

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: ASA 35/16/92

Distr: UA/SC

UA 184/92

Fear of "Disappearance"

3 June 1992

PHILIPPINES:

Ricardo Lirasa, aged 30

---

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Ricardo Lirasa. He was abducted by members of the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) in *barangay* (local administrative unit) Cab-cab on 15 May 1992. Despite claims that he was released on the same day Ricardo Lirasa has not been seen since.

According to witnesses, Ricardo Lirasa was selling fish in *barangay* Cab-cab on 15 May when he was approached by members of the CAFGU from the 6th Special Force based at Isabela, Negros Occidental. He was taken to the San Augustin detachment for questioning. The reasons for the arrest are unclear, but relatives believe that Ricardo Lirasa's active membership of a basic Christian community led the authorities to suspect him of being a member of the outlawed New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Ricardo Lirasa's wife went to the San Augustin detachment to make inquiries about his whereabouts and was told that he had been released on the night of 15 May 1992. Further inquiries have been made at other military camps, but no information on the whereabouts of Ricardo Lirasa has been forthcoming, and there are fears he may have "disappeared" in custody.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has recorded 12 cases of "disappearance" or incommunicado detention since the beginning of 1992. In 1991, at least 25 cases were recorded. Of these 25, at least 6 prisoners are believed to have been killed in custody. In 1990 more than 50 people were reported to have "disappeared" in the Philippines. 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. During the last two years at least 18 prisoners whose detention was denied by security forces subsequently reappeared after a period in police or military custody. The fate and whereabouts of the majority of those reported to have "disappeared" remains unknown in June 1992.

"Disappearance" and incommunicado detention in the Philippines have occurred against a background of armed conflict between government and government-backed forces and the New People's Army (NPA). 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 cases in which there is clear and substantive evidence, the perpetrators of "disappearances" have been members of government or government-backed forces.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Ricardo Lirasa and urging the authorities to act immediately to clarify his fate and whereabouts;
- calling for an immediate and impartial investigation into this 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.

page 2 of UA 184/92...

**APPEALS TO:**

1. General Renato de Villa  
Secretary of National Defence  
Department of National Defence  
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo  
1110 Quezon City  
Metro Manila, Philippines

**Telegrams: Secretary of National Defence, Manila, Philippines**  
**[Salutation: Dear General de Villa]**

2. General Lisandro Abadia  
Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines  
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo  
1110 Quezon City, Metro Manila  
Philippines

**Telegrams: AFP Chief of Staff, Quezon City, Manila, Philippines**  
**Telexes: 22471 DND PH; 42002 DCSLOG PM**  
**[Salutation: Dear General Abadia]**

3. Brigadier General Donato Quintos  
Commander  
Negros Island Command  
Camingawan, Bacolod City  
Philippines

**Telegrams: Brigadier General Dontato Quintos, Negros Island Command, Bacolod City, Philippines**  
**[Salutation: Dear Brigadier General Quintos]**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1. Mary Concepcion Bautista (Chairman) OR  
2. Paulynn Paredes Sicam (Commissioner) OR  
3. Hesiquio Mallillin (Commissioner)  
Commission on Human Rights  
IBP Building Complex  
Dona Julia Vargas Avenue  
Pasis Metro Manila, Philippines

4. Senator Wigberto Tanada  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights  
Padre Faura, Manila  
Philippines

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 15 July 1992.