

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Extrajudicial Execution/Fear for Safety

18 May 1993

PHILIPPINES: Porferio Masuela and Inostacia Masuela

Amnesty International is concerned at the killing of Porferio Masuela, a 75-year-old farmer, on 22 April 1993 by Philippine government forces. The organization also fears for the safety of Inostacia Masuela, his 71-year-old wife, who witnessed Porferio Masuela's murder.

Porferio Masuela was killed in his house in *barangay* (local administrative unit) Luz, Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, by three members of a Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU), a government-backed militia used by the military in counter-insurgency operations. The three CAFGUs, who were identified as members of a unit based in *barangay* Linantuyan, Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, were said to have been drunk when they entered Porferio Masuela's house at about 4pm on 22 April 1993. They immediately attacked Porferio Masuela with a piece of wood, accusing him of harbouring members of the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). His wife - Inostacia Masuela - saw him being stabbed at least five times in the abdomen and back by one of the CAFGUs. When she tried to stop the attack on her husband one of the CAFGUs tried to stab her, but she managed to run away and hide.

Inostacia Masuela did not return to her house that night because she feared for her life. When she, her son and a nephew returned to the house the next day they found Porferio Masuela's body lying in a pool of blood. A magazine of live bullets was found immediately outside the house. The same day they took Porferio Masuela's body into town for autopsy and burial.

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of . Those who witness, or file complaints about, human rights abuses by Philippine government forces frequently themselves become victims of human rights violations including intimidation, ill-treatment, or even extrajudicial execution. Not only did Inostacia Masuela witness her husband's death but she is understood to be planning to file criminal charges against the three CAFGU members concerned. Amnesty International's concern is heightened by the fact that the three CAFGUs remain at large and fully armed. It is therefore calling on the government to immediately disarm the alleged perpetrators and to take other appropriate steps to guarantee Inostacio Masuela's safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The killing of unarmed civilians, including elderly people, women and children, is widespread in rural areas particularly in areas where the government believes the NPA enjoys support from the civilian population. Porferio and Inostacia Masuela had originally been living in such an area, but had been obliged to move to a "hamlet area" set up by the military in 1989 and 1990 as a means

of cutting off support by the rural civilian population for the NPA rebels.

The CAFGUs are one of the forces deployed by the government in its efforts to defeat the NPA and other armed opposition groups. Despite considerable evidence of CAFGU involvement in human rights violations, a leading military official said in August 1992 that military training of CAFGU members had "corrected" this problem and the government proposed a substantial budgetary increase for the CAFGU in 1993. However, evidence compiled by Amnesty International does not support these claims. It

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indicates that judicial and institutional measures to protect human rights have had little impact on the behaviour of CAFGU members, despite intermittent changes in the level of violations reported in the various regions of the Philippines. In view of this evidence, Amnesty International has repeatedly urged the government to dismantle the CAFGU as a matter of urgency.

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

- expressing concern that Porferio Maseula was killed on 22 April 1993 by members of a Citizen Armed Geographical Unit (CAFGU) based in *barangay* Linantuyan, Guihulngan, Negros Oriental;
- calling for an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the killing, and for the suspected perpetrators to be disarmed immediately and brought promptly to justice;
- expressing concern that Inostacia Masuela may face intimidation or physical violence from government forces because of what she witnessed;
- urging the authorities to take appropriate measures to guarantee her safety;
- reiterating calls by Amnesty International for the government to take immediate steps to dismantle the CAFGU.

PLEASE SEND YOUR APPEALS TO

1) President Fidel V. Ramos
Malacañang 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 of Foreign Affairs)**

Salutation: Dear President Ramos

2) Hon Emilio Macias II
Governor, Province of Negros Oriental
Provincial Capital
Dumaguete City
Negros Oriental, Philippines

Telegrams: Hon Emilio Macias, Governor, Negros Oriental, Philippines

Salutation: Dear Governor

3. Lt Col Jose Bandong Jr
Superintendent, Philippine National Police
Camp Francisco Fernandez, Sibulan
Negros Oriental, Philippines

**Telegrams: Lt Col Jose Bandong, Camp Francisco Fernandez, Sibulan, Negros
Oriental, Philippines**

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant Colonel

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Sedfrey Ordonez
Chairman, Commission on Human Rights
IBP Building
Dona Julia Vargas Avenue, Pasig
Manila, Philippines

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 29 June 1993.