

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 129/93 Unacknowledged Detention/Fear of "Disappearance" 23 April 1993

~~PHILIPPINES: Ricky Bero~~
Julio Rapol, 57-year-old farmer

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Ricky Bero and Julio Rapol who "disappeared" after being arrested on 18 March 1993 by a combined team of Philippines National Police (PNP) and members of the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) in *barangay* (local administrative unit) Villa Pag-asa, Bansud, Oriental Mindoro. Despite repeated requests for information, as of 23 April 1993 relatives have been unable to establish the whereabouts of Ricky Bero and Julio Rapol. Amnesty International is concerned that they may be in danger of ill-treatment or even extrajudicial execution if they are not located immediately. It urges the government to act immediately to locate Ricky Bero and Julio Rapol and to guarantee their safety.

Ricky Bero was arrested by a 12 person team of PNP and CAFGU members at 5pm on 18 March outside the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Villa Pag-asa, on suspicion of being a member of the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). When informed that he was being arrested, Ricky Bero asked for permission to contact Julio Rapol, at whose house he was temporarily staying. When Julio Rapol arrived he asked the PNP/CAFGU team to inform the *barangay* captain about Ricky Bero's arrest, but this request was refused. Instead both men were taken to the military camp at Bliss, *barangay* Villa Pag-asa, Bansud.

On 20 March one of Julio Rapol's daughters went to the military camp in Bliss to make inquiries about her father's whereabouts, but the military denied that he was being held there. She then went to the military camp in Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro, where she was informed that neither Ricky Bero nor Julio Rapol were being held there. However, an officer of 271st PNP company told another relative of Julio Rapol that the two men had been brought to a military camp in Bongabong. Relatives of Ricky Bero were reportedly told that Ricky Bero had been detained because his brother was a member of the NPA.

With the help of local human rights organizations relatives have sought the assistance of the mayor of Bansud, Prudente Soller, and the provincial governor, Rodolfo G Valencia, in locating the whereabouts of the two men who have "disappeared". As a result the provincial governor has written to the PNP command requesting them to investigate the "disappearances". To date Amnesty International has not received details of any response to these letters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

"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 CPP. Victims of "disappearance", incommunicado detention and extrajudicial killings have come from all walks of life. They have included rural people living in zones of conflict, members of tribal communities, social and community workers, members of lawful political organizations, church workers, trade unionists and human rights lawyers.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Ricky Bero and Julio Rapol who were arrested on 18 March 1993 by a combined team of PNP and members of the CAFGU in *barangay* Villa Pag-asa, Bansud, Oriental Mindoro;

- urging the authorities to act immediately to clarify their fate and whereabouts;

- calling for an immediate and impartial investigation into their arrest and unacknowledged detention and asking to be informed of the progress of any such investigation;

- reiterating Amnesty International's call for the government to establish and maintain centralized public registers of all people detained in all parts of the country, to be regularly updated and made available to detainees, family and lawyers.

APPEALS TO

1. President Fidel V Ramos
Malacanang 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. General Raul Imperial
Director General
Philippine National Police
Camp Crame, Quezon City
Manila, Philippines

Telegrams: Gen Imperial, PNP, Camp Crame, Manila, Philippines

Salutation: Dear General Raul Imperial

3. PNP Provincial Director
Bongabong
Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

Telegrams: PNP Provincial Director, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

Salutation: Dear Director

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1. Sedfrey Ordonez
Chairman, Commission on Human Rights
IBP Building
Dona Julia Vargas Avenue
Pasig, Manila, Philippines
Faxes: + 63 2 631 6190, + 63 2 631 9530

2. Rodolpho G Valencia
Provincial Governor
Provincial Capital
Calapan, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

3. Senator Raul Roco
Chairman, Senate Committee on Civil, Political and Human Rights
Philippine Senate, Ermita, Manila, Philippines
Faxes: + 63 2 922 2407

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 4 June 1993.