Balolong, that would have simultaneously taken place. The gunmen alighted from a black Toyota Innova, and had calmly approached the mayor before they opened fire, according to a witness.

The witness said the slain mayor managed to scamper away but he was felled by another shot. One of the gunmen approached Balolong to shoot the mayor at point blank range.

Balolong Jr. and PO1 Eliseo Umanday were the apparent targets of the attack, but Edmund Meneses, a supermarket electrician, was caught in the barrage of the bullets. The attack also injured Jose Vigilia, an employee of the CSI Supermarket, and Rogelio Esguerra, a taho (soy drink) vendor. [...]. Balolong was already dead when he arrived in the hospital [...].

[...] Senior Superintendent Sterling Raymund Blanco, provincial director, said investigators were already in the area.

2 suspects fall in Pangasinan mayor’s slay

By Gabriel Cardinoza and Yolanda Sotelo

LINGAYEN, Philippines — Police here on Sunday announced the arrest of two suspects in the murder of Urbiztondo Mayor Ernesto Balolong Jr. and two others, and the wounding of four others in Urbiztondo town in Pangasinan province on Saturday. Senior Superintendent Sterling Raymund Blanco, provincial police director, identified the suspects as Eduardo de Guzman, 65, and Marito Sarmiento, 38, both residents of Bugallon town.

“We are now in the process of conducting background investigation on the suspects,” said Blanco in a news conference here.

Blanco said policemen arrested De Guzman and Sarmiento in Barangay (village) Salomague Sur in Bugallon town as they were about to leave a motorcycle repair shop there on Saturday afternoon. [...]

Blanco said a witness, who helped police investigators trace the escape route of the suspects, identified De Guzman and Sarmiento as the two men who first alighted from a Toyota Innova car.

The car was later found abandoned along the provincial road in Barangay Caoayan Kiling in San Carlos City.

Inquirer Northern Luzon, 08.06.2014

Last year, Balolong’s home was subjected to a raid by the National Bureau of Investigation, from which they allegedly recovered unlicensed weapons that allowed them to arrest the mayor. Balolong was also being investigated for his alleged part in the 2012 murder of a Lingayen town vice mayor and his wife. He was released on December 2013.

The murdered official was a member of the Liberal Party.

Manilatimes.net, 09.06.2014

Radio broadcaster murdered in Calapan

A radio broadcaster was shot dead in Calapan City Monday, police said, the third journalist in just over a month to be murdered in one of the most dangerous countries for media workers.

A gunman riding a motorcycle shot Nilo Baculo, 67, from close range outside his home, local police chief Superintendent

Glicerio Cansilao said.

“We are investigating whether it had something to do with his work, although at the moment we could not say categorically,” Cansilao told AFP.

He said Baculo used to work as a commentator and newsreader for the DWIM radio until it shut down last year. [...]

Bulatlat.com, 14.06.2014

Motorcycle driver tagged as rebel supporter killed

By Janess Ann J. Ellao

MANILA — A habal-habal driver, accused by the military of being a supporter of the New People’s Army, was killed in the morning of June 4, 2014 by an unidentified man who flagged him down.

Wilfredo Estrebillo, 41, a resident of [...] Kapalong, Davao del Norte was found dead in a secluded area in [...] Kapalong. He sustained 17 [...] gunshot wounds.

Around 30 minutes before his body was discovered, a member

of the Florida Driver’s Association who requested anonymity said Estrebillo arrived at the terminal driving his tricycle at around 7:30 a.m. A man then approached Estrebillo and asked if he could be brought to Barangay Florida.

Estrebillo said he would charge P50 (\$1.15) for the ride. But the man said, “Okay, I will pay you P80 (\$1.80).”

Estrebillo, married to Rosita, 35, and father to two children, is the 30th victim of extrajudicial killing in Southern Mindanao



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Region under President Aquino's administration.

Rosita, wife of Estrebillo, told members of Karapatan [...] that they have received information sometime in April or May this year that his husband was being accused by the intelligence unit of the 60th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army of participating in the arrest of Corporal Rogelio Rosales, a member of the Bravo Company of the 60th IBPA, by members of the New People's Army.

Rosales was captured by the NPA on May 3, 2014. He was declared as prisoner of war and was soon released and turned over to Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte last May 19.

A certain Boyet Indak, a former motorcycle driver, reportedly informed Rico Labajo, also a motorcycle driver, that Estrebillo and five other drivers are part of the military's hit list. The five others are: Jonathan Colon, Eleazar Batobato, Rico Labajo, Ondo Labajo, Dodong Labajo and Joy Eway.

Rosita said members of the Scene of the Crime Operatives were already examining her husband's body when she arrived. Later, she told Karapatan - Southern Mindanao Region that a pack of shabu wrapped in a paper was allegedly found in her husband's

back pocket. [...]

Hanimay Suazo, secretary general of Karapatan - SMR, told Bulatlat.com that Estrebillo is neither a drug user nor a pusher.

"In fact, he is an active member of the Barangay First Action Team as a rescuer. His wife said the shabu was planted. His motorcycle was also missing to make it appear as a common crime and not a political killing and mislead the investigation," Suazo said.

Rosita, for her part, believes that her husband's unidentified passenger is a member of the 60th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army.

"We condemn the brutal killing of Wilfredo Estrebillo. On the basis of motive, pattern and execution, there is no doubt that it is the handiwork of fascist state agents. Before Esrebillo was killed, he and other habal-habal drivers were threatened by soldiers of the 60th IBPA who accused them of being supporters of the New People's Army," Suazo said.

Suazo challenged the Aquino government to end the implementation of his counterinsurgency program Oplan Bayanihan and to resume peace talks with the CPP-NPA-NDFP.

Inquirer.net, 16.06.2014

Student heckler decries 'trumped up' charges

By Marc Jayson Cayabyab

MANILA, Philippines—The student heckler who disrupted the Independence Day speech of President Benigno Aquino III claimed he was slapped with trumped up charges of purportedly assaulting a police officer.

