

URGENT ACTION

LIFE SENTENCE FOR 'CONFESSING' UNDER TORTURE

Filipino national Ronaldo Lopez Ulep is serving a life sentence for espionage in a Qatari prison: he had 'confessed' under torture. The verdict on his appeal will be announced on 31 May.

Ronaldo Ulep, a former civilian employee of Qatar's air force, was arrested on 7 April 2010 in front of three of his children at his home in the capital, Doha, by officers from the Criminal Investigation Division (CID). He was convicted of spying by a Court of First Instance in Doha on 30 April 2014, and sentenced to life imprisonment, for allegedly selling information about his employer.

Ronaldo Ulep is understood to have been held incommunicado for about a month before his family were told where he was. During the first eight months of his detention, he was tortured and otherwise ill-treated. According to sources close to the case, during two interrogation sessions he was burned with cigarettes on his back and legs, stripped naked and forced to crawl around on the floor until his knees bled, and punched and slapped. He was then forced to sign a document in Arabic, which he could not read, that was later presented in court as a "confession". Ronaldo Ulep was also held for three to four days with his hands bound behind his back and was repeatedly deprived of sleep by guards who taunted him by saying his family were dead. He spent four years in solitary confinement at the State Security Bureau in Doha. After he was sentenced he was moved to the Central Prison in Doha and has not been allowed to contact his family despite asking permission at least twice.

According to court documents, at his trial Ronaldo Ulep told the court that his "confessions" had been extracted through torture and other ill-treatment. However the Court of First Instance rejected this, citing a lack of evidence to support his allegations. His appeal began on 26 May 2014 and five sessions have taken place: some of these have lasted as little as 15 minutes and no translation service has been provided. The Appeal Court is expected to issue its verdict on 31 May.

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Urging the Qatari authorities to order a full and independent investigation into Ronaldo Ulep's allegations of torture and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice;
- Urging them to ensure that the verdict on his appeal does not rely on evidence gained through torture;
- Asking them to ensure that Ronaldo Ulep is treated humanely whilst in detention and is granted regular phone calls to his family, and access to his lawyer and consular assistance.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 JUNE 2015 TO:

Minister of Justice

Dr. Hassan Lahdan Saqr Al-Mohannadi
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 917
Doha
State of Qatar
Fax: +974 44832875
Email: info@moj.gov.qa
Salutation: Your Excellency

Attorney General

Dr Ali bin Fetais Al Marri
PO Box 705
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Email: info@pp.gov.qa
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Head of state (Amir of Qatar)

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al
Thani
PO Box 923
Doha, State of Qatar
Fax: +974 4436 1212

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Two other Filipino nationals were involved in the same trial as Ronaldo Ulep. They were arrested in March and April 2010 respectively and they too are understood to have been held in solitary confinement in the State Security Bureau until their trial. Both have alleged that "confessions" presented in court were extracted through torture. One of the men was sentenced to life imprisonment and the other was sentenced to death. The verdicts on their appeals are expected the same day as Ronaldo Ulep's.

Amnesty International has twice written to the Qatari authorities to raise the case – in September 2014 and in January 2015 - but has received no response. The organization has also raised the case with the Philippines Embassy in Qatar.

In recent years, Amnesty International has received reports of torture or other ill-treatment being used to force detainees to "confess" or provide information. Most reported incidents occur before detainees are charged or tried, particularly during periods of incommunicado detention by State Security. Activists in Qatar have raised concerns that State Security personnel, generally operating in plain clothes, do not identify themselves when carrying out arrests and have been holding detainees in police detention centres rather than State Security-run facilities. Their aim appears to be to deny responsibility for carrying out particular arrests and detentions and thereby to deflect criticism of their actions.

Name: Ronaldo Lopez Ulep

Gender m/f: m

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