

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**Possible Extrajudicial Execution**

**4 May 1993**

**PHILIPPINES:**

**Exquito Lasquite, trade unionist**

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Amnesty International is deeply concerned at the killing of Exquito Lasquite, a 33-year-old local coordinator of the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW), on 17 April 1993. Members of a Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU), a government-backed militia used by the military in counter-insurgency operations, are believed to have been responsible for his killing. Amnesty International is concerned that Exquito Lasquite's killing appears to reflect a continuing pattern of human rights violations against trade unionists in the Philippines.

Exquito Lasquite had been an active member of the NFSW since 1984 and at the time of his death was the coordinator of a NFSW socio-economic project in Hacienda Culminares, *barangay* (local administrative unit) Minnoyan, Murcia, Negros Occidental. In the months prior to his death, members of the CAFGU unit assigned to the army's 61st Infantry Battalion at Minnoyan had frequently come to Exquito Lasquite's house and questioned him about his activities and those of the New People's Army (NPA). They had also accused him of keeping firearms in his house.

Exquito Lasquite's murder took place at his house in the afternoon of 17 April 1993. His wife was returning home after attending an NFSW meeting and was about 20 metres away from the house when she and her five children, who had come out to meet her, heard gunshots coming from their house. When they reached the house they saw Exquito Lasquite lying dead with multiple gunshot wounds to his head.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has documented a pattern of serious human rights violations against trade unionists in the Philippines. These have included extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrest and "disappearance", as well as torture and ill-treatment while in police or military custody. Human rights violations against trade unionists have been particularly serious on the major sugar-producing island of Negros in the central Philippines where Exquito Lasquite lived.

Within the trade union movement the primary victims of human rights violations have been members of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU, May First Movement) and the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW), a KMU affiliate, of which Exquito Lasquite was an active member. Both unions have been among the most active and vocal critics of the government, not just with respect to labour issues,

but also in the context of the wider political debate.

Such violations have occurred within the context of a protracted armed struggle between government forces and the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Trade union victims have predominantly been those accused by the authorities of sympathy with the armed insurgency or members of unions alleged to be "fronts" for the Communist Party of the Philippines.

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:**

- expressing concern that Exquito Lasquite may have been killed on 17 April 1993 by members of the CAFGU based at the Minnoyan Detachment of the Army's 61st Infantry Battalion;

- urging the government to carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the possible extrajudicial execution of Exquito Lasquite;

- urging that the findings of such an investigation be made public and the perpetrators brought to justice;

- asking to be kept informed of the progress of any investigation;

- urging the government to take steps to ensure that the right of trade unionists to engage in lawful trade union activity without fear of death, "disappearance" or arbitrary arrest or torture is effectively guaranteed;

- reiterating calls by Amnesty International for the government to take immediate steps to dismantle the CAFGU.

**APPEALS TO**

1. President Fidel V Ramos  
Malacanang Palace  
Manila, Philippines

**Telegrams: President Ramos, Manila, Philippines**

**Faxes: + 63 2 731 1325 (via Press Secretary to the President);  
+ 63 2 832 7793 (via Department or Foreign Affairs)**

**Salutation: Dear President Ramos**

2. General Lisandro Abadia  
GHQ, Armed Forces of the Philippines  
Camp Aguinaldo  
Quezon City, Philippines

**Telegrams: General Abadia, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Philippines**

**Salutation: Dear General Abadia**

3. Brig. Gen. Ramberto Saavedra  
Negros Island Command  
Camingawan, Bacolod City  
6100 Philippines

**Telegrams: Brig. Gen. Saavedra, Negros Island Command, Bacolod City,  
Philippines**

**Salutation: Dear Brig. Gen. Saavedra**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1. Sedfrey Ordonez	2. Lt. Col. Pedro Cabuay
Chairman, Commission on Human Rights	61st Infantry Batallion
IBP Building	Minnoyan, Murcia
Dona Julia Vargas Avenue, Pasig,	Negros Occitantal
Manila, Philippines	Philippines

**Faxes: + 63 2 631 6190**

**+ 63 2 631 9530**

and to diplomatic representatives of the Philippines accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 June 1993.