In a press conference at the House of Representatives on Monday, Pio Emmanuel Mijares claimed he did not resist security as he was being escorted out after he heckled President Aquino in Naga city on June 12.

"The direct assault was questionable because there was no resistance. I gladly followed security which escorted me so there would be no chaos," Mijares said in Filipino.

He alleged that the additional charge of assault was slapped to extend his detention to 36 hours. He was accused of assault for purportedly damaging the uniform of arresting officer PO1 George Estocado.

Mijares even said there were some beatings and scratches, but he pointed out that he was not hurt. [...]

Once in the detention center, Mijares also alleged that he was not allowed to contact his lawyer.

"I was expecting I would not be charged. But they still detained

me for 36 hours," Mijares said.

Mijares, an Ateneo De Naga student, was also slapped with "tumults and other disturbances of public order" and creating "alarm and public scandal."

Mijares reportedly interrupted Aquino's speech by shouting "Patalsikin ang Pork Barrel King! Walang pagbabago sa Pilipinas!" [Oust the Pork Barrel King! Nothing new in the Philippines!]

[...] Paul Vincent Casihilan, Karapatan Bicol spokesperson, said they would file charges of illegal and arbitrary detention as well as police brutality against the Philippine National Police command in Naga. They would file the raps before the Ombudsman and the Commission on Human Rights.

"We didn't have an agenda to cause chaos. We were only there to express our basic right," Mijares said in Filipino. [...]

In a radio interview, Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Abigail Valte said the administration did not instigate the filing of charges against Mijares.

She added that the raps were filed by the Philippine National Police in Naga city and not the Presidential Security Group.

Davaotoday.com, 20.06.2014

ComVal farmer, son forced as guides in military rebel hunt

By John Rizle L. Saligumba

DAVAO CITY - Nightmares of sounds and images of gunfire and explosion wake farmer Pedro Cadungog every night, as he has also avoided tending to his farm following his ordeal of allegedly [being] forced as guides by Army soldiers in a military operation. [...]

Hanimay Suazo of the human rights group Karapatan showed Davao Today Pedro's medical certificate that noted "post traumatic stress disorder" on Cadungog and his son.

[...] Pedro recounted that day, on June 7, that while they were heading for their farm at 6:00 am, in [...] Compostela Valley, they were accosted by 25 "fully-armed men dressed in fatigue uniform".

Cadungog said the soldiers belonged to the Army's 71st Infantry Battalion from their identifying insignias, and was headed by a certain "Joel Ondoy" whom soldiers refer to as "General". He said the soldiers immediately took his son's cellphone and accused them of being "a spy of NPA (New People's Army) rebels."

"They made us guide them to where the NPA rebels are posting.

[...]" said Pedro [...]. [...]

Randel, Pedro's 20 year-old son said it was him whom the soldiers asked whether they know if there are NPAs in the area and if he know[s] where they are encamping.

"I told them the truth that I know where in the hope that my father and I will not be harmed," said Randel. [...]

Pedro said they were forced to "walk ahead." [...]

"[...] a bomb exploded," said Pedro. [...]

"[...] They exchanged gunfire for more than 15 minutes. A soldier told us to get up when the shooting stopped but when we advanced again, two more bombs exploded," he said. [...]

Pedro said he and his son were separated when nigh fell "to prevent us from fleeing." [...]

Pedro said they "were taken by Ondoy aboard a helicopter with the dead soldier."

"When we got down the helicopter, a clean-looking soldier held my hand and told me to say that I was the one who killed their men," he said. [...]

Randel said they were taken to "a (Army) brigade in Barangay



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Mapaan", in Maco, Compostela Valley".

"[...] They asked us where we hid our guns and that we were NPAs," he said. [...]

Pedro and Randel got back to their farm last June 10 but they said they "had to go home early because we fear the same thing would happen." [...]

Suazo of Karapatan said [...] the soldiers committed "arbitrary arrest and arbitrary detention."

"They were clearly used as human shields and as they were taken to 1001st Army Brigade in Barangay Maapang against

their will, they were also forced to sign documents saying that they are NPAs which surrendered," Suazo said. [...] " [...] in this case alone they did not physically harm them and even have them examined. But, the fact is that they were forced to become human shields and guides in a combat operation putting at risk their very lives," she said.

Davao Today has attempted to get the side of the Army units concerned but has yet to receive a response in time for the posting of this story.

Bulatlat.com, 26.06.2014

Military arrests another pregnant woman it accuses of being an NPA guerilla

By Janess Ann J. Ellao

MANILA — Another pregnant activist was arrested on June 20, 2014 in Lucena, Quezon.

Maria Miradel Torres, 26, four months pregnant, was arrested while staying at a relative's house in Barangay Ilayang Iyam in Lucena, Quezon. She was, at the time, seeking medical treatment due to profuse bleeding.

Torres, 26, is a member of women's group Gabriela - Mauban. Torres, in an interview with her lawyers and human rights defenders, said she was interrogated by members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the Southern Luzon Command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Both the CIDG and AFP soldiers did not present a warrant of arrest and even searched the entire house.

Her two cellphones were confiscated.

She was told that she was being arrested for murder charges. She was also interrogated by a man who introduced himself as a rebel returnee and a certain "PO2" for nearly an hour while lying down in her relative's house due to her delicate pregnancy. She was asked about the whereabouts of a certain Peping Agudo and Apo, who, she said, she does not know.

Torres was brought to Camp Nakar Station Hospital that day. Her relatives learned about where she was taken two days later. Her mother was initially barred from seeing and assisting her with her personal needs, human rights group Karapatan said in a statement. [...]

Karapatan said Torres was maliciously tagged as a member of the New People's Army by state security forces. During the interrogation, she was being forced to admit that she was the

"Alex" and "Sydney" they were looking for.

Torres said there is no truth to the charges being filed against her. [...]

