
amnesty international

PHILIPPINES

@Nonita Din

Murder of a trade unionist

MARCH 1995

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Amnesty International is deeply concerned at the killing of Nonita Din, a 41-year old active member of the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW), on 29 January 1995. Members of the armed security force of the Philippine-American Timber Corporation-Land Improvement Division (PATIL-D) are believed to have been responsible for her killing. Nonita Din's killing reflects a continuing pattern of human rights violations against trade unionists in the Philippines.

As an active member of the NFSW-Food and General Trades-Kilusang Mayo Uno (NFSW-FGT-KMU), Nonita Din, together with her husband and other sugar workers in the town of Ayungon, Negros Oriental, had campaigned for the implementation of a genuine agrarian reform program in the area. In so doing, they have been publicly labelled by elements of the Philippine military as members of a "communist front." In November 1992 three of Nonita Din's neighbours and co-members of the NFSW-FGT-KMU, Jimmy Trinidad, Rogelio Sabaiton and Nicomedes Manlangit, were also killed by gunmen believed to belong to the PATIL-D security force. The perpetrators of this crime have never been arrested.

Nonita Din was resting at home with her husband Fernando and daughter Cresiame when she was shot dead at about seven o'clock on the evening of 29 January 1995. According to

Fernando Din she was hit in the neck and face as the family was gathered in their dining area, and died instantly. Fernando and Cresiame were unhurt.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has documented a continuing pattern of serious human rights violations against trade unionists in the Philippines. These have included extrajudicial execution, arbitrary arrest, "disappearance", and torture and mistreatment while in police or military custody. Human rights violations have been particularly serious on the major sugar-producing island of Negros in the central Philippines where Nonita Din lived. Members of NFSW and the KMU labour federation, who have been vocal critics of government policies, have been especially vulnerable.

Such human rights violations have occurred within the context of a protracted armed struggle between the government and the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Trade union victims have usually been those labelled by the authorities as sympathizers of the armed insurgents, although they have been engaged in legal political activity as trade unionists.

The series of killings in Ayungon is symptomatic of the entrenched power of private armies in the rural Philippines, which are often integrated, either formally or informally, into government counter-insurgency operations. Amnesty International is gravely concerned at the failure of the Philippine Government to control abuses by such forces, which reflects an abdication of its fundamental responsibilities. The organization believes that as long as the government allows private armies to commit abuses with impunity, trade unionists and government critics will remain at risk.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

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

- *expressing concern at the possible extrajudicial execution of Nonita Din in Tambo, Ayungon, Negros Oriental, on 29 January 1995;*
- *urging the government to carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into her death, that its findings be made public and those found responsible be brought to justice;*
- *asking to be kept informed of the progress of any investigation;*
- *urging the government to provide effective guarantees of the right of trade unionists to engage in lawful trade union activity without fear of death, "disappearance", torture or arbitrary arrest;*
- *reiterating calls by Amnesty International for the government to enforce the Constitutional prohibition of private armies and paramilitary groups, to dismantle all armed vigilante groups and explicitly prohibit their operation.*



PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:

1. President Fidel V Ramos
Telegrams: President Ramos, Manila, Philippines
Malacanang Palace
Faxes: +63 2 833 7793 (via Department of Foreign Affairs) or
Manila +63 2 731 1325 (via Press Secretary to the President)
Philippines
Salutation: Dear President Ramos

2. General Arturo Enrile
Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines
Camp Aguinaldo
Faxes: +63 2 832 3793
Quezon City Telexes: 22471 DND PH or 42002 DCSLOG PM
Philippines Salutation: Dear General Enrile

3. P/Supt. Oliver Condolon
Officer in Charge, PNP Provincial Commander
Camp Francisco Fernandez
Brgy. Agan-an
Sibulan
Negros Oriental
Philippines Salutation: Dear P/Supt. Condolon

4. Hon. Emilio Macias II, MD
Governor, Province of Negros Oriental
Provincial Capitol
Dumaguete City 6200
Philippines
Salutation: Dear Governor Macias

PLEASE SEND COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1. Sedfrey Ordonez
Chairperson, Commission on Human Rights
IBP Building, Dona Julia Vargas Ave
Pasig
Manila
Philippines

2. Saletto Erames
Chairperson, Provincial Board Committee on Human Rights
Provincial Capitol
Dumaguete City 6200
Philippines

**KEYWORDS: WOMEN1 / TRADE UNIONISTS1 / EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTION1 / ARMED
CONFLICT / PRIVATE SECURITY GUARDS / IMPUNITY /**