

FIRST ALERT: On April 2, 2007, reports reached KARAPATAN office that the victims were missing.

UA Date: 4 April 2007

UA Title: Two missing peasants in Cagayan Valley, Luzon, Philippines, found dead

UA Case: Summary execution

Victims: Arthur Orpilla
About 50 years old, peasant, married, with children
Village councilor and resident of Bagunot village, Baggao town, Cagayan province
Chair of the local chapter of Kagimungan (Alyansa dagiti Mannalon ti Cagayan or Kagimungan or Alliance of Farmer in Cagayan), and leader of the Anakpawis party-list in Baggao, Cagayan province

Dionisio Battad

About 50 years old, peasant, married, with children
resident of Bagunot village, Baggao town, Cagayan province
member of the local chapter of Kagimungan (Alyansa dagiti Mannalon ti Cagayan or Kagimungan or Alliance of Farmer in Cagayan), and member of the Anakpawis party-list in Baggao, Cagayan

Place of Incident: Baggao, Cagayan Province

Date of Incident: Abduction - 27 March 2007

Recovery of bodies – March 28 and April 3, 2007

Alleged Perpetrators: Armed men suspected to be elements of the 17th Infantry Battalion, Phil. Army, led by 2nd Lt. Johnny Calub

Account of Incident

At around 4 pm on March 27, Orpilla and Battad informed their families that they were going to the military camp in the community to report to the commanding officer.

Since last month, the two men had been forced to report to the military camp upon orders of the 17th IB PA's commanding officer 2nd Lt. Johnny Calub. According to their relatives, since last month Orpilla and Battad had been reporting twice daily, every 8 am and 4 pm, at the military camp located in the community and just one

kilometer away from the two victims' respective homes. Also last month, the two men were also forced by the military to tell the local media that their peasant organization is a front of the Communist Party of the Philippines and New people's Army (CPP-NPA). Orpilla and Battad were forced to do so because Calub had reportedly threatened them that if they did not, that the military will implicate them in the killing of former Kagimungan chair Joey Javier, who was killed by suspected soldiers last year.

The two men are active members of KAGIMUNGAN, a local chapter of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Peasant Movement of the Philippines). When they failed to come home, their families feared that the two were taken by the military.

The next day, in the morning of March 28, the body of Arthur Orpilla was found near the Magapit Bridge in Lallo, Cagayan province, Cagayan Valley region, bearing multiple stab wounds on the left shoulder. On April 3, the body of Dionisio Battad, with a gunshot wound in the head, was also found near the Magapit Bridge.

The peasant group Kagimungan has been known in the region for pursuing agrarian struggles, such as the lowering of interest in farm loans, increase in prices of agricultural products, and the implementation of genuine agrarian reform.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Send letters, emails or fax messages calling for:

1. The immediate formation of an independent fact-finding and investigation team composed of representatives from human rights groups, the Church, local government, and the Commission on Human Rights that will look into the summary execution of Arthur Orpilla and Dionisio Battad
2. The arrest and prosecution of the perpetrators of the crimes of summary execution
3. The immediate and proper indemnification of the victims' families; and
4. The Philippine Government to be reminded that it is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that it is also a party to all the major Human Rights instruments, thus it is bound to observe all of these instruments' provisions.

You may send your communications to:

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Please send us a copy of your email/mail/fax to the said government official to our address below.

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