

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

**AI Index: ASA 35/22/91  
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**UA 250/91**

**Attempted Extrajudicial Execution**

**22 July 1991**

**PHILIPPINES: Vidal TOMBO, human rights lawyer**

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A human rights lawyer, Vidal Tombo, and two companions were shot on 17 July 1991 by unidentified armed men in Santa Rosa, Nueva Ecija. The attempted killing may have been related to Vidal Tombo's activities as defence counsel for political prisoners and those accused of membership of the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The attack may also have been connected to Vidal Tombo's position as president of a peasant cooperative in his home town. Amnesty International believes that Vidal Tombo may still be at risk of extrajudicial execution and urges the government to act immediately to guarantee his safety and to ensure that all lawyers are free to conduct professional and human rights activities without fear of reprisals.

On the evening of 17 July 1991 at approximately 11.30 pm, Vidal Tombo, Benedicto Pacheco, Roberto de Vera and others were on the verandah in front of Vidal Tombo's home at barangay Maliolio, Santa Rosa, Nueva Ecija. Vidal Tombo reported that a motorcycle and a red jeep, each bearing two men, drove past his home. Five minutes later they returned, two men alighted and began firing at Vidal Tombo and his companions. Using armalite rifles, the two men reportedly continued firing for nearly ten minutes. Vidal Tombo was injured in the right arm and stomach; Benedicto Pacheco suffered injuries on his left elbow and ankle; Roberto de Vera was shot in his right leg and arm.

Vidal Tombo is currently undergoing medical treatment but his exact whereabouts have been kept confidential in order to protect him from the risk of further attack.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION** (Note to translators: standard paragraph up to last sentence - see ASA 35/13/91 UA 121/91)

At least six human rights lawyers have been killed in the past three years in apparent extrajudicial executions in the Philippines; of these, three were Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) lawyers who had been active in the defence of human rights and in reporting abuses by members of the security forces. In addition to those killed, dozens more have received death threats or other kinds of intimidation in recent years. In May 1990, FLAG lawyer Solema P. Jubilan received a series of death threats believed to have emanated from members of the Philippines Constabulary (PC) in North Cotabato province (see UA 234/90, ASA 35/16/90, 6 June 1990). In January 1991 FLAG lawyer Nerio G. Zamora received a death threat from the provincial PC commander in Bohol (see UA 09/91, ASA 35/01/91, 14 January 1991 and update, ASA 35/18/91, 5 June 1991). In March 1991, human rights lawyer Romeo Capulong was followed by unidentified men believed to be connected to military intelligence forces (see UA 121/91, ASA 35/13/91, 3 April 1991).

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Attorney Vidal Tombo following the attempted killing by unidentified armed men on 17 July 1991;

- urging the government to take immediate and effective steps to ensure that Attorney Tombo is not subjected to further threats to his life;

- urging the government to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into this incident, with the results to be made public, and to bring the suspected perpetrators to justice before a civil court;

- noting with concern that at least six human rights lawyers have been killed in apparent extrajudicial killings in the past three years in the Philippines and that dozens more have been threatened with death or otherwise intimidated.

**APPEALS TO:**

General Renato S. de Villa  
Secretary of National Defense  
Department of National Defense  
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo  
Quezon City  
Metro Manila, Philippines

**Telegrams: Defense Secretary de Villa  
Quezon, Philippines**

**Telexes: 22471 DND PH or 42004 DCSLOG PM**

**Faxes: + 63 2 721 3988**

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

**Telegrams: Chief Staff Armed Forces, Manila, Philippines**

**Telexes: 22471 DND PH or 42004 DCSLOG PM**

**Faxes: + 63 2 832 3793 (via Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs)**

Gen. Cesar Nazareno  
Director General  
Philippine National Police  
Headquarters of the Philippines Constabulary  
Camp Crame, Novaliches  
Metro Manila, Philippines

**Telegrams: Director General National Police, Quezon  
City, Metro Manila, Philippines**

Franklin Drilon  
Secretary of Justice  
Department of Justice  
Padre Faura Street Ermita  
Manila, Philippines

**Telegrams: Justice Secretary Drilon, Manila, Philippines**

**Faxes: +63 2 521 1614**

**COPIES TO:**

Mary Concepcion Bautista  
Chairman, Commission on Human Rights  
IBP Building Complex  
Dona Julia Vargas Avenue  
Pasig Metro Manila, Philippines

Free Legal Assistance Group  
204 Cabrera II Building  
64 Timog Avenue, Quezon City  
Philippines  
**Faxes: +63 2 81 75410**

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 2 September 1991.