

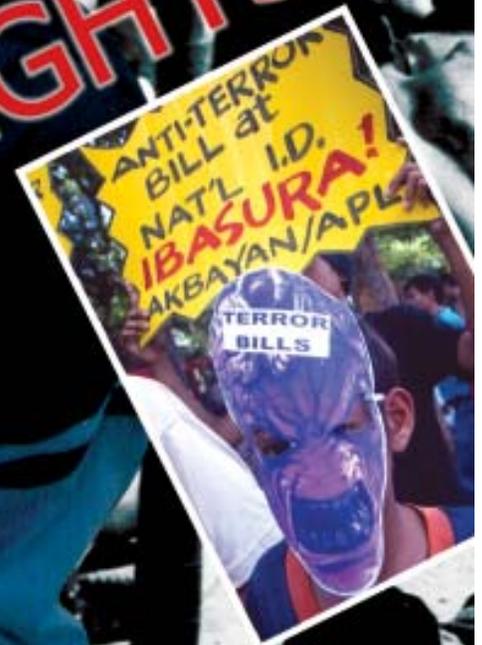
H U M A N R I G H T S

# FORUM

Volume 2 • Number 1

January-March 2005

AMIDST TERRORISM  
DETERMINED  
DEFENSE OF  
HUMAN RIGHTS



PHILIPPINE HUMAN RIGHTS INFORMATION CENTER



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Amidst terrorism:  
**DETERMINED DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS** ..... 3

Bicutan Siege:  
**UNTOLD TALE OF ABUSES** ..... 6

Abu Sayyaf Group:  
**HOW IT BEGAN, WHAT CAME OUT OF IT** ..... 8

**'RUSH' I.D. SYSTEM** ..... 10

**VIOLENT ILLEGAL DEMOLITION** ..... 12

**'POISONOUS' CASSAVA** ..... 16

**WISH UPON A POPE** ..... 18

**Multo ng Terorismo**

**K**ASABAY ng pagguho ng dalawang katore ng World Trade Center noong 2001, isinilang ang bagong kalaban daw ng demokrasya at kapayapaan, ang terorismo.

Mula noon, ipinantakot na ang terorismo ng mayayamang bansa tulad ng Estados Unidos at Britanya para maipatanggap sa kanilang mamamayan at sa buong mundo ang mga patakaran at mga aksyong taliwas sa mga prinsipyo ng karapatang pantao.

Hindi ba't ang pag-hunting kay Osama bin Laden ang ginamit na dahilan para mapabagsak ang gobyernong Taliban sa Afghanistan? Si Saddam Hussein naman at ang kanyang "weapons of mass destruction (WMD)" ang tinukoy na target ng mga Kano sa pagsakop nila sa Iraq. Ito ay mga kampanyang nagdulot din ng takot, pagdurusa, at kamatayan sa mga mamamayan ng mga bansang nabanggit.

Pero teka muna, ano nga ba ang terorismo? Ang tutoo kahit sa lebel ng United Nations (UN) wala pa ring iisang legal na depinisyon sa konseptong ito. Maging ang mga anti-terorismong batas na ipinasa sa US at Britain ay walang binabanggit na malinaw na depinisyon ng terorismo.

'Yan ang mahirap at mapanganib sa inilulunsad na giyera kontra-terorismo ng mga kanluraning bansa at ng gobyernong Arroyo dito naman sa Pilipinas. Nais nila ng dagdag na kapangyarihan at limitadong karapatan at kalayaan ng mga mamamayan para gapiin ang kalabang wala namang tiyak na hugis at identidad.

Sa ganitong sit-wasyon, kahit sino pwedeng maging tero-rista tulad ng mga nagpoprotestang mamamayan, mga aktibista, mga kalaban sa pulitika at negosyo, at kung sino pang herodes na buma-bangga sa mga tao, pamilya, at interes na nasa poder.

