

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "Disappearance"

20 May 1992

PHILIPPINES:

Andres y Bitong Friginal, aged 39, truck driver

Amnesty International is concerned at the reported "disappearance" of Andres y Bitong Friginal, a 39-year-old truck driver from *barangay* (administrative unit) 2, Aurora Province. Andres y Bitong Friginal is believed to have been arrested by the military on 6 March 1992 in EDSA, Kalookan in Metro Manila. For two months after his arrest no news was heard of him. On 8 May 1992 his family learned that Andres y Bitong Friginal had been taken to his employer's home by the military on several occasions during the previous eight weeks, apparently to verify his employment as a truck driver. During these visits Andres y Bitong Friginal told his employer that he was being detained at Camp Bago Bantay in Quezon City, the headquarters of the 15th Military Intelligence Group of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP).

When Andres y Bitong Friginal's sister, accompanied by members of a local human rights organization, made inquiries at the Camp Bago Bantay she was initially told that he had been transferred to Camp Olivas in Pampanga Province. However, this statement was contradicted by a more senior officer at the camp who denied any knowledge of Andres y Bitong Friginal, but later added that a member of the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), with the same name had surrendered and was being detained at Camp Olivas.

Subsequent inquiries by the family and human rights workers at Camp Olivas met with denials of the presence of Andres y Bitong Friginal. The family were finally told by a captain at the camp that they should come back again another day.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Amnesty International has recorded 11 cases of "disappearance" or incommunicado detention since the beginning of 1992. During the previous year at least 25 cases were recorded. Of these 25, at least six were 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 whose detention was denied by security forces subsequently reappeared after a period of police or military custody. The fate and whereabouts of the majority were unknown in March 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 armed wing of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). 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 have been members of government or government backed forces.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Andres y Bitong Friginal and urging the authorities to act immediately to clarify his fate and whereabouts;
- calling for immediate and impartial investigations into this case and asking to be informed of the progress of any such investigations;
- 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.

APPEALS TO

1) Brigadier General Emililano Templo **Dear Brigadier Geneneral Templo**
Head of Civil-Military Relations
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo
EDSA
1100 Quezon City, Metro Manila
Philippines

Telegrams: Head of Civil-Military Relations, Manila, Philippines

Telexes: 22471 DND PH or 42004 DCSLOG PM

2) Deputy Chief of Staff of the **Dear Colonel Gavino**
Intelligence Service of the AFP
Colonel Roman Gavino
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo
EDSA
1100 Quezon City, Metro Manila
Philippines

Telegrams: Deputy Chief of Staff of the Intelligence Service, Manila, Philippines

Telexes: 22471 DND PH or 42004 DCSLOG PM

COPIES OF YOUR APPEAL TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) Mary Concepcion Bautista (Chairman) OR
 - 2) Paulyynn Paredes Sicam (Commissioner) OR
 - 3) Narciso Moneiro (Commissioner)
- Commission on Human Rights
IBP Building Complex
Dona Julia Vargas Avenue
Pasig 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. Please contact the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 July 1992.