

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "Disappearance"

27 August 1992

PHILIPPINES: Felipe Cabagsican Cabanting, aged 24

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Felipe Cabagsican Cabanting. The organisation has recently learned that he was arrested on 27 July 1992 in Iloilo City by members of the Philippines National Police (PNP) and taken to Iloilo City Proper Police Station. Inquiries made at the police station about Felipe Cabagsican Cabanting's whereabouts have met with denials that he is in police custody.

According to reports, Felipe Cabagsican Cabanting, a 24-year-old resident of *barangay* (local administrative unit) Durog, Leon, Iloilo, was arrested by three members of the PNP at Iloilo Terminal Market, Iloilo City on 27 July 1992 and taken to Iloilo City Proper Police Station. It is believed that he was suspected of being a member of the outlawed New People's Army, the armed wing of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). On 3 August 1992, representatives from a local human rights organization went to the police station to inquire about Felipe Cabagsican Cabanting, but were told that he was not in police custody. Felipe Cabagsican Cabanting has not been seen since his arrest, and there are fears he has "disappeared" in custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has recorded 17 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 prisoners are 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 prisoners whose detention was denied by security forces subsequently reappeared after a period in police or military custody. The fate and whereabouts of the majority of those reported to have "disappeared" remained unknown in August 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 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 of "disappearances" have been members of government or government-backed forces.

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

- expressing concern at the reported "disappearance" of Felipe Cabagsican Cabanting, who was reportedly arrested on 27 July 1992 and taken to Iloilo City Proper Police Station;
- urging the authorities to act immediately to clarify his fate and whereabouts;
- calling for an immediate and impartial investigation into this case and asking to be informed of the progress of any such investigations;

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- urging the government to ensure that any security-forces personnel or police officer believed responsible for the "disappearance" of Felipe Cabagsican Cabanting be brought promptly to justice and tried before a civil court.

APPEALS TO:

1) Chief Inspector Ricarod C. Jomud
Station Commander
Iloilo City Proper Police Station
General Luna St. Iloilo City
Philippines

Telegrams: Station Commander, Iloilo City Proper Police Station

Salutation: Dear Chief Inspector Jomud

2) President Ramos
Malacañany Palace
Manila, Philippines

Telegrams: President Ramos, Manila, Philippines

Telexes: 40414 MALCOM PN; 45618 RMC PM; 63370 PRES PN; 82361 PU

Salutation: Your Excellency

3) General Lisandro Abadia
Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines
Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Philippines

Telegrams: AFP Chief of Staff, Quezon City, Manila, Philippines

Telexes: 22471 DND PH, 42004 DCSLOG PM

Salutation; Dear General Abadia

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1. Mary Conceptcion Bautista (Chairman) OR
2. Paulynn Paredes Sicam (Commissioner) OR
3. Narciso Moneiro (Commissioner)
Commission on Human Rights
IBP Building Complex
Dona Julia Vargas Avenue
Pasis Metro Manila, Philippines

4. Hon. Restitoto Jotes
Chairman, Committee on Human Rights
Sanguniang Panglungaod
Iloilo City Hall, Iloilo City 5000
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 8 October 1992.