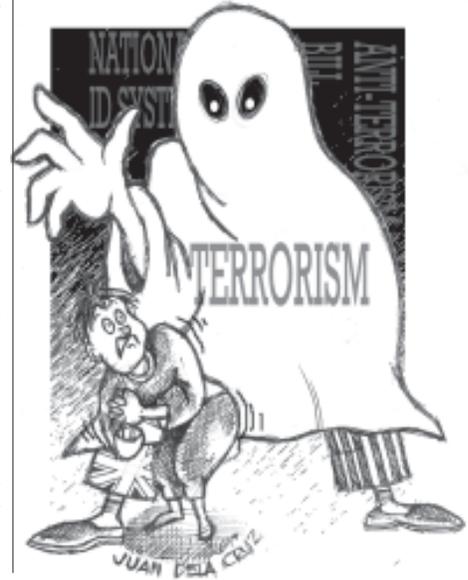
Lumilikha rin ng "mass hysteria" at nagpapatingkad sa diskriminasyon ang ganitong pagtugon sa problema ng terorismo. Halimbawa ay ang karaniwan nang pagsasangkot sa mga Arabo at Muslim sa mga teroristang gawain. Kaya madalas ay sinusona ng mga pulis ang kanilang mga komunidad at sila rin ang unang

dinadampot kapag may mga bombahan sa siyudad.

Ito rin ang isa sa mga dahilan kung bakit naganap ang "Bicutan Siege" kung saan tinortyur at pinatay ang mga presong halos lahat ay Muslim kahit nakontrol na ng mga pulis ang sitwasyon matapos ang tangkang pagtakas ng ilang bilanggo.

Sa ngayon, minamadali ni Pangulong Arroyo ang pagpapatupad sa National I.D. System at pagpapatibay sa anti-terrorism bill na nakasalang sa Kongreso. Ngunit kailangan ba talaga ang mga panukalang ito para sugpuin ang terorismo? Hindi pa ba sapat ang mga kasalukuyang batas? Ano ang garantiya na hindi magagamit ang mga kapangyarihang ito para sa interes ng iilan?

May mga nagsasabing ang terorismo raw ay "pagsasagawa ng mga aksyong nagdulot ng pagkatakot, pagdurusa, pasakit, at kamatayan sa mga sibilyan para sa pampulitika at pang-ekonomiyang layunin." Hmm, teka lang, hindi ba ginagawa rin ito ng mga gobyerno?



**HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM**  
 PHILIPPINE HUMAN RIGHTS INFORMATION CENTER

Editorial Board  
**NYMIA PIMENTEL-SIMBULAN DR. P.H.**  
**SONNY MELENCIO**  
**GINA DELA CRUZ**

**BERNARDO LARIN**  
 Editor-in-Chief

**LUIS GORGONIO**  
 Managing Editor

**ARNEL RIVAL**  
 Art Director

**PEPITO FRIAS**  
 Photographer

Contributors  
**PHILRIGHTS RESEARCH TEAMS**  
**SONNY MELENCIO**  
**RED BATANO**

The Human Rights Forum is published quarterly by the Philippine Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights) with office address at 53-B Maliksi St. Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City  
 Telefax: 433-1714  
 Tel. No.: 920-9573  
 E-mail: prights@tri-isys.com

**EDITORIAL**

Amidst terrorism

# Determined Defense of Human Rights



When the smoke cleared after the siege, survivor-inmates of the Bicutan tragedy are led back to their cells by jail guards.  
JOJO PASANA

■ By **Max M. de Mesa**

Chairperson, Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)

*War, whether literal or as a trope,  
Is never conducive to respect for,  
but rather poses threats to, human rights.*

**A. Belden Fields**

Rethinking Human Rights for the New Millennium

**T**HE Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), at the time of this writing, has already submitted to the Commission on Human Rights a common narrative report about the Bicutan siege<sup>1</sup>. It contains tales of excessive use of force, extrajudicial executions, massacre, cruel and inhuman treatment done against detainees suspected of being

“terrorists”. On March 14, some of them tried to escape from Camp Bagong Diwa. Their plan failed, and so they took over portions of the detention center. The incident set off the siege that ended up in carnage.

