

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 17/002/2002

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Further information on UA 286/01 (MDE 17/002/2001, 7 November 2001) - Fear of torture

KUWAITTiodi Magliar Tomaro (m), Filipino

Mary-Jane Vitios (f), Filipina, aged 26

Nooriza Talib Ashak (f), Filipina, aged 34

Loridos Seri Esper (f), Filipina, aged 41

Rosalie Teesor Baklidia (f), Filipina, aged 38

Jamie Bernardo (m), Filipino, aged 38

Released: Ojaro Rubia (m), Filipino, aged 31

Ojaro Rubia was reportedly released before 22 January without charge. He and six other Filipino nationals were accused of the murder of a Canadian citizen on 10 October 2001.

All of his fellow accused, except Tiodi Tomaro were reportedly freed without bail on the "personal guarantee" of a local individual in March 2002. They face various charges in connection with the murder of a Canadian national, following confessions which were allegedly obtained under torture. They are required to attend future court sessions of their trial, the next hearing of which is scheduled for 30 April. Tiodi Tomaro was not granted bail and will remain in prison while the trial proceeds.

In February 2002, the chairperson of the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, Abdul Mohsin Jamal, was reported in the Kuwaiti newspaper, *al-Watan*, to have said that he received a large number of letters from Amnesty International members and other human rights activists. They had asked him to ensure that all the legal safeguards would be adhered to in the case of the Filipino nationals named above, including their right to a fair trial. He emphasized that all the defendants had access to their lawyers and family, adding that the Kuwaiti Constitution contained safeguards for defendants, especially concerning the issue of confessions obtained under torture, which the Committee was sure would be adhered to.

No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.