Andrea Rosal [...] was seven months pregnant when she was arrested on Mar. 27, 2014. She was also detained at Camp Bagong Diwa where she did not receive needed medical attention. She gave birth on May 17, 2014 but her baby died the following day due to lack of oxygen in her blood.

Conditions at BJMP

On June 25, 2014, Torres was brought to Camp Bagong Diwa, Bicutan, south of Manila. She described her travel as "bumpy," which, she said, caused her belly to tighten.

She is worried about her condition. She said her doctor told her that she needed complete bed rest because her placenta is attached too low. Even the military doctor, a certain Capt. Pimentel of the Camp Nakar Station Hospital who checked her condition while she was still in Lucena, said so too, Torres added.

[...] Her medicines, she said, were confiscated when she arrived at Camp Bagong Diwa.

"I am supposed to take Duphaston three times a day. But I have not taken one since this morning," she said.

Karapatan - Southern Tagalog called for the immediate release of Torres. [...]

[...] Hilao-Enriquez [chairperson of Karapatan] said, adding that the inhumane treatment that Torres experienced violates her human rights as well as national and international laws and instruments regarding the treatment of prisoners. [...]

UPDATES ON CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Asian Human Rights Commission/ Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) - Urgent Appeals Programme, 03.06.2014

Security guards who shot a farmer dead and wounded others not arrested four months on

In our appeal on 20 March 2014 ([AHRC-UAC-036-2014](#)), we mentioned that Arman Lumibao Padino, (34), was killed instantly after he was shot in the head by a security guard of a landlord. A fellow farmer, Noel Umali, was struck in the buttocks as he was escaping when the guards were shooting at them on 12 January 2014.

Arman and Noel were together with Bet Baltazar and his wife, Meng Baltazar, all are members of Aniban ng Nagkakaisang Mamamayan ng Hacienda Dolores (ANIBAN), when they were prevented from entering a disputed land in Porac, Pampanga. The farmers were to harvest the crops they cultivated.

The shooting happened soon after Antonio Tolentino, the head of the village; and Oricolo Padino, brother of Arman; Rex Lapid, Ronald de Jesus and Virgillio Padino, went to the area after the farmers sought their assistance. Under the law, the head of the village has a mandate to ensure order in the community.

However, when they arrived, while village head Tolentino, was talking to the security guards asking them as to why they were preventing the farmers entry, one of them, identified as Larry Sabado, pointed his gun at him. Another security guard,

Felizardo Clark, the head of the "roving guards", shot Arman Padino in the head.

An extract of his [sworn statement](#) on January 20, 2014, Ronald de Jesus [...] stated that (unofficial translation from Filipino):

That, when Sabado and Barangay Captain Tolentino were talking, I have witnessed that Sabado pointed his gun at Barangay Captain Tolentino. That, at this point, the other security guards, about ten of them, also pointed their guns at all of us;

That, at this point, I have witnessed Felizardo Clark, head of the "roving guards", shot at Arman Padino, making him to fall to the ground...;

That, I have also witnessed that when Sabado shot Barangay Captain Tolentino, his gun did not fire despite him repeatedly pulling the trigger. [...]

Another farmer, Noel Umali, affirmed de Jesus testimony and had [clearly identified](#) Felizardo Clark as the one who had shot Arman Padino to his head [...]. Umali was also hit to his buttocks when other guards shot him as he was escaping (unofficial translation from Filipino):

That, I was shocked and frightened at what I have witnessed



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when Arman Padino fell to the ground after he was shot by security guard Felizardo Clark; That, after they shot Arman Padino, another security guard attached to the Triple L standing to my left, also shot me; That, I was hit at the upper left of my buttocks; That, I fell to the ground...

On the same day, the incident [was reported](#) to the Porac Police Station. However, the police neither mentioned the names of the culprits in the police report nor they have arrested the security guards involved. It was only on May 7, 2014, that the police conducted its investigation after the AHRC sent appeal letters to its headquarters. Here, they summoned the victim's wife, Analyn Padino.

On January 21, Atty. Jasmin Navarro-Regino, CHR Regional III director, had [endorsed](#) the complaints of the victims and their families to Ms. Leila De Lima, secretary of the Department of Justice (DoJ), due to "...uncertainty with the current flow of investigation of the case, since a case against the suspected Security Guards have yet to be filed with the Prosecutor's Office

by the Police".

In response to the CHR's endorsement, on March 5, 2014, Mr. Claro Arellano, DoJ prosecutor general, [wrote](#) to Analyn Padino, telling her: "We are allowing your case to be filed here (DoJ). But, if you are so minded, please coordinate first with (chief of our Docket Section)". The DoJ is yet to resolve whether or not there is a 'probable cause' to file the case in court.

On April 23, 2014, the TFDP made a follow up at the Police office in Porac, Pampanga. Speaking to PO3 Saugo Sab-it, investigator of the case, he explains that the police did not investigate because: "the family only reported three (3) days after the incident. He was able to get the affidavits of the witnesses [...]"

PO3 Sab-it also added that the Padino's wife, Analyn, had also informed them they would file the complaint directly to the DOJ. It appears that despite having been reported, no investigation was conducted, and the police also did not arrest of the perpetrators soon after it happened despite being identified by witnesses. [...]

Philippine Daily Inquirer, 11.06.2013

What Went Before: Media killings under Aquino administration

MANILA, Philippines—More than 20 journalists and media workers have been killed under the Aquino administration, based on the count of media watchdogs as of the end of May.

On May 23, Sammy Oliverio, who hosted several programs on local radio stations in Digos City, Davao del Sur province, was shot twice in the head and nape by two men riding on a motorbike. According to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines, Oliverio was the 28th journalist or media worker killed since President Aquino took office in 2010. Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) counts him as the 24th.

In a letter to the editor published in the Inquirer on May 30, Melinda Quintos de Jesus, CMFR executive director, explained that [...] "CMFR does not include on its list four journalists killed between 2011 and 2013 because, after extensive investigation, we established that they were killed because of a business dispute, in the course of a robbery, or because of purely personal matters," De Jesus said.

