

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Harassment/death threats

27 August 1993

PHILIPPINES: ~~Henry Llanos Banos, 32 years~~
Graciano Pardillo, 56 years
Danilo Cangmaong, 23 years

The three men named above, all members of the Capehan Farmers' Association (CFA) in Tuburan, Cebu, have been harassed and threatened with death by local government officials and police for the last four months. The threats are apparently intended to stop the farmers campaigning for government assistance and improvements to their land. Amnesty International fears that the lives of the three may be in danger and urges the Philippine Government to act immediately to guarantee their safety and wellbeing.

Acts of harassment by local government officials began in April 1993. In the following months members of the local branch of the Philippine National police became directly involved. On 27 April the Captain of *barangay* (local administrative unit) Gimamaa ordered Graciano Pardillo to stop the formation of the CFA, alleging that it was "front" organization for the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The captain said he would destroy the CFA himself and threatened to kill its members.

On 30 June 1993, the same Captain fired shots into the air outside a house where Henry Llanos Banos and the other farmers were discussing a proposal to ask for provincial government assistance with their water supply. After the shots were fired the Captain ordered Henry Llanos Banos to come out of the house and, when he did so, threatened to kill him. The *barangay* chief accused the farmers of being supporters of the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the CPP. On the following day, the son of the Captain, along with a member of the local police who was brandishing a revolver, challenged Henry Llanos Banos to a fight.

One month later, on 30 July, the mother of Henry Llanos Banos received an unsigned letter, threatening to kill her son. She believed the letter was sent by the *barangay* captain or the police. In early August another member of the group, Danilo Cangmaong, was knocked unconscious by a member of the police force and another son of the *barangay* captain.

The three farmers, and other members of the CFA are frightened by these forms of harassment and believe their lives may be in danger. They have sought the assistance of national and international human rights organizations and asked for pressure to be put upon the Philippine Government to protect them.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Harassment, death threats and other human rights violations have occurred against a background of armed conflict between government and government-backed forces and the NPA. The evidence clearly indicates that people who receive death threats are at serious risk of extrajudicial execution or "disappearance". The majority of victims of human rights violations are civilians whose peaceful political, social, religious or human rights activities have brought them into conflict with government policy. Such people are frequently accused or "labelled" by the military of being NPA sympathizers. Once labelled in this way, they are portrayed by the security forces as legitimate targets within the counter-insurgency campaign.

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

- expressing grave concern for Henry Llanos Banos, Graciano Pardillo and Danilo Cangmaong, who have been repeatedly harassed and threatened with death by local government and police officials in *barangay* Gimamaa, Tuburan, Cebu;
- urging the government to act immediately to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of the three farmers and other members of the CFA;
- calling upon the government to suspend the suspected perpetrators from active service, and to bring them promptly to justice before a civil court.

APPEALS TO

1) Police Superintendent Cesar Pagtakhan
Director
Philippine National Police
Cebu Provincial Command
DAS, Lutupan
Toledo City, Cebu
Philippines

Telegrams: PNP Director, Cebu Provincial Command, Toledo City, Philippines

Salutation: Dear Superintendent Pagtakhan

2) Vicente de la Serna
Governor
Province of Cebu
Capitol Building
Cebu City 6000
Philippines

Telegrams: Governor, Cebu Province, Capitol Bldg, Cebu City, Philippines

Salutation: Dear Governor de la Serna

3) SP04 Federico Montebon
Station Commander
Tuburan Police Station
Municipal Building
Poblacion, Tuburan
Cebu

Philippines

Telegrams: PNP Commander, Tuburan Police Station, Tuburan, Cebu, Philippines

Salutation: Dear Commandor Montebon

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Atty. Alejandro Alonso
Director
Commission on Human Rights - 7
Third Floor, Ybañez Building
Fuente Osmeña, Cebu City 6000
Philippines

2) Sedfrey Ordoñez
Commission on Human Rights
IPB Bulding
Doña Julia Vargas Avenue
Pasig, Manila
Philippines

and to diplomatic representatives of Philippines accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 October 1993.