

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "disappearance"

23 March 1993

PHILIPPINES: Ramon D. Amican, 43-year-old farmer

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Ramon D. Amican, a farmer and captain of his *barangay* (subdistrict), who was abducted from his home in Camarines Sur province by unidentified armed men on 15 February 1993. He has been missing since then and there are fears that his life may be in danger. The abduction occurred in the context of military counter-insurgency operations in the locality. Amnesty International urges the government to act immediately to locate Ramon Amican and to guarantee his safety.

An eyewitness reported that on 15 February Ramon Amican arrived at his home in Calabnigan, Libmanan at 7pm. Two hours later his wife went out of the house. She was seized by armed men and ordered to call her husband. The men insisted they only wished to talk to Ramon Amican but then took him away. The following morning Ramon Amican's wife went to the *barangay* centre to seek the assistance of local residents and officials in searching for her husband.

During the weeks prior to the abduction residents in Libmanan had become alarmed by increased military activity within the locality. More than 50 families from *barangay* Calabnigan were evacuated from their homes in early January, to avoid being caught in crossfire between Philippine Army troops and NPA forces.

In a radio broadcast on 18 February military officials and spokesmen for the armed opposition group, the New People's Army denied knowledge of the abduction, and to date Ramon Amican remains missing.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

"Disappearance", extrajudicial killing and other human rights violations have occurred against a background of armed conflict between government and government-backed forces and the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Government efforts to defeat the insurgency have involved efforts to weaken selected civilian organizations and this has resulted in a blurring of the distinction between lawful political activity and armed opposition to the government. Victims of human rights violations have included community leaders, trade unionists, human rights activists, journalists or others whose political or professional activity leads them to express criticism of government policy. NPA members have also been responsible for human rights abuses, including summary executions of people accused of betraying the armed struggle.

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

- expressing concern at the abduction of Ramon Amican from his home in Calabnigan, Libmanan, Camarines Sur;

- urging the authorities to take immediate steps to locate Ramon Amican and to guarantee his safety;

- urging the authorities to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of this case and to bring the suspected perpetrators promptly to justice.

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APPEALS TO

1. General Lisandro Abadia
Chief of Staff
Armed Forces of the Philippines
Camp Aguinaldo
Quezon City
Philippines

Telegrams: Gen. Abadia, Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Philippines

Salutation: Dear Gen. Abadia

2. Brig Gen Andres Superable
Chief Superintendent
Philippine National Police
Camp Gen Simeon Ola
Legaspi City
Albay
Philippines

Telegrams: Brig Gen Superable, PNP Legaspi City, Philippines

Salutation: Dear Brig Gen Superable

3. Military Commander
RECOM 5
Camp Bagong Ibalon
Legaspi City
Albay
Philippines

Telegrams: Commander, RECOM 5, Legaspi City, Philippines

Salutation: Dear Commander

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Sedfrey Ordoñez
Chairman, Commission on Human Rights
IBP Building
Doña Julia Vargas Avenue
Pasig, Manila
Philippines

and to diplomatic representatives of Philippines accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 May 1993.