In CMFR's tally, Oliverio is listed as the third journalist to be killed this year.

On May 4, broadcaster Richard Nadjid of Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, was killed. Aside from being a spinner at the DxNN Power Myx FM in Tawi-Tawi province, Nadjid also handled the station's daily public affairs program.

On April 6, Rubylita Garcia, a correspondent of the tabloid Remate, died five hours after two gunmen shot her in front of her 10-year-old granddaughter in her house in Bacoor City.

In the same month, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) re-

Suspect in reporter's slay arrested in Bacoor City

By Rogelio Limpin

Bacoor City, Cavite: A female police asset was shot eight times by a suspected gun-for-hire but survived after she was taken to Philippine General Hospital on Sunday.

Her assailant is also suspected of killing a tabloid reporter here.

Bacoor City Police Chief-Rommel Estolano identified the suspect as Banjo Banggalosa Balited, 25, and residing in Pasay City [...].

[...] The suspect was arrested in his hideout in [...] Bacoor City. Confiscated from him was a motorcycle without plate number which he used as get away vehicle. The police also found 15 grams of shabu in his possession. [...]

Estolano added that the suspect might be involved in the killing of Remate reporter Robelita Garcia who was gunned down inside her house in Talaba, Bacoor City.

The suspect is now detained at Bacoor Police City Jail in Bacoor City, Cavite while frustrated murder and possession of illegal drugs will be filed against him.

Manilatimes.net, 18.06.2014

leased the latest Global Impunity Index, which ranked the Philippines as one of the top three countries where murder of journalists is most likely to go unpunished.

The Philippines has been in the No. 3 slot since 2010, while Iraq, with 100-percent impunity, has ranked first since the survey began in 2008. Somalia has been in the second spot for the last four years.

From Nov. 29 to Dec. 11 last year, three journalists in Mindanao were killed and one was wounded in the Visayas.

On Dec. 11, Rogelio Butalid, a block-timer for 107.9 FM Radyo Natin, was shot dead by a lone killer in Tagum City in Davao del Norte province shortly after he finished his radio program.

The previous night, unidentified men shot and wounded Jonavin "Jhey-R" Villalba, a radio reporter, in Iloilo City.

On Dec. 6 last year, radioman Michael Milo was gunned down in Tandag City in Surigao del Sur province. The previous week, another radioman, Joas Dignos, was killed in Valencia City in Bukidnon province.

Action Network Human Rights- Philippines

CPJ, in its report, cited as "a welcome development" last year's conviction of a gunman in the 2011 murder of Palawan broadcaster Gerardo Ortega. But the group noted that "it did little to change the rampant impunity in the Philippines."

On Jan. 24, 2011, a lone assailant shot Ortega in a used-clothing store in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan province.

Gunman Marlon Recamata was sentenced to life imprisonment in May last year but the alleged masterminds of the murder—former Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes and his brother, former Coron Mayor Mario Reyes—have remained at large.

Visayandaily.com, 16.05.2014

'Still no justice for Bayles'

By Adrian Nemes III

The case of Bayan Muna-Negros member Benjamin Bayles who was killed, allegedly by members of the military in Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental, four years ago, will be raffled off to another court.

Rod-Cel Gumban, chairman of the Defend Patrimony ecumenical group, said yesterday that this is because Hinigaran Presiding Judge Nilo Sarsaba has inhibited himself from the case.

Gumban said four years have passed since the death of Bayles, but apparently, justice remains elusive for him and his family.

Gumban, a deacon of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente, to which Bayles belonged, added that there seem to be deliberate move to conceal the truth behind the killing.

He noted that in one of the hearings, Judge Sarsaba asked both the Hinigaran and Kabankalan police, the first responders to the incident, to present the logbooks containing the incident report of the Bayles killing.

However, one of the logbooks is missing while the page where the killing was recorded had been torn off from the other one.

Asian Human Rights Commission – Urgent Alert Update, 23.06.2014

Tortured and falsely charged activist detained for nearly nine years to be freed today

Dear friends,

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) is pleased to inform you that the charges against Fernando Obedencio, a human rights activist whom we reported to have been tortured, falsely charged and held for nearly nine years, have been dismissed. The court granted his petition to dismiss the fabricated charges of possession of illegal drugs against him, and ordered that he be released from prison.

UPDATED INFORMATION: (Based on the information received from Moro Women Center Inc.)

At 8am today, the Regional Trial Court (RTC), Branch 36, in General Santos City, heard the petition of Fernando Obedencio asking the court to dismiss the fabricated charges of the possession of illegal drugs against him. Obedencio's counsel, human rights lawyer Dominador Lagare Sr., filed an Omnibus Motion to Dismiss on May 14, 2014. [...]

In his Motion to Dismiss, Lagare questioned in detail the validity of evidence and the procedures on which they were collected by the police, and how the prosecution used them in the trial. He

Another suspect arrested in Bukidnon radioman slay

By Mario C. Manlupig Jr.

LAW enforcers [...] arrested another suspect in the killing of a broadcast journalist in Bukidnon. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in northern Mindanao (PDEA-10) found out that the assistant of former policeman Asterio Pamisa is one of the suspected triggermen of radio commentator Joash Dignos [...].

Raul Preglo [...] was arrested by PDEA-10 operatives [...].

[...] Preglo admitted he was already hiding from law enforcers since his name came up in connection with Dignos' killing after another suspect, Dionasio Daulong, was arrested.

However, the suspect brushed off allegations that he was one of the alleged hired gunmen who killed Dignos.

"They are only pointing fingers at me since I was there when Dignos was killed," he added.

According to PDEA-10 assistant regional director Rayford Yap, the search warrant issued by the Regional Trial Court in Branch 9 in Cagayan de Oro targeted only Pamisa who was caught with an approximate 50 grams of suspected shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) with a street value of P400,000.

Rosemaria Bajao, PDEA-10 information officer, said Preglo matched in one of the sketches released by the Valencia city police last January identifying the possible killers of Dignos. [...]

