

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 35/004/2005

18 March 2005

Further Information on UA 67/05 (ASA 35/003/2005, 15 March 2005) - Possible "disappearance"/Fear for safety/Health Concern

PHILIPPINES

Angelina Bisuna Ipong (f), aged 61

Angelina Bisuna Ipong was produced before journalists on 15 March. Newspapers reported that she had been arrested on 8 March by a military intelligence unit.

Military officials claimed that she was a senior member of the regional branch of the Communist Party of the Philippines, and that there was an outstanding arrest warrant against her on charges of murder and robbery.

Military officials stated that she had not been maltreated and that she remained in a healthy condition, but noted that her blood pressure levels had increased. She is said to have a heart condition.

It is not yet known whether she has been allowed full access to lawyers of her choice.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While membership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is not illegal, the government has been carrying out anti-insurgency operations against its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), since the 1970s. CPP members, and other leftists suspected of involvement or sympathy with the NPA, remain at risk of arrest, especially if accused of links to attacks and robberies by NPA armed rebels.

Safeguards covering the treatment of detainees are enshrined in the Philippines Constitution and national law, but they are frequently ignored. Suspected NPA members and leftist activists arrested are often held incommunicado for extended periods, denied access to lawyers and their families, and are at risk of ill-treatment or torture during interrogation.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- noting that military officials have produced Angelina Bisuna Ipong before journalists, but expressing concern that she is reported to have been held incommunicado for seven days;
- urging the authorities to ensure that she is humanely treated, given regular medical care for her heart condition, and allowed access to relatives and a lawyer of her choice;
- urging that she be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, and tried in accordance with international standards for fair trial, or else released.

APPEALS TO:

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President of the Republic
Malacañang Palace Compound
New Executive Bldg.
J. P. Laurel St.
San Miguel, Manila
Philippines

Fax: + 63 2 735 6192/ 736 1010
Email: corres@op.gov.ph
opnet@ops.gov.ph
Salutation: Dear President Macapagal - Arroyo

Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr.
Secretary of National Defense
Department of National Defense
3rd Floor, DND Building
Camp Aguinaldo
EDSA, Quezon City
Metro Manila
Philippines

Fax: + 63 2 911 6213
Salutation: Dear Secretary Cruz

COPIES TO:

Hon. Purificacion Valera-Quisumbing
Chairperson, Commission on Human Rights
SAAC Bldg., Commonwealth Ave., UP Complex
Diliman, Quezon City
Philippines

Fax: + 63 2 929 0102
Email: drpvq@chr.gov.ph

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 30 April 2005.