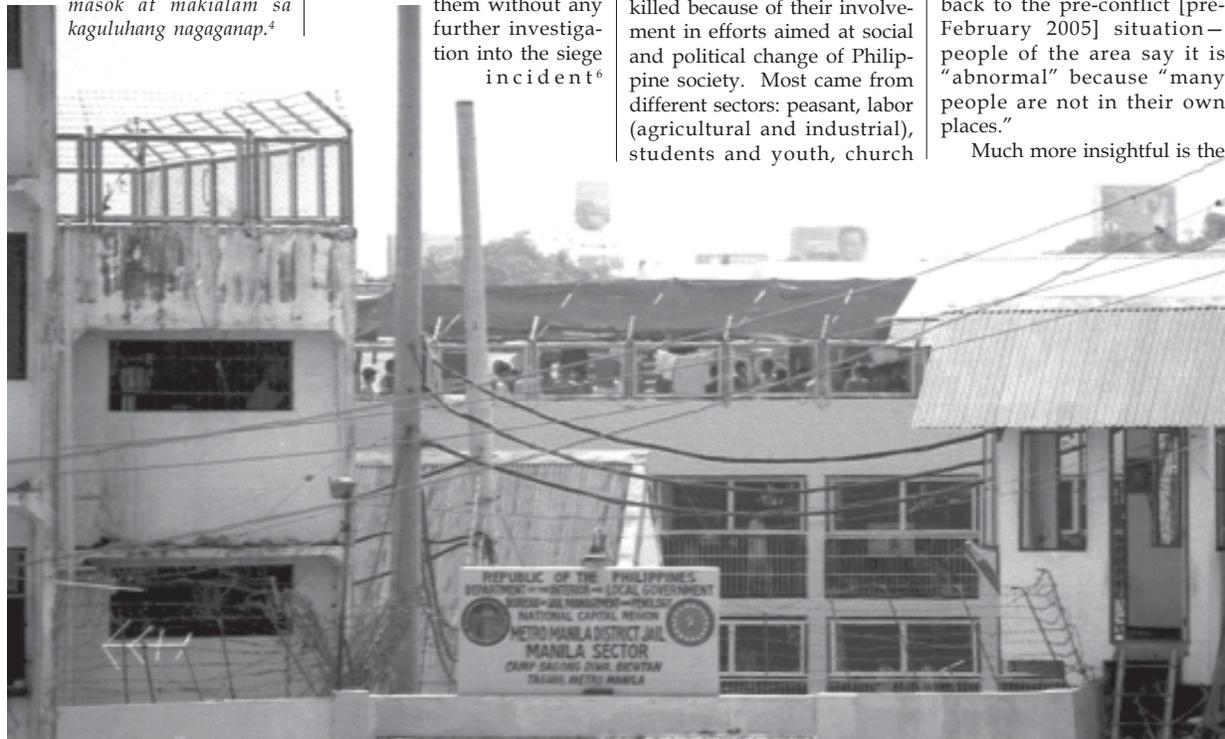
What happened on that day stresses the pervasive character of the “war” against terrorism that extends to detention centers and prisons, where cover-up of deaths in custody is easy and

asking questions is hard.<sup>2</sup> Here are some narrations of that siege:

*Ilang sandali pa...nagkaputukan na. Nagtago ako sa loob ng aming selda dahil sa takot, at nagsiksikan kami doon. Nakita ko ang isa sa aking kasamahang inmate na si Jojo Patarasa, taga selda 49, na tinutulungan ang isa pang kasamahang inmate na si Alesan Escandar na tinamaan sa likod. Noong binuhat ni Jojo si Alesan ay tinamaan din siya sa tiyan ng bala at lumuwa ang mga bituka nito. Nang makita ng PNP-*

SAF ito ay lumapit at hindi man lang tinulungang maitayo at maipadoktor. Ngunit habang si Jojo ay humihingi ng tulong ay binaril ito sa ulo ng nasabing PNP-SAF at pinapasok naman sa selda si Alesan at doon binaril nang walang kalaban-laban.<sup>3</sup>

