

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Incommunicado Detention/Possible "Disappearance"

7 June 1991

PHILIPPINES

Eulogio MANIKAR, a 25-year-old farmer

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Eulogio Manikar, who has not been seen since 1 May 1991. He is reported to have gone missing after being taken for questioning by the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Santa Rita, Hilongos, Leyte.

On 30 April 1991 the barangay (local district) captain of Santa Rita reportedly called a meeting of the PWERSA MASA (Force of the Masses), an anti-communist "vigilante" group, at which the local activities of the armed insurgency movement were discussed. The meeting was apparently attended by Hilongos town Police Chief and several police officers. Eulogio Manikar told his mother that he had been in the vicinity of the meeting and had noticed a man staring at him. He said that after the meeting ended the man followed him.

According to his mother's account, Eulogio Manikar was frightened by this incident and the following day went to report it to the barangay captain. Since then he has not returned home and his current whereabouts are unknown. Eulogio Manikar's mother subsequently went to the barangay captain to ask about her son. She reported that the captain admitted that he had taken Eulogio Manikar to the PNP detachment in Santa Rita, and that he was held there for questioning about his alleged involvement in a killing believed to have been plotted by New People's Army (NPA) members.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has recorded at least ten cases of "disappearance" or incommunicado detention during the first five and a half months of 1991. Of these, one was subsequently found dead and is believed to have been victim of an extra-judicial execution by members of the security forces. More than 50 people were reported to have "disappeared" in the Philippines during 1990. Of these, at least five are believed to have died or to have been killed while in custody and some appeared to have been tortured. At least 15 people, whose detention was denied by security forces, subsequently reappeared after a period in police or military custody. The majority were still missing at the end of the year.

"Disappearance" and incommunicado detention in the Philippines have occurred against a background of armed conflict between government and government-backed forces and the NPA, the armed wing of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The majority of those held in unacknowledged or incommunicado detention have been members of lawful non-governmental organizations publicly labelled by the security forces as fronts for the NPA or CPP, or individuals suspected of NPA or CPP membership. In the overwhelming majority of the cases in which there is clear and substantive evidence, the perpetrators have been members of government or government-backed

forces.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern for the safety of Eulogio Manikar and urging the authorities to act immediately to clarify his fate and whereabouts;
- calling for an immediate and impartial investigation into his case and asking to be informed of the progress of the investigation;
- urging the government to ensure that all those suspected of committing human rights violations are brought promptly to justice and tried before a civil court;
- calling on the government to ensure that Eulogio Manikar and all those held in detention by security forces are granted immediate access to relatives and lawyers;
- expressing concern that members of an unofficial "vigilante" group may have been involved in unlawful activities and acted with the support or cooperation of police authorities.

APPEALS TO

Franklin Drilon
Secretary of Justice
Department of Justice
Padre Faura Street Ermita
Manila, Philippines

**Telegrams: Justice Secretary Drilon,
Manila, Philippines**

Faxes: +63 2 521 1614

General Cesar P Nazareno
Director General
Philippine National Police
Headquarters of the Philippines
Constabulary

Camp Crane
Metro Manila, Philippines
**Telegrams: Director General
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Metro Manila, Philippines**

and to at least one of the following:

Francisco Omega
Office of the Philippine National
Police
Hilongos

6524 Leyte, Philippines
**Telegrams: Francisco Omega,
National Police Office, Hilongos,
Leyte, Philippines**

COPIES TO:

Mary Concepcion Bautista
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Commission on Human Rights
IBP Building Complex
Dona Julia Vargas Avenue
Pasig Metro Manila, Philippines

Captain Salvador Ugarde
Commanding Officer
PNP Detachment
Santa Rita, Hilongos

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**Telegrams: CO Ugarde, PNP
Detachment Santa Rita, Hilongos,
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and to diplomatic representatives of the Philippines in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 July 1991.