

## URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

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**PHL 003 / 0311 / OBS 053**

Assassination  
**Philippines**  
March 30, 2011

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in **The Philippines**.

### **Description of the situation:**

The Observatory has been informed by the Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights (KARAPATAN) of the killing of Mr. **Bonifacio Labasan**, vice-chairperson of the Isabela chapter of the Union of Peasants in Cagayan Valley (Danggayan Dagiti Mannalon iti Cagayan Valley - DAGAMI), engaged in a campaign against the conversion of vast crop lands for the production of bio-ethanol, which would displace farmers from their lands in Isabela Province.

According to the information received, on March 9, 2011 at 10:30 a.m., Mr. Bonifacio Labasan and his daughter were riding on a motorcycle on the way to Baranggay Victoria, Municipality of San Mateo, in the Isabela Province. While on the road, they noticed that two men riding in tandem on a motorcycle were following them. When Mr. Bonifacio Labasan and his daughter arrived to Baranggay San Roque, the two men forced them to stop.

One of the two men approached Mr. Bonifacio Labasan and ordered him to come with them. As Mr. Bonifacio Labasan refused, the man pointed a gun at him and shot him on his right side. When Mr. Bonifacio Labasan fell, the man shot him in the head causing his death. The two men immediately left on their motorcycle.

After almost an hour, two policemen arrived to the scene. They interviewed Mr. Bonifacio Labasan's daughter and accompanied her back home.

According to the information received, a complaint has been lodged at the local police. It has been reported that the police is still studying the filing of charges. No one has been detained at the time of issuing this appeal.

Within the DAGAMI's campaign launched last year against the bio-ethanol project in Isabela, Mr. Bonifacio Labasan was involved in dialogues between the Government and farmers. He also participated in protest actions on the rights of the peasants and helped in the dissemination of DAGAMI's campaign and other farmers' ongoing issues in their community and province.

The Observatory strongly condemns the killing of Mr. Bonifacio Labasan, which seems to merely aim at sanctioning his human rights activities, in particular his defence of the peasants' rights to their lands. The Observatory urges the Philippines authorities to order a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into his assassination, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a civil competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law. The Observatory further urges the authorities in the Philippines to guarantee the protection of all human rights defenders in accordance with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, and other international human rights instruments ratified by the Philippines.

### **Actions Requested:**

Please write to the authorities in the Philippines urging them to:

- i. Order a thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into Mr. Bonifacio Labasan's assassination, in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a civil competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law;
- ii. Provide adequate reparation to Mr. Bonifacio Labasan's family;
- iii. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of the Mr. Bonifacio Labasan's family, the members of DAGAMI and of all human rights defenders in The Philippines;
- iv. Conform with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially:
  - its Article 1, which states that "everyone has the right, individually or in association with others, to promote the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels",
  - its Article 5, which establishes that "for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the rights, individually and in association with others [...]: (a) to meet or assemble peacefully; (b) to form, join and participate in non-governmental organisations, associations or groups;
  - its Article 6, which provides that "everyone has the right individually and in association with others: (b) [...] to impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms; (c) To study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters";
  - its Article 8.2, which states that everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, "to submit to governmental bodies and agencies and organizations concerned with public affairs criticism and proposals for improving their functioning and to draw attention to any aspect of their work that may hinder or impede the promotion, protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms";
  - and its Article 12.2 which provides that "the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration."
- v. Guarantee the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments ratified by the Philippines.

### **Addresses:**

- H.E. Benigno S. Aquino III, President of the Republic of the Philippines, New Executive Building, Malacañang Palace, JP Laurel St., San Miguel, Manila 1005, Philippines. Fax:

+63 2 736 1010, Tel: +63 2 735 6201 / 564 1451 to 80; E-mail: [corres@op.gov.ph](mailto:corres@op.gov.ph) / [opnet@ops.gov.ph](mailto:opnet@ops.gov.ph);

- Hon. Paquito Ochoa, Chairperson, Presidential Human Rights Committee (PHRC), 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr. New Executive Bldg. Office of the President, Malacanang Compound, Manila, Philippines. Trunk Line: + 632 735 6201 Loc. 5301 & 5503. Telefax: + 632 734 6761. Email: [phrc.phil@gmail.com](mailto:phrc.phil@gmail.com)
- Hon. Loretta Ann P. Rosales, Chairperson, Commission on Human Rights, SAAC Bldg., UP Complex, Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. Fax: +632 929 0102. Email: [chair.rosales.chr@gmail.com](mailto:chair.rosales.chr@gmail.com)
- Atty. Jasmin Navarro-Regino, Regional Director, CHR, Region 3, 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr. Kehyeng Bldg, Dolores Junction, Dolores, City of San Fernando, Pampanga, Philippines. Tel. No. +45 2 9614830. Tel-Fax. No. +45 2 9614475. Email: [chrreq3@yahoo.com](mailto:chrreq3@yahoo.com) / [attyjnr@yahoo.com](mailto:attyjnr@yahoo.com)
- Police Director General Raul M. Bacalzo, PNP Chief, Office of the Chief, PNP, National Headquarters Philippine National Police, Camp Crame, EDSA, Quezon City, Philippines. Tel: +632 9116213. Fax: +632 7248763
- Clarence V. Guinto, Police Superintendent, Acting Chief, Human Rights Affairs Office, Human Rights Affairs Office, Office of the Chief, PNP, National Headquarters Philippine National Police, Camp Crame, EDSA, Quezon City, Philippines 1111. Tel. Nos. +632 723 0401 to 20 local 3668. Mobile: +63 916 442 4536. Email:
- Ms. Teresita Quintos-Deles, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), 6th Floor, Agustin 1 Building, F. Ortigas Jr. Avenue (formerly Emerald Avenue), Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1600, Philippines. Trunk line: +632 6360701 to 07. Fax +632 638 2216. Office of the Secretary (OSEC): +632 544 4217. Email: [osec@opapp.gov.ph](mailto:osec@opapp.gov.ph)
- Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations in Geneva, 47 Avenue Blanc, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland, Fax: +41 22 716 19 32, Email: [mission.philippines@ties.itu.int](mailto:mission.philippines@ties.itu.int)
- Embassy of the Philippines in Brussels, 297 Avenue Moliere, 1050 Brussels, Belgium, Tel: +32 2 340 33 77 / 2 340 33 78, Fax: +32 2 345 64 25.

Please also write to the diplomatic representations of the Philippines in your respective countries.

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Geneva-Paris, March 30, 2011

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, an OMCT and FIDH venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

- Email: [Appeals@fidh-omct.org](mailto:Appeals@fidh-omct.org)
- Tel and fax OMCT: + 41 22 809 49 39 / 41 22 809 49 29
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