Nang matapos ang putukan, binuksan ng mga PNP-SAF ang pintuan ng aming selda at habang nakatutok ang kanilang mga baril sa amin ay sumisigaw kami na “Hindi kami kasama nina Kosovo; mga sibilyan kami!” Matapos ito, inutusan kami ng mga PNP-SAF na maghubad ng damit at pinadapa kaming lahat na ang mukha ay dikit sa sahig.... Pinaakyat kaming lahat sa ikatlong palapag, sa “sunning area” ... at doon ay pinagtatadyakan ako sa katawan at sa mukha ng mga pulis na SAF na nakamaskara at...pinapaamin na isa ako sa mga kasama ni Kosovo na nakipagbarilan sa kanila. Mariin kong itinanggi ang mga pinaaamin sa akin dahil nga ako ay nasa loob ng CR ng aming selda at tinali pa namin ang pintuan nito para walang makalabas-masok at makialam sa kaguluhang nagaganap.<sup>4</sup>



The March 14 carnage has etched into our common memory Camp Bagong Diwa as a place where the worst of custodial massacre and torture happened.

JOJO PASANA

■ ■ ■

Nang mapunta na ang lahat sa itaas ng ASG-Building ay kasama pa namin si Commander Global at nakasuot pa siya ng itim na underwear. Nagtanong sa amin itong mga PNP-SAF, sino daw si Commander Global at tinuro naman [ng mga kasamang jailguards] si Global at wala na itong magawa kundi ang itaas ang kanyang mga kamay. Kinuha nila si Global at sinabihan na “ituro mo sa amin si Kosovo.” Habang nakatali ang mga kamay nito at nakalagay sa ulo ay pinababa nila na kasama ang mga PNP-SAF. Mga 60 seconds lang ang nakalipas ay may narinig akong sigaw na, “Wag po! Wag po!” at may putok na sumunod. Mga bandang hapon na ay nalaman naming binaril nila si Commander Global na wala namang kinalaman sa mga pangyayari at wala itong kalaban-laban dahil nga wala naman itong baril na hawak.<sup>5</sup>

While not a few would argue like Malacanang that these “criminals” or “terrorists” deserved what happened to them without any further investigation into the siege incident<sup>6</sup>



Troop movement during the siege.

JOJO PASANA

itself, one should look into the track record of the state, particularly of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration, in its campaign against perceived “enemies of the state” or “terrorists”, and its impact on people and human rights.

From the Marcos dictatorship to the Estrada administration, more than 2000 extrajudicial executions or *salvagings* were perpetrated and remained unsolved.<sup>7</sup> The victims were killed because of their involvement in efforts aimed at social and political change of Philippine society. Most came from different sectors: peasant, labor (agricultural and industrial), students and youth, church

people, and human rights workers, among others. The number doesn’t include those who have disappeared and have not been surfaced or found.<sup>8</sup> Their deaths or absence inflict deeper wounds on their families and relatives—not to mention the social and economic dislocations, and other difficulties arising from the loss.

The human rights violations cited above, together with other forms of abuses, have intensified during the Arroyo administration—from abetting the “no rally-no permit” cum violent dispersal of the City of Manila, to the bloody conclusion of the Hacienda Luisita peasant-worker picket, to the extrajudicial executions of members and supporters of militant groups and people’s organizations,<sup>9</sup> to acquiescence to the *salvagings* in Davao City, to the actual state of war in Sulu.

As to the situation in Sulu, which the government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chose to describe as “normalizing”<sup>10</sup>—i.e. “going back to the pre-conflict [pre-February 2005] situation—people of the area say it is “abnormal” because “many people are not in their own places.”

Much more insightful is the

statement of Fatmawati Salapuddin of the Bangsamoro Women's Solidarity: "In Sulu, for the past three decades, the abnormal (human rights violations) has become normal, so that people there just choose to remain silent."<sup>11</sup> So much more would it be in incidents of massacres like that of the Bicutan siege.

The administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has placed the peoples of the Philippine Archipelago under a situation of a "permanent war" against "terrorism". She has mirrored in her administration the U.S. campaign.<sup>12</sup> She has allowed the increase of conditions and infrastructures that erode our human rights, like the right to privacy.<sup>13</sup> She, through various government agencies and institutions, has marginalized human rights that are *derogable* in a "state of emergency", like freedom of movement and of expression, and has abetted those that are *non-derogable* such as torture and extrajudicial executions, by allowing a "culture of impunity"<sup>14</sup>. These actions done with impunity are not limited to political and civil rights but they also extend to economic, social and cultural rights, like the rights to adequate food and housing, education, and health.<sup>15</sup>

The sufferings of the people inflicted by the state, either by commission or omission in implementing human rights, in several respects, are exacerbated by non-state actors or entities.<sup>16</sup>

With such a situation of human rights, it is imperative for human rights defenders to engage either state and non-state actors or entities with a human rights perspective and stance.<sup>17</sup> This presupposes a massive campaign for human rights education and skills and engagement in activities and situations that violate human rights of persons and peoples. From such struggles will hopefully emerge more human rights defenders, and among their ranks a stronger unity. In the face of terrorism, a determined defense for human rights is the only option. ■

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The common narrative with accompanying photos is entitled "The Truth About the Bicutan Siege: Tales of Excessive Use of Force, Extrajudicial Executions, Massacre, Torture, Cruel and Inhuman Treatment". This narrative was collated from affidavits and discreet narrations of detainee-survivors, relatives, as well as findings of investigators and human rights personnel from the Commission on Human Rights, Congressman Mujiv Hataman, Law Offices of Roque & Butuyan/ Office of Legal Aid, Abbas Alejandro-Abbas Francisco and Associates, Billah Islam, the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), the Medical Action Group (MAG), Balay Rehabilitation Center, and PAHRA. This was formally presented to the Commission on Human Rights on April 21, 2005 in the presence of the relatives of victims, NGO human rights organizations, including moro organizations, and peace advocates and the media. See also the medical report and statement given by MAG after its medical mission after the siege.

<sup>2</sup> Fields, Belden A. *Rethinking Human Rights for the New Millennium*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, pp. 189ff

<sup>3</sup> The names of narrators have been omitted for security purposes. "Some moments after that [ultimatum]...firing commenced. Out of fear I hid myself inside our cell and we crammed ourselves there. I saw one of our fellow inmates, Jojo Patarasa, from cell no.49, who was helping another inmate, Alesan Escandar, who got hit at the back. While lifting Jojo, Alesan was hit in the stomach by a bullet and his entrails burst out. When one member of the PNP-SAF saw this, the said person approached and did not even help, but rather shot Jojo in the head. Alesan was ordered to get inside the cell and, helplessly, was shot there."

<sup>4</sup> "When the firing stopped, the PNP-SAF opened the doors of our cell. While they pointed their guns at us, we were shouting: "We are not with Kosovo; we are civilians!" The PNP-SAF ordered us to strip off our clothes and to lie down with our faces close to the floor. We were ordered to go up to the "sunning area". There, PNP-SAF men wearing masks kicked me in the body and in the face, forcing me to admit that I was with Kosovo in a shootout against them. I vehemently denied the accusation because I was really inside the toilet of our cell, with its door tied up to ensure that no one could either get in or get out, and not be involved in the trouble that happened."

<sup>5</sup> "When all were on the top floor, Commander Global was still with us and alive. He was even wearing a black brief. We were then asked by the PNP-SAF as to who is Commander Global. He was pointed out by the jail guards. Commander Global had no choice but to raise his hands in the air. They took him and ordered him: "Identify Kosovo for us." With tied hands placed on his head, PNP-SAF led Commander Global downstairs. Some sixty seconds passed when I heard the cry: "Please, don't! Please, don't!" Then, a gun shot rang out. In the afternoon, we learned that they shot Commander Global, who had nothing to do with the incident, and was [helplessly] shot because he had no gun."

