

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 35/37/99

20 September 1999

Further information on UA 178/99 (ASA 35/30/99, 23 July 1999) and follow-ups (ASA 35/33/99, 11 August and ASA 35/35/99, 13 August 1999) - Imminent execution

PHILIPPINESJosefina Esparas

Josefina Esparas is scheduled for execution by lethal injection on 30 September 1999. She would be the first woman put to death in the Philippines since the death penalty was restored at the end of 1993.

In August President Estrada announced that executions would be suspended until a "conscience committee" had been set up to review the cases of prisoners scheduled for execution. The committee has now been formed and is reported to be headed by Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora, with four other members: a Catholic bishop, the chairwoman of the pro-death penalty citizens' group Crusade against Violence and two psychology professors. According to a report from *Agence France Presse*, Ronaldo Zamora has said that the case of Josefina Esparas, who was sentenced to death for drug trafficking, will be the first to be considered.

Josefina Esparas's health is reported to have deteriorated since her death sentence was confirmed. According to press reports she has been diagnosed as diabetic and has also been suffering from depression.

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

- calling on Executive Secretary Zamora and the members of the "conscience committee" to urge President Estrada to exercise his power to grant clemency and commute to a more humane alternative the death sentence passed on Josefina Esparas;
- acknowledging the seriousness of the crime of which Josefina Esparas was convicted, but pointing out that the death penalty has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect and is brutalizing to all involved;
- expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty as a violation of one of the most fundamental human rights - the right to life;
- 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 (please note that fax tones are sometimes difficult to obtain):

Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora
Office of the Executive Secretary
2nd Floor, New Executive Building, J.P. Laurel St,
San Miguel 1005, Manila
Philippines

Telegrams:Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora, Manila, Philippines

Faxes:+ 63 2 736 1010

Salutation:Dear Executive Secretary Zamora

President Joseph Estrada
Malacañang Palace
J.P. Laurel St
San Miguel 1005
Manila

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Philippines

Telegrams: President Estrada, Manila, Philippines

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

E-mails: erap@ops.gov.ph

Salutation: Dear President Estrada

COPIES TO:

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

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 1 November 1999.