Preglo is the second suspect arrested in the killing of Dignos following Daulong who was earlier arrested by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (CIDU) of Malaybalay city [...], Bukidnon last June 13. [...]

Arrest of mastermind

Cagayan de Oro Press Club president Jerry Orcullo lauded the authorities for the capture of another suspect in the slaying of Dignos.

Still, Orcullo is hopeful for the arrest of the mastermind of the killing. [...]

Earlier, Regional Prosecutor Jaime Umpa told this paper that he is hoping the other suspects of the killing will be arrested. [...]

[Dignos was shot](#) at a restaurant along Sayre Highway in Valencia on November 29, 2013.

Dignos suffered from 22 gunshot wounds on his body. He was a block timer of DxDGT Radyo Abante in Maramag town in Bukidnon and the first radio announcer in the province to be killed. [...]

Sun.Star Cagayan de Oro, 26.06.2014

[...]

Two motorcycle-riding men shot Bayles, 44, in Himamaylan City on June 14, 2010. Two suspects on a motorcycle apprehended at a police checkpoint in nearby Kabankalan City later that day, were found to be members of the Army.

The accused identified as Private First Class Rafael Cordova, whose pseudonym is Roger Bajon, and Pfc Reygine Laus, alias Ronnie, are allegedly members of the 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company of 61st Infantry Battalion, formerly based in [...] Sipalay City.

Edre Olalia, secretary general of National Union of People's Lawyers, that is assisting the family of Bayles, had said earlier that the biggest question that remains unanswered is the identity of the person behind the assassination of Bayles.

also questioned the failure of the court to ensure that the victim was afforded his right to speedy resolution of his case, notably the 180 days period from the filing of case in court.

Lagare further argued in court the evidence against the victim lacked merit, the procedures in the process of collection of evidence were questionable and his prolonged detention has already exceeded the expected jail term even if he was to be convicted.

As of this writing, Obedencio's supporters, notably the Moro Women Center (MWC), are proceeding to the General Santos City jail, where he is presently detained, to assist the process of his release from prison.

The AHRC pays tribute to Obedencio and his supporters for their commitment, courage and determination in assisting the victim for many years. We would like to thank those who supported Obedencio in his struggle to clear his name and to be exonerated from the fabricated charges.

Thank you.



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Karapatan – Press Release, 24.06.2014

Court grants military in Cadapan-Empeño case another trial date despite lack of witnesses, series of postponements

Karapatan lambasts the defense in the Cadapan-Empeño case for consistently delaying the proceedings since the case was filed in 2011. Yesterday's hearing was supposed to be the last presentation of the defense's witnesses, but RTC branch 14 Judge Teodora Gonzales of Malolos Bulacan allowed another date for the defense to present their witnesses for the "last time." Judge Gonzales fined the defense several times and warned that the case will be deemed submitted for resolution if the defense fails to present their witnesses.

"Despite the obvious maneuver of the defense to postpone the proceedings, the court still gave them leeway. Is this fair for the families of Karen and Sherlyn who have been searching for justice for eight long years? How long should we wait for the military to gather its witnesses and present their testimonies to the Court?" Karapatan Chairperson Marie Hilao-Enriquez said. The Court allowed the request of the defense for a 15-minute break to prepare their judicial affidavits on the spot. It also allowed accused Col. Felipe Anotado to take the witness stand.

InterAksyon.com, 26.06.2014

'Sekyu' falsely accused - and tortured - as a rebel seeks review as DOJ drops AFP, PNP men from raps

MANILA, Philippines - A security guard who had been tortured and detained for close to year after he was mistakenly accused of being a ranking communist rebel has asked the Department of Justice to review a resolution absolving a number of military and police officers of the charges he filed.

The human rights group Karapatan said Rolly Panesa filed his petition for partial review on Thursday after the DOJ dropped Major Generals Alan Luga and Eduardo Del Rosario, police Chief Superintendent James Andres Melad, Senior Superintendent Manuel Abu, and Chief Inspector Reynaldo Mendoza from charges of violating the anti-torture law.

The DOJ also cleared Judge Advocate General Office lawyer Alex Alberto Propanes [...] and said there was no probable cause to indict Colonel Generoso Bolina and the military's "witnesses" -- Luis Grajo Rayos, Michael Rojo Alvarado and Erwin Rosales -- for perjury.

The only ones indicted by the DOJ were Inspector Bonifacio Guevarra, Senior Police Officer 1 Christopher Flores, Police Officers 2 Ariel dela Cruz and Joseph Fernandez, for less serious physical injuries, violation of section 4b (mental and psychological torture) of the anti-torture law (Republic Act 9745), violation of the rights of arrested persons (RA 7438), and grave coercion.

Panesa, a native of Negros Occidental, was [arrested](#) by military and police intelligence agents in Cubao, Quezon City on October 5, 2012, with the Armed Forces of the Philippines later claiming to have captured Benjamin Mendoza, an Ilocano who supposedly is a member of the Communist Party of the Philippines' Central Committee.

The military stuck to its claim even after human rights groups presented evidence Panesa had apparently suffered severe torture after his arrest and despite information tending to disprove that the security guard, then 48, could not be the rebel leader, who was 61 at the time.

On August 27, 2013, the [Court of Appeals](#), acting on a petition for habeas corpus filed on Panesa's behalf, ordered him released after it was "con-

vinced that this is a case of mistaken identity." [...] in its resolution, the DOJ said while the anti-torture law was violated by state security forces, it belied Panesa's claims of physical torture, describing the security guard's injuries as "superficial much less not severe."

It also said there was no "mental torture at the time of arrest because complainant could not accurately recount what happened after his arrest."

Reacting to the DOJ findings, Karapatan chair Marie Hilao-Enriquez said: "It is a clear and established fact that Panesa was harassed, intimidated and tortured not only mentally and psy-

On cross-examination of Prosecution lawyer Julian Oliva, Anotado insisted there is no military camp in Limay, Bataan, only a military detachment. Witness Raymond Manalo during earlier hearings testified he was detained at the said camp/detachment. But, Anotado argued he never met Raymond Manalo, Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño nor heard any news regarding their abduction.

