

UPDATE: MORE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS FACE HARASSMENT SUIT

Urgent Action! Urgent Action! Urgent Action!

01 January, 2007

After filing trumped up complaint of Frustrated Murder against human rights advocate Oliver Gimenez, M.D., 43, and human rights abuse victims Mr. Jessie Almenes, 20, and Mr. Marlon Almenes, 24, the Malacañang-based Inter-Agency Legal Advisory Group (IALAG) through the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police (AFP-PNP) in Negros Oriental, central Philippines added three other human rights defenders on its lengthening list of targets for its “legal offensive”.

NEW VICTIMS

The premier human rights alliance KARAPATAN-Central Visayas recently learned that these government agencies conspired to file another trumped up complaint of **Murder** against Dr. Gimenez and three other human rights advocates, namely: **Ms. Preciosa Daño, Ms. Cris Muñoz, and Ms. Paz Silva**. Daño is a provincial coordinator of the progressive BAYAN Muna party-list in Cebu. Muñoz is a staff and Gimenez’ colleague at a developmental non-government organization. And, Silva is the Advocacy Officer of KARAPATAN-Central Visayas.

These individuals, and their organizations, are staunch critics of the government’s “all-out war policy” and convenors of the Stop the Killings campaign. They have been subjected to military surveillance and harassment since 2004.

OLD TARGETS

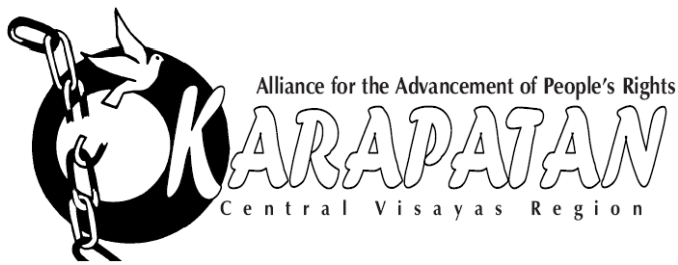
In fact, Daño was previously charged with Multiple Murder together with Vimarie Arcilla, Public Information Officer of KARAPATAN-Central Visayas, and 34 others on April, 2006 in Cebu. For this purported reason, she was abducted on 12 April 2007 by M/Sgt. Sulapas and other agents of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP), but released the next day after the perpetrators “learned” the said case has been dismissed as baseless by the court in September, 2007 yet.

On 21-24, August 2008, Muñoz and Silva were among those subjected to text threats by suspected military agents, alias “Joy” and “Benjie” using the mobile phone numbers 09059393006 and 09096217843, respectively. Four other staff and Silva’s colleagues at KARAPATAN-Central Visayas received the same text threats in the same period.

TIRED MOTIVE

These acts of vilification are calibrated to expose the victims to greater harm and justify more attacks against them by projecting them as “enemies of the state”. These are also calibrated to dissuade them from continuing to investigate and remedy worsening human rights violations. Thus, these acts serve the government’s goal at maintaining a state of atrophy and impunity.

RESPONSE NEEDED



Human rights defenders in central Philippines are not buckling under tremendous odds. However, your support in whatever form is needed to win the battle squarely against the seemingly overwhelming forces of terror.

For a start, you may continue to send notices of concern and support and/or follow up on ones sent earlier demanding that the Philippine government **1) ensure that individuals who works for promotion of human rights are protected, especially those who seek redress for violations committed against them; 2) ensure that its legal procedures are not misappropriated for political persecution of critics, activists and other perceived “enemies of the state”; 3) review the complaint filed against human rights defenders Dr.Oliver Gimenez, Ms. Preciosa Daño, Ms. Cris Muñoz, and Ms. Paz Silva, and victims of human rights violations Mr.Marlon Almenes and Mr.Jessie Almenes, in particular, to investigate the purported complainants under pain of perjury; and, 4) dissolve the Inter-Agency Legal Advisory Group as per recommendation of UN rapporteur Philip Alston, to local agencies, among others, listed as:**

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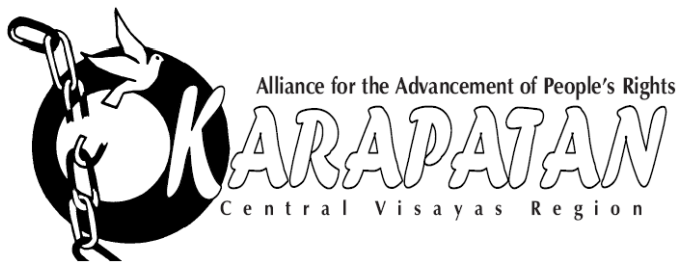
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