<sup>6</sup> A 16-page siege report was made by an inter-agency fact-finding team formed by Interior and Local Government Secretary Angelo Reyes who was himself head of the Crisis Management Team (CMT) responsible for the siege itself. The findings of this report was being serialized by Norman Bordadora in the Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) starting April 23, 2005. Cfr. PDI issues April 23, p. A23; April 24, p.A2. In the meantime, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) until this writing has no copy of the post-operations report despite its issuance of a *subpoena* last April 22, 2005. It also appears that lawyers-investigators of CHR have no immediate access to the human rights victims-detainees (as clients of CHR) despite their constitutional mandate (R.A. 7438) unless given verbal or written permission by government, police or military authorities.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics taken from the Research, Documentation and Information Program (RDIP) of the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP).

<sup>8</sup> Confer with the data of Families of the Involuntary Disappeared (FIND), including "Number of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance Under the GMA Administration, April 2001-December 2004". February, 2005

<sup>9</sup> Philippine Daily Inquirer. "2 party-list solons start fast to protest killing of militants", March 31, 2005, p. A9

<sup>10</sup> Santos, Jr., Soliman M. "Sulu: State of War, Calls for Peace". Paper presented as delegate of the Mindanao Solidarity Network, which is a member network of the Mindanao Peaceweavers, April 2005.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1-2

<sup>12</sup> Belden, op.cit. Please see Chapter 7: "Perpetual War and Human Rights in the United States". According to the author: "The trope of war is very powerful on the public mentality. Once it is propagated, the insecurity

of the public is aroused and politicians make a political investment in it from which it is very difficult to extract themselves." (pp. 1750176). See also Bacevich, Andrew J. and Engelhardt, Tom. *The New American Militarism* as reviewed by Tom Dispatch in *antiwar.com*. Bacevich writes about "The Normalization of War" which people, like that in Sulu, know and experience as upon them.

<sup>13</sup> See [www.privacyinternational.org/survey/phr2004](http://www.privacyinternational.org/survey/phr2004) on Human Rights and Privacy with a section on the Philippines on the laws passed that intrude in one's right to privacy. There is a related International Campaign Against Mass Surveillance (ICAMS).

<sup>14</sup> Balay Rehabilitation Center et al. "A Report on the Philippine Government's Implementation on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: An NGO Parallel Report for Presentation to the United Nations Human Rights Committee", September 2003. U.N. Committee on Human Rights. "Concluding Observations of the Human Rights Committee on the Philippines". October 30, 2003. UNCHR meetings 2153<sup>rd</sup> and 2154<sup>th</sup> (CCPR/C/SR.2153 and 2154). Till the writing of this article there has been no response from the Philippine government regarding the conclusions and recommendations of the said UN monitoring body.

<sup>15</sup> Florencio, Cecilia A. Professor. Nutrition in the Philippines: The Past for its Templates; Red for its Colors. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2004

<sup>16</sup> Partnership of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and Services (PARRDS) et al. "Statistical Findings on Human Rights Violations", "Distribution of Cases and Victims of Human Rights Violations per Subject Area". February, 2005. These papers, covering the period from August 1997- September 2004, present well-documented cases wherein the human rights of farmers are violated by state agents and state-backed militia, as well as abused by non-state actors, not only by landlords and private armed goons, but also by members of the New People's Army of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Other cases come from areas where people, especially indigenous peoples, are dislocated and harmed and their sources of subsistence are taken over or destroyed by mining and logging companies.

<sup>17</sup> Diokno, Maria Socorro I. *Human Rights Centered Development: Theory and Practice*. Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2004.

# Bicutan Siege: UNTOLD TALE OF ABUSES



Survivors of the siege are ready to tell their story and of those who did not make it through.

JOJO PASANA

*The abuse ... is when it disjoins remorse from power. W. Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, II,i*

**T**HE Office of Legal Aid of the University of the Philippines, the Institute for Human Rights, and the NCR investigators of the Commission on Human Rights corroborated the earlier news that the Department of Justice state counsels, who pursued the cases against the suspected Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) detainees had prior knowledge of the planned jailbreak two months before the Bicutan siege. This information was relayed to the concerned officials of the Bureau of Jail Management and Prisons (BJMP).

