

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 35/36/99

18 August 1999

Further information on UA 199/99 (ASA 35/31/99, 5 August 1999) - Imminent execution

PHILIPPINESRomeo Gallo, aged 37, charcoal burner

On 18 August 1999, Romeo Gallo was given a 45 day reprieve of execution by President Estrada. The reprieve was given on the advice of his spiritual advisers, Manila Auxiliary Bishop Teodoro Bacani Jr. and Brother Mike Velarde, leader of the charismatic Catholic group El Shaddai.

Following his announcement of the reprieve, the President said in radio interviews on 18 August that he has agreed to the creation of a special review committee, proposed by his spiritual advisors, to be made up of religious leaders, academics and jurists who would conduct a final review of death penalty cases. He also said that all executions would be suspended until the committee has been established. It is not known when the committee, which could supplant the present presidential review committee for death penalty cases, will be set up. In one radio interview President Estrada added "I am not God. I am just a human being and I can make mistakes."

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

- welcoming the granting of a 45 day reprieve for the execution of Romeo Gallo, and the announcement that all executions in the Philippines are currently suspended;
- urging that his sentence is commuted;
- expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty as a violation of one of the most fundamental human rights - the right to life;
- urging President Estrada to consider permanently suspending executions, with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty in line with the United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/8.

APPEALS TO:

President Joseph Estrada
Malacañang Palace
Manila
Philippines

Telegrams: President Estrada, Manila, Philippines
Faxes: + 63 2 832 3793 (via Department of Foreign Affairs)
or+ 63 2 731 1325 (via Press Secretary to the President)
e-mails: erap@erap.com
Salutation: Dear President Estrada

COPIES TO:

Serafin Cuevas
Secretary of Justice
Padre Faura, Ermita, Manila
Philippines
E-mails: doj@erap.com
Faxes: + 63 2 521 1614

Commission on Human Rights

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Chairperson Aurora Recina
SAAC Building, Commonwealth Avenue
U.P. Complex, Diliman,
1104 Quezon City
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 2 October 1999.