



Secretary Leila de Lima
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Cologne, April 10, 2014

Killing of Romeo Capalla

Honorable Secretary de Lima,

The Action Network Human Rights – Philippines is writing you to express its grave concern about the killing of Romeo Capalla, Chairperson of the board of directors of the Panay Fair Trade Center (PFTC). Unidentified gunmen shot him dead on March 15, 2014 at the market of Oton, Iloilo in presence of his 90 year-old mother-in-law.

A detainee during the Martial Law period, Capalla was a founding member of the Panay chapter of SELDA (Samahan ng mga Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto), an organization which supports political prisoners all over the country. He later devoted his life advocating the production of fair trade and organic food. His advocacy made him a target of harassment by state security forces. In 2005, Romeo Capalla, then PFTC manager, already faced trumped-up charges for destructive arson. He was arrested in August 2005 and spent two months in prison. The spurious charges against him were only dropped after mass protests of PFTC farmers.

Other members of PFTC were also victims of repression in the past. Thus, Ruth Salditos, current PFTC president, has been denounced as a terrorist by the military. She is currently facing trumped-up charges for rebellion accusing her of attempted murder and the use of unlicensed firearms and explosives.

During the visit of a delegation of the Action Network Human Rights – Philippines to your country in February 2014, we observed that, despite the promises of the current administration, still in only very few cases are perpetrators of human rights violations successfully prosecuted and convicted. We are also extremely concerned about the continuing severe human rights violations taking place and a lack of progress in ending extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and fabricated charges against political activists. In the first few months of 2014 alone, several political activists and human rights defenders were murdered. These include the murders of land reform activist Arman Lumibao Padino in Porac, Pampanga on January 12, of urban poor leader Sixto Bagasala Jr. in Malabon City on February 15, and of human rights activist William Bugatti in Kiangan, Ifugao on March 26.

Members: Amnesty International, Brot für die Welt – Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, IPON, Misereor, missio, philippinenbüro e.V., Vereinte Evangelische Mission



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The murder of Romeo Capalla has thus to be seen as an example of the continuing serious abuses and still existing deficiencies in combating human rights violations. We therefore once again urgently call upon the Government of the Republic of the Philippines:

- To conduct a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation into the killing of Romeo Capalla and to hold the perpetrators accountable for this crime.
- To reconsider the charges against Ruth Salditos and to drop them immediately should no sufficient evidence be found.
- To investigate all cases of serious human rights violations without delay and to bring the perpetrators to justice.
- To issue a standing invitation to all UN special rapporteurs with thematic mandates and working groups of the UN Human Rights Council in order to receive an independent assessment of the most pressing issues.

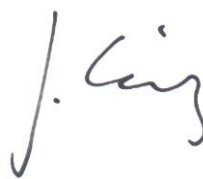
We kindly ask you to keep us informed about the measures taken by you.

Yours sincerely,

For the Action Network Human Rights Philippines:



Elmar Noé
Chair of the Action Network Human Rights - Philippines



Johannes Icking
Coordinator

Copy to:

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President of the Republic of the Philippines

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Philippine Embassy Berlin, Germany

Loretta Ann P. Rosales
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Special Task Force on extrajudicial killings
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Christoph Strässer
Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian
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General Emmanuel T. Bautista
Chief of Staff
Armed Forces of the Philippines

Guy Ledoux
Ambassador
Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines

Director General Alan LM Purisma
Police Director General
Philippine National Police

Christof Heyns
United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial,
summary or arbitrary executions

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Colonel Rhoderick M. Parrayno
Chief Human Rights Office
Armed Forces of the Philippines

Barbara Lochbihler, MEP
Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights
European Parliament

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Stavros Lambrinidis
Special Representative for Human Rights
European Union

Michael Brand, MP
Chair of the Committee on Human Rights and
Humanitarian Aid
German Bundestag

About the Action Network Human Rights - Philippines

The Action Network Human Rights - Philippines (Aktionsbündnis Menschenrechte – Philippinen, AMP) was formed in August 2007 to promote lobby- and information work in Germany and the EU regarding the human rights situation in the Philippines. Through its office, the network coordinates publications, events and lobby activities. Target groups are political decision makers, human rights defenders and social activists as well as the media in Germany and Europe. Member Organisations of the AMP are Amnesty International Germany, Bread for the World - Church Development Service (EED), International Peace Observers Network (IPON), Misereor, Missio Munich, philippinenbuero Inc. in Asia House and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM). The main focus of the network lies on the core human rights issues of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, as well as trumped up charges.

Members: Amnesty International, Brot für die Welt – Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst, IPON, Misereor, missio, philippinenbüro e.V., Vereinte Evangelische Mission



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