## The Day Before the Siege

Kosovo (Alhamser Manatad Limbong) and two other detainees were playing basketball on the first floor of the Special Intensive Care Area (SICA) Building at about 6 o'clock in the morning on March 14, when two guards working on a double shift entered and stopped their game.

Kosovo and two other detainees wrestled with the guards. One stabbed the guard with ice pick. Subsequently, they grabbed the gun of one jail guard and shot the other guard. Upon seeing what happened to the two guards on duty, the guard at the tower immediately went down to help, but he was also shot at. After which, Kosovo and the two detainees ran outside to escape but they heard shots coming from outside. They were forced to retreat to their cells. Despite protests of fellow inmates fearing they would get embroiled in the situation, they insisted on coming in. Then, two suspected ASG members, Borham Hadji and Ulli Atti, ran towards the jail guards' office but the guards shot at them.

Kosovo, together with Ka Lando, tried to convince other detainees at the first floor to join them, but the majority refused. Reports have it that even Commanders Global (Nadzmi Sabdulla) and Robot (Galib Andang) tried to dissuade Kosovo about his plan. Remaining adamant, Kosovo told those who refused to join them to go to the right side of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor fronting the Annex Building known as Metro Manila District Jail. Those who joined them were ordered to go to the left side. Kosovo and the two were joined by less than 10 others including

Almundi Tarbanga, an MILF detainee suspected of being a terrorist.

Other detainees who did not join Kosovo's group and could not be accommodated in the place he designated for them, went up to the second floor for refuge. After which, detainees on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors, who chose not to join, tied their cell doors shut from the inside for protection and to prevent other detainees from entering.

Kosovo's group asked for Congressman Mujib Hataman and Robin Padilla with Atty. Calleja to act as negotiators. But Robin Padilla was not available so the PNP instead offered ARMM Governor Parouk Hussein in Padilla's place. Three other negotiators, said to be British-trained, aided these two government officials. However, the detainees only negotiated with Hataman and Hussein to whom they presented their five demands. These were the following: speedy trial, respect of their human rights, security, food and other needs, and media projection.

At around 11 a.m., external negotiations took place with the government's Crisis Management Team (CMT) composed of Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Angelo Reyes, Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Arturo Lumibao, three PNP negotiators, Taguig Mayor Fred Tinga and Congressman Cayetano with Ka Lando as spokesperson for Kosovo's group. Secretary Reyes demanded that Kosovo's group surrender first before the latter can have the live media interview. Kosovo said that they needed to eat first and to pray before they decided on that matter. After some time, the group declared they wouldn't surrender unless they had the media interview first. Secretary Reyes acceded. Since it was already 6:00 p.m., Ka Lando again requested if they could eat and pray first.

The negotiations bogged down.

At that time, Congressman Hataman had been talking with Commander Global on the cell



**Cops help a survivor who cannot walk on his own because of wounds and exhaustion.**  
JOJO PASANA

phone. Commander Global said that he could not convince Kosovo anymore to discontinue with their plan despite the fact that many of the detainees who were not part of the attempted escape will be affected. Ka Lando said that they were all ready to die.

### The Siege

At around 7:30 a.m., Secretary Angelo Reyes gave a one-hour deadline for Kosovo's group to surrender. At 8:30 a.m., the deadline lapsed but was extended for 15 minutes. At 9 a.m., the attack was launched at the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors.

Teargas canisters were thrown inside each cell. Concentrated firing was made without warning in every cell (estimated at one round of magazine per cell) of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors.

When the smoke cleared, detainees on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors were ordered to strip down to their briefs and come out of their cells. Once out of their cells, the detainees were kicked and punched and ordered to put their hands behind their heads and to crawl up to the rooftop.

Some wounded detainees who were crawling out and asking for help from the Special Action Force (SAF) were ordered by the latter to return to their cells. As they did so, they were shot. A detainee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor said that he saw a certain Maulo, a wounded suspected ASG, while they were all crawling