"[...] What they are giving us is a gamut of alibis and denials that are not supported by evidence. They do not have competent witnesses that's why they keep on delaying the proceedings. [...]" said Hilao-Enriquez. " [...] We express our outrage on this kind of justice system that only favors the privileged. But we will never stop seeking justice for Karen and Sherlyn and all victims of human rights violations [...]" Hilao-Enriquez concluded. Families and supporters of Sherlyn and Karen will commemorate the 8th year of their abduction on June 26.

Adding insult to injury: Zero conviction under PH's anti-torture law

By Mart D. Sambalud

TAGUM CITY – A Hong Kong-based legal rights organization said the Aquino administration failed "to investigate, prosecute and convict" state agents and their accomplices for violating the Anti-Torture Act of 2009, as the country is supposed to join the global observance

Thursday the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture.

"The law has been in operation for over four years now; however, none of the perpetrators involved in the dozens of cases we have documented have been convicted for their crimes," The Asian Legal Resource Center (ALRC), a sister organization of the Asian Human Rights Commission, noted [...].

In its February 19, 2014 report, the group noted that "there exists an emerging pattern of dismissals of torture complaints" with many cases have never been effectively investigated and prosecuted.

"Since the Anti-Torture Act was signed into effect in 2009, in none of the complaints that the AHRC has documented has a court so far resolved that the accused have a case to answer," said Basil Fernando, director of Policy and Programme Development of both the Asian Human Rights Commission and that ALRC. [...]

According to ALRC, the government Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the Public Attorney's Office (PAO), the Philippine National Police (PNP), the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) - which have legal obligation to investigate torture complaints "failed to comply with this provision in a routine, systematic and widespread manner."

[...] He [Fernando] also attributed the failure to "misunderstanding of officials' roles, inadequate forensic analysis and medical reporting, and lack of protection for victims complaining of torture and their families, who are subjected to intimidation and threats".

"The government's failure to investigate promptly violates the absolute and non-derogable nature of the prohibition of torture in the Convention against Torture (CAT), in General Assembly Resolutions," he said. [...]

davaotoday.com, 26.06.2014



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chologically but also physically to force him to admit he is 'Benjamin Mendoza.' His badly beaten face is a telling evidence that he was heavily tortured, while being interrogated by the PNP and the AFP." [...]

Enriquez maintained that the military and police officers cleared

Inquirer Visayas, 30.06.2014

Lack of progress in Capalla murder case slammed

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.

ILOILO CITY, Philippines—The family and colleagues of slain Iloilo fair trade center head Romeo Capalla have lamented what they perceive to be the lack of progress in the resolution of his murder.

In a statement issued on June 25 to mark the 100th day after Capalla was murdered on March 15, his widow, Maria Corazon Gemarino, said their family was still struggling with the loss of her husband and finding justice.

"One hundred days since his death, my family and I are still struggling with this big void. We miss him dearly," she said.

But Gemarino said they were saddened by the efforts to find and arrest her husband's killers. "There's little or no effort in bringing the perpetrators to justice," she said.

Capalla was shot in front of the public market of Oton town in Iloilo province as he was assisting his 91-year-old mother-in-law in boarding his sport utility vehicle.

He died of two bullet wounds to the head.

MAGUINDANAO MASSACRE

Inquirer Mindanao, 23.06.2014

Suspect in Maguindanao massacre, 2 others killed in Cotabato City shootout

By Edwin Fernandez

COTABATO CITY, Philippines—A suspect in the 2009 Maguindanao massacre and two of his companions were killed in what police say was a shootout with lawmen who were about to serve an arrest warrant before dawn Monday.

Senior Superintendent Rolan Balquin, Cotabato City police director, identified the slain massacre suspect as Muktar Kindo Santo, who carried a P250,000 reward for his arrest.

Also killed in the shootout were Guimaludin Buisan and a still unidentified man. [...]

Inquirer Mindanao, 24.06.2014

NUJP slams promotion of Army colonel

By Germelina Lacorte

DAVAO CITY, Philippines—The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines has questioned the promotion of an Army colonel who had rejected a request to provide a military escort for the 58 people, including 32 journalists and other media workers, who were killed in the Maguindanao massacre nearly five years ago.

Rowena Paraan, NUJP chair, said in an e-mailed statement that the promotion of Colonel Medardo Geslani to brigadier general was an insult to the memory of the victims, whose families are still looking for justice, 55 months after the worst election-related violence blamed on the Ampatuan clan and 200 of their armed men.

"This is the second time that an Army officer, whose inaction allowed the massacre to happen, has been promoted," Paraan said.

Geslani, commander of the 601st Brigade with jurisdiction over

by the DOJ had "obvious knowledge" of the arrest and torture of Panesa.

"They were the brains behind the arrest of Panesa. They even bragged about the capture of this supposedly high-ranking NPA commander with a P5.6 million-peso bounty," she added.

Capalla, 65, was the chair of the board of directors of Panay Fair Trade Center (PFTC) and its general manager for more than 12 years. [...] An hour after he was gunned down, unidentified persons also burned a truck and other equipment of a muscovado sugar mill operated by a partner of PFTC in Janiuy town in Iloilo.

Police on March 28 filed a murder complaint against Julie Cabino and four other unidentified persons but no arrests have been made. Investigators have also not determined the motive behind the killing.

Chief Insp. Joseph Euje Almaquer, spokesperson of the Iloilo Provincial Police Office, said they were waiting for the resolution of the complaint.

"The case has already been filed. We will act depending on the outcome of our complaint whether or not an arrest warrant will be issued by a court," he told the Inquirer.

Balquin said the slain men had been implicated in a series of killings in the city and nearby towns.

