

ATTACHMENT 10

Submission by the Non-Government Organization KARAPATAN Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights Related to the PHILIPPINES for the UPR First Session April 2008



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On the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (June 26)

KARAPATAN says GMA government not complying with UN Convention against Torture

The human rights group KARAPATAN said that the Arroyo government is not complying, and is in fact violating the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The said convention was entered into force on 26 June 1987 and ratified by the Philippine government on October 23, 1987.

KARAPATAN, a human rights watchdog monitoring government compliance to human rights instruments, said torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment continue to be recorded in the Philippines under the Arroyo regime, among them:

- Erap 5 – *Virgilio “Ver” Eustaquio, Ruben Dionisio, Jim Cabauatan, PO3 Jose Justo “Jay” Curameng, Dennis Ibona*, all council members of the Union of the Masses for Democracy and Justice (UMDJ), were abducted and held incommunicado and tortured for two days under the custody of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP). The ISAFP at first denied having them in their custody, but, after two days, it admitted that they had the five.
- Tagaytay 5 - *Axel Alejandro Pinpin, Aristides Sarmiento, Riel Custodio, Rico Ybanez, and Michael Masa*, collectively known as “Tagaytay 5” who were arrested in Tagaytay, Cavite on mere suspicion that they were members of the New People’s Army (NPA). Physicians who visited them said they were tortured.
- Eleven young, punk backpackers collectively known as the “Sagada 11” who were on their way to Sagada when accosted by the Regional Mobile Group of the Philippine National Police at a checkpoint. They were stripped naked, made to endure beatings, watercure, and other forms of cruelty.
- 60-year old peace advocate *Angelina Bisuna-Ipong* who was forcibly taken from a resort on March 8, 2005 without a warrant, held in military custody in Zamboanga for 12 days where she was tortured and sexually molested before being surfaced in the Pagadian City Jail on March 20, 2005.
- *Eduardo Serrano*, 53 y/o, with two other women were abducted in Lipa City in Batangas on 2 May 2004 after alighting from a bus, has gone missing for 10 days and underwent torture while in military custody before being surfaced by the military at the Calapan, Oriental Mindoro Provincial Jail

Instead of being eliminated, torture continues to be practiced in the Philippines and around the world by despotic regimes whose cruel methods match their determination to crush the human spirit. It is still widely used to intimidate dissidents, extract confessions, or to punish, discipline or humiliate prisoners, KARAPATAN said and scored the Arroyo ally US President George W. Bush, for the US torture chambers in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and Abu Ghraib and other prisons in Iraq.

On this day, KARAPATAN said the nation must pay its respect to those who have endured the unimaginable by speaking up against torture which is used by tyrannical regimes to terrorize its citizens.

KARAPATAN demanded for the immediate and unconditional release of the above-named prisoners of conscience, drop all malicious charges against them and punish military operatives who have committed the despicable crime of torture. The human rights advocates also called on legislators to immediately enact House Bill 03021 or An Act Declaring Torture A Crime and Prescribing Penalties for Commission of Acts of Torture.###