

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 35/009/2002

28 August 2002

Further information on EXTRA 63/02 (ASA 35/007/2002, 14 August 2002) - Imminent execution

PHILIPPINES Rolando Pagdayawon (m), former police officer

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Rolando Pagdayawon, who was scheduled to be executed by lethal injection on 30 August, has been granted a 90-day reprieve by President Arroyo. He was sentenced to death for the rape of his common-law wife's nine-year-old daughter.

According to the President's Press Secretary, the reprieve will give the President more time to determine whether his death sentence should be commuted to a prison term. The reprieve also applies to two other men, Filemon Serrano (see follow-up to UA 236/02, ASA 35/006/2002, 2 August 2002) and Eddie Sernadilla, who were both due to be executed in September.

The Press Secretary said that President Arroyo's decision to grant a reprieve was partly due to pressure from the Catholic Church in the Philippines which, along with human rights groups, has been pressing for abolition of the death penalty.

Moves in Congress towards abolition of the death penalty have been gathering pace in recent weeks. According to the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), almost half of the members of the House of Representatives and a majority of Senators have signalled their intent to vote for the abolition of capital punishment. In May, the House of Representatives' Committees on Revision of Laws and Civil, Political and Human Rights approved bills providing for abolition. The Senate is currently conducting public hearings on a similar bill. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has urged the President to certify the bills as urgent.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals in English or in your own language:**

- welcoming the President's decision to grant a 90-day reprieve to Rolando Pagdayawon and urging her to commute his death sentence to a prison term;
- expressing the hope she will grant clemency to all other prisoners facing imminent execution;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of rape and other violent crime but pointing out that the death penalty has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect, and is brutalizing to all involved;
- expressing concern at serious defects in the Philippine criminal justice system, including the use of torture, lack of access to lawyers and unfair trials, which increase the risk of executing the innocent;
- urging the President to grant an official moratorium on all executions, and to support current moves within Congress to abolish the death penalty.

**APPEALS TO:** (Please note that fax tones are sometimes difficult to obtain)

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo  
Malacañang Palace  
J.P. Laurel St  
San Miguel 1005  
Manila  
Philippines

**Telegrams: President Macapagal-Arroyo, Manila, Philippines**

**Fax: + 63 2 736 1010 / 832 3793**

**Salutation: Dear President Macapagal-Arroyo**

**COPIES TO:**

Secretary of Justice

Secretary Hernando Perez

Department of Justice

Padre Faura, Ermita, Manila

Philippines

**Fax: + 63 2 521 1614**

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 9 October 2002.