Santo was allegedly a member of the now dismantled private militia of the Ampatuan clan in Maguindanao. [...]

The death of Santo came four years and seven months after the massacre in Ampatuan, Maguindanao [...] known as the country's worst election-related violence and attack on media persons.

the town of Ampatuan in Maguindanao at the time of the massacre, had denied a request by then Vice Mayor Esmel Mangudadatu of Buluan, who is now governor of Maguindanao, for security escorts for a convoy of women and journalists, which was to file his certificate of candidacy on that day.

Mangudadatu lost his wife and sister in the bloodbath.

Geslani's "failure, or more accurately, refusal to act on a request from Mangudadatu for security escorts for the convoy, may have sealed the fate of the Ampatuan 58," Paraan said, referring to the victims by the name of the municipality where the massacre took place. She said that aside from his refusal to provide security escorts, Geslani also knew that scores of gunmen had stopped the convoy in Barangay Salman and led it toward the hinterland of Ampatuan followed by a backhoe that was eventually used to bury the victims in a mass grave.



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Before Geslani, Maj. Gen. Alfredo Cayton, commander of the 6th Infantry Division, was promoted to lieutenant general before he retired. On the day of the massacre, Cayton assured the journalists who perished in the massacre that it was perfectly safe to travel from Buluan to Shariff Aguak, Paraan said.

"It boggles the mind how the Army, which never ceases to boast of its intelligence prowess, could have missed the fact that three days before the massacre, Maguindanao police and members of the Ampatuan clan's private militia had already set up checkpoints on the highway leading to the provincial capital," Paraan said. "Or that as early as then, word was spreading like wildfire that the family that ruled Maguindanao had vowed never to allow Mangudadatu to run against their own."

Before his promotion, Geslani served as deputy commander of the Tradition and Doctrine Command (Tradoc) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines

based at Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac. [...]

"For Benigno Aquino III to approve Geslani's promotion is yet another betrayal of his promise to make justice and human rights the cornerstone of his presidency," Paraan said. [...]

Army defends promotion of controversial general

By Bong Lozada

MANILA, Philippines—Standing with their own, the Philippine Army on Tuesday defended the promotion of one of its officers whose inactions prior to the Maguindanao Massacre drew the ire of critics.

Lieutenant Colonel Noel Detoyato, Philippine Army spokesman, said that newly-promoted Brigadier General Medardo Geslani deserves the star on his shoulder despite what the critics said. [...]

Before Geslani's promotion, the Office of the Ombudsman cleared Geslani of any involvement in the gruesome [Maguindanao] massacre.

Detoyato said that Geslani, who topped the 1982 "Sandigan" class of the Philippine Military Academy, was promoted since he had no actions that would merit any legal actions. [...]

Inquirer.net, 24.06.2014

PEACE PROCESS

Mindanews.com, 14.06.2014

Peace pact signing lures more investments into Bangsamoro area

DAVAO CITY – The Regional Board of Investments of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (RBOI-ARMM) has posted a total of P1.621 billion investments in the first five months of 2014 but investments are expected to reach or go beyond P2 billion before the month ends.

The first five-month issue figure is 158 million more than the [...] investments the ARMM posted in the four quarters of 2013.

[...] Lawyer Ishak Mastura, RBOI-ARMM chair, says the positive climate brought about by the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on March 27 this year has encouraged investors. [...]

The signing of the CAB is expected to end decades of insurgency and violent conflict in the Moro-dominated areas in Mindanao.

"Investors view this peace agreement as a removal of the major risk of flare-up of violent political conflict and insurgency in the region. [...]" Mastura said.

In the first quarter, the RBOI-ARMM generated investments of P921.56 million from the Lamsan Power Corporation's biomass renewable energy investment, P520 million from SR Languyan Mining Corporation's million nickel ore mining project in Tawi-

tawi and ABSCOR Multi-Trading Company's Php 10 million import and export trading business in Maluso, Basilan.

Agumil Philippines Inc., a Filipino-Malaysian company engaged in oil palm milling, registered with RBOI in 2006. The firm exports its products mainly to Malaysia. [...]

A press statement from the RBOI-ARMM said the firm has accumulated a sizable amount of quality palm kernels enough to process into Palm Kernel Oil (PKO) for export and Palm Kernel Cake (PKC) for animal feeds.

The crushing plant project will be constructed near the milling plant and is expected to generate 500 cyclical construction workers and 54 new jobs.

Aside from being a business partner of over 6,000 oil palm outgrowers in Maguindanao and nearby areas, Agumil is also expected to put up a biomass power plant to support the energy needs of their milling and crushing plants within 2014 [...].

Agumil will be provided by RBOI with a six-year Income Tax Holiday (ITH) at the start of their commercial operations and other fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for the company's socio-economic contributions to the development of the region. [...]

Mindanews.com, 24.06.2014

PNoy, Murad meet on concerns over draft Bangsamoro Basic Law

By Carolyn O. Arguillas

HIROSHIMA – It wasn't a two-hour talk like their first face-to-face meeting [...] in Tokyo on August 4, 2011 but President Benigno Simeon Aquino III and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chair Al Haj Murad Ebrahim met for "15 to 20 minutes" [...] just before the President delivered his keynote address at The Consolidation for Peace for Mindanao seminar at around [...].

Accompanied by his peace panel chair, Mohagher Iqbal, Murad raised their concerns about the Malacanang-proposed revisions on the draft Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) [...].

Murad told MindaNews that he brought to the President's attention their "concerns" on the proposed revisions of the 97-page draft that the GPH-MILF Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) submitted to the Office of the President on April 22.

Murad declined to disclose details about their "concerns" [...].

[...] The President, he said, told them he cannot answer them now as he has yet to check with those who reviewed the draft, but promised to look into these "concerns." [...]

The MILF had earlier expressed fears of a "watered down"

version of the draft Basic Law.

Draft to Congress

Malacanang is expected to submit the draft to Congress when it reopens on July 28, the same day the President is expected to deliver his State of the Nation Address.

