

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "disappearance"

6 October 1993

PHILIPPINES

Manilyn Magpatoc, aged 10 years

Abelardo Jr. Magpatoc, aged 6 years

Nenita Magpatoc, aged 20 years

Two children, Manilyn and Abelardo Magpatoc, and their Aunt, Nenita Magpatoc, were reportedly abducted on 12 September 1993 by armed men believed to be military or police agents in Bitan-agen, Butuan City. Their fate and whereabouts remain unknown and Amnesty International is urgently concerned for their safety.

Eyewitnesses reported that at approximately 2.30am more than a dozen armed men went to the home of the Magpatocs and ordered the family to open the door. Relatives tried to refuse but the men forced their way in and seized the three victims. Nenita Magpatoc's mother tried to plead for the three to be left alone, but was told by one of the men that they were following orders from their superiors. The three young people were then taken away in a car.

Relatives sought the help of military officials of the 301st Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army. They were told that nothing was known about the alleged abduction. However the parents of Manilyn and Abelardo had previously been accused by the military of being members of the armed opposition group, the New People's Army (NPA). Relatives and members of the local community believe that the two children and their aunt were abducted to force their parents to surrender to military forces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At least 14 people are reported to have "disappeared" in the Philippines since the beginning of 1993. "Disappearance", extrajudicial killing and other human rights violations have occurred against a background of armed conflict between government and government-backed forces and the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Government efforts to defeat the insurgency have involved efforts to weaken selected civilian organizations and this has resulted in a blurring of the distinction between lawful political activity and armed opposition to the government. Victims of human rights violations have included community leaders, trade unionists, human rights activists, journalists or others whose political or professional activity leads them to express criticism of government policy.

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

- expressing deep concern at the reported abduction of Manilyn Magpatoc, aged 10, Abelardo Jr. Magpatoc, aged 6 and Nenita Magpatoc, aged 20, from their home in Bitan-agan, Butuan City;

- noting with urgent concern that two of the victims are young children. In view of this fact urging the authorities to act immediately and to take effective steps to locate the three and to guarantee their safety and well-being;

- urging the authorities to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of this case and to bring the suspected perpetrators promptly to justice before a civilian court.

APPEALS TO

1. President Fidel V. Ramos
Malacañang Palace
Manila
Philippines

Salutation: Dear President Ramos

**Faxes: +63 2 832 7795 (via Dept of Foreign Affairs)
+63 2 731 1325 (via press secretary)**

Telexes: 4014 Malcom PN; 45618 RMC; 63370 Pres PN; 82361 PU

2. Col. Sergio Belleza
Commanding Officer
30th Infantry Battalion
Buenavista, Agusan del Norte
Philippines

Salutation: Dear Colonel Belleza

Telegrams: Commander, 30th IBPA, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte, Philippines

3. Brig. Gen. Clemente Mariano
Commanding General 4th Infantry Division
Camp Evangelista
Cagayan de Oro City
Philippines

Salutation: Dear Brig. Gen. Mariano

Telegrams: Commanding General, Camp Evangelista, Cagayan de Oro, Philippines

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Sedfrey Ordoñez
Chairman, Commission on Human Rights
IBP Building
Doña Julia Vargas Avenue
Pasig, Manila
Philippines

Faxes: +63 2 631 6449

Task Force Detainees - Northern Mindanao
Door-S, Dongallo Compound
123 Hayes St, Camaman-an
Cagayan de Oro City
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 17 November 1993.