

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance"/Threat of Abduction

21 December 1990

PHILIPPINES: Rosario LADRONIO (f), aged 30
+ her 2-month-old baby

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Rosario Ladronio, reportedly arrested by unidentified armed men on 18 December 1990 at her home in barangay San Benito, Victoria, Laguna province. The organization is also concerned for the safety of Rosario Ladronio's baby, who is apparently at risk of abduction.

According to information received from relatives, a group of unidentified armed men in military uniform went to Rosario Ladronio's home between 12am and 1am of the morning of 18 December. Three men entered the house. Relatives said that one was carrying an M-14 rifle, another a .45 calibre revolver, and the third a two-way radio. Other men, also in military uniform, waited outside the house in what appeared to be a military jeep.

The reasons for the arrest of Rosario Ladronio are unclear, but relatives believe the authorities suspected her of being the wife of a commander of the Southern Tagalog district of the outlawed New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Since the incident took place, relatives have reported that men belonging to the group that abducted Rosario Ladronio have returned several times to the house and attempted to take away her baby. Thus far, relatives say they have managed to hide the baby.

Relatives have approached the Captain of the barangay (local district), human rights organizations and the governmental Philippines Commission on Human Rights and asked for help in locating Rosario Ladronio and protection for the baby's safety, but as yet their efforts have been fruitless. The military authorities deny that Rosario Ladronio is being held in custody, and her whereabouts remain unknown.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As part of the government's campaign to crush the armed insurgency in the Philippines, suspected sympathizers of the NPA have been ill-treated, "disappeared" or killed by government and government-backed forces. Among the victims have been residents of villages in rural areas alleged to be NPA strongholds; trade unionists, human rights workers and members of a range of social, political and community organizations the authorities believe to be "fronts" for the banned CPP.

Amnesty International has also received reports of the "disappearance" of the wives of suspected NPA guerrillas. In one case, two women whose custody was denied by the military authorities for several weeks, were subsequently found to be held in a military installation. The camp commander alleged that the women were members of a guerilla group but said they would be released if their husbands "turned themselves in".

"Disappearances" have been reported at an alarming rate in the Philippines over the last year. Amnesty International received information regarding more than 50 "disappearances" in the period from December 1989 to mid-December 1990,

compared to a total of about 40 reports of "disappearance" in 1989. Some of the "disappeared" have been found dead, apparently killed by military, or paramilitary forces. Others have been located after being held in incommunicado and without charge for long periods in military custody.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Rosario Ladronio, last seen on 18 November 1990 in the custody of unidentified armed men in military uniforms;

- urging the authorities to conduct an urgent investigation into this case and to ensure that, if in custody, Rosario Ladronio is granted immediate access to relatives and a lawyer; and if she is not to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence, to release her immediately;

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Rosario Ladronio's two-month-old baby and calling on the government to take immediate, effective measures to ensure that the baby is fully protected from intimidation or abduction.

APPEALS TO:

President Corazon Aquino
Malacañang Palace
Manila, Philippines

Telegrams: President Aquino, Manila, Philippines

**Telexes: 40414 MALCOM PN, 45618 RMC PM,
63370 PRES PN or 82361 PRES PU**

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

General Fidel V. Ramos
Secretary of National Defense
Department of National Defense
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo
Quezon City
Metro Manila, Philippines

Telegrams: Defense Secretary Ramos, Quezon, Philippines

Telexes: 22471 DND PH or 42004 DCSLOG PM

Faxes: + 63 2 721 3988

Brig-Gen Alejandro A Galido
Commander
South Luzon Command (SOLCOM)
Camp Nakar
Lucena City
Quezon Province, Philippines

Telegrams: Commander SOLCOM, Camp Nakar, Lucena City, Queson Province, Philippines

COPIES TO:

Mary Concepcion Bautista
Chairman
Commission on Human Rights

IBP Building Complex
Dona Julia Vargas Avenue
Pasig Metro Manila, Philippines

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 31 January 1991.