

UA 199/99

Imminent**PHILIPPINES**Romeo Gallo

Romeo Gallo is scheduled for execution by lethal injection on 18 August 1999. He was sentenced to death for the rape of his 13-year-old daughter at their home in 1994.

The execution is one of five scheduled to take place over the week beginning 16 August 1999. Josefina Esparas, Jurry Andal, Ricardo Andal and Edwin Mendoza are scheduled for execution on Monday 16 August, two days before Romeo Gallo.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Philippines abolished the death penalty in 1987 but reintroduced it in 1994. It now has one of the highest death row populations in the world, currently standing at over 1000. The death sentence is applicable for 46 offences and mandatory for 21 in the Philippines. 47 or more convicts on death row have had their sentences confirmed by the Supreme Court, of whom at least 10 may be executed in 1999.

Leo Echegaray, a convicted child rapist, was the first person to be executed in 23 years when he was put to death by lethal injection on 5 February 1999. In June and July 1999 four other people were executed, including Eduardo Agbayani, who was convicted of the incestuous rape of his daughter. His daughter had requested presidential clemency. President Estrada is reported to have instructed his aides to telephone the prison authorities to stay the execution at the last minute. However, the call was received after the lethal injection was administered. Dante Piandiong, Jesus Moralles and Archie Bulan were executed on 7 July 1999. Dante Piandiong had alleged that he was tortured during pre-trial detention. Amnesty International has no information as to whether, during a Presidential Review process held in June 1999, the claims of torture were properly investigated or what the findings of this committee actually were. The men continued to protest their innocence until the moment of their death.

President Estrada has granted a temporary reprieve shortly before a scheduled execution at least four times in the past six months.

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

- acknowledging the seriousness of the crime for which Romeo Gallo was convicted, but explaining your opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life, pointing out that it has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect, and is brutalizing to all involved in its application;
- urging the President to use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute this and all other pending death sentences;
- drawing attention to world trends to abolish or reduce the use of the death penalty, in accordance with Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the Philippines is a state party;
- urging the Philippines to establish a moratorium on executions, with a view to completely abolishing the death penalty, in line with resolution 1998/8, adopted on 3 April 1998 by the UN Commission on Human Rights.

APPEALS TO:

President Joseph Estrada
Malacañang Palace

2

J.P. Laurel St
San Miguel 1005
Manila
Philippines

Telegrams: President Estrada, Manila, Philippines

**Faxes: + 63 2 742 1641 / 832 3793 (via Dept of Foreign Affairs - works best)
/ 731 1325 (via Press Secretary to the President)**

E-mail: erap@ops.gov.ph

Salutation: Dear President Estrada

COPIES TO:

Secretary of Justice
Serafin Cuevas
Department of Justice
Padre Faura, Ermita, Manila
Philippines
Fax: + 63 2 521 1614

Chairperson, Commission on Human Rights
Aurora Navarrete-Reciña
SAAC Building,
U.P. Complex
Commonwealth Avenue
1100 Quezon City
Philippines

and to diplomatic representatives of the Philippines accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 August 1999.