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Teresita Quintos-Deles had told the International Conference of Cotabato on June 6 that the draft was still undergoing a "thorough process of review" by the Office of the President to ensure Congress gets a "more refined and strengthened" draft.

In the same Cotabato conference, Senate President Franklin Drilon, in a message read for him by Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, assured the Senate's support to the peace process and their commitment to pass what he refers to as "unifying and integrating" Basic Law.

Drilon said they "will ensure that the Bangsamoro law falls within the four corners of the Constitution and that it can withstand judicial scrutiny."

He vowed to pass the law "as early as possible." [...]



Action Network Human Rights- Philippines

Hronlineph.com, 25.06.2014

Congress Holds Historic Consultation with IPs in Maguindanao

Cotabato City – “We hope that this time, we will be heard, and our desires as a people will actually be considered and included in the forging of a genuine peace here in Mindanao.”

This was expressed by Timuay Alim Bandara, a Teduray leader of the Timuay Justice and Governance, in the congressional hearing held in Upi, Maguindanao.

The Committee on the National Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples of the House of Representatives conducted yesterday the first ever congressional public consultation in Upi, Maguindanao on the “Hopes and Aspirations of the Indigenous Peoples in the Bangsamoro” that gathered close to 800 participants from North and South Upi.

The six members of the committee led by Rep. Nancy A. Catamco heard the various issues and concerns of the Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo relating to their socio-cultural, economic and political future in the Bangsamoro. The committee hoped that this discourse will prepare them in deliberating the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) once it reaches Congress.

“We all agreed that we are supporting the peace process but there are several issues that we want to clarify especially on the ancestral domains in the Bangsamoro”, said Rep. Catamco.

The Teduray, Lambangian and Dulangan Manobo in the prospective Bangsamoro are more or less 122, 327 individuals in a 201, 850-hectare unified ancestral domain claim which covers the whole area of Upi, Datu Blah Sinsuat and South Upi as well as some parts of Datu Odin Sinsuat, Shariff Aguak, Datu Hofer,

Talayan, Guindulungan, Ampatuan and Datu Abdullah Sangki in Maguindanao.

17 years after the Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA) was signed, the delineation process still remains at the initial stage despite the problems of logging, mining and other development projects that continue to plague the indigenous communities.

Timuay Alim Bandara, the head claimant shared his fear that despite their incessant efforts to peacefully struggle for its delineation, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) specifically in the Annex on Power-Sharing, placed the ancestral domain of the indigenous peoples under the exclusive power of the Bangsamoro.

“Our participation in this public consultation is a manifestation that we are already hurt and confused”, Bandara lamented. Meanwhile, Cong. Teddy Baguilat, the vice-chair of the committee assured the indigenous peoples that “the BBL is not a hindrance to the ancestral domain delineation. We encourage the NCIP to continue with the delineation.”

This long-drawn assertion of the IPs in the proposed core territory of the Bangsamoro is a product of raising the stakes in the peace process and making it more inclusive. Along this line, Timuay Labi Sannie Bello of the Timuay Justice and Governance (TJG) ended with an appeal that this politically-negotiated settlement made to address the historical injustices done to the Bangsamoro peoples will likewise correct the injustices done to the Indigenous Peoples through the passage of time. [...]

Inquirer Mindanao, 26.06.2014

3 MNLF factions agree to re-unite with Misuari as leader

By Julie S. Alipala

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines—Three factions of the Moro National Liberation Front agreed to name founder Nur Misuari as their representative in future talks with the government to implement the 1996 peace agreement, and move as one in pursuit of peace and the Bangsamoro aspiration for self-governance. During the June 11 to 12 meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, three factions of the MNLF – Habib Mudjahab Hashim’s MNLF Islamic Command Council (ICC), the Executive Committee of 15 led by Muslimin Sema and Nur Misuari’s group represented by lawyer Randolph Parcasio – signed an agreement to have “a unified, solid position toward efforts to arrive at a political, just and lasting peaceful solution” to the Bangsamoro problem.

Hashim [...] said they also agreed to have Misuari as the group’s leader and representative in future dealings with other institutions and entities, including the Philippine government.

Misuari, however, has been in hiding since his men attacked Zamboanga City in September 2013. He will be represented by lawyer Randolph Parcasio.

“We have discussed with MNLF senior leaders, together with the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation), the need to intervene and seek for the lifting of Misuari’s arrest warrant,”

Hashim said. [...]

Hashim said no formal talks have happened between the MNLF and the MILF, which has signed a Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro with the Philippine government. [...]

While the MILF recently signed a peace agreement with the Philippine government led by the Aquino administration, the MNLF has been complaining that the government failed to fully implement the provisions of the peace deal it signed in 1996. The MILF is a breakaway group of the MNLF. [...]

Misuari was not invited in the Jeddah meeting initiated by the OIC. But Hashim said they were in constant contact with Misuari during the two-day meeting.

The MNLF senior leaders also agreed that Parcasio will be the spokesperson of the “MNLF Jeddah Formula.” Hashim expressed the group’s hope that the Department of Justice would review the cases filed against Misuari.

Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Isabelle Salazar said the lifting of the warrant of arrest against Misuari would be a matter for the Regional Trial Court in Taguig City to decide on.

“I believe that the Court will appreciate the merits of the case,” Salazar said.

FURTHER READINGS

Icg.com, 19.06.2014

The Philippines: Dismantling Rebel Groups

The Philippines has had some recent success in winding down decades-long negotiations with rebel groups, but achieving peace with the country’s biggest insurgency, in Mindanao, requires both new energy and fresh thinking.

In its latest report, *The Philippines: Dismantling Rebel Groups*, the International Crisis Group examines President Benigno Aquino III’s efforts to end major insurgencies, including with the Mindanao-based, 12,000-strong Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). An October 2012 pact with the MILF – the most recent agreement in intermittent talks that began in 1997 – brought hope for peace. Government and rebels now need to find ways to improve security in Mindanao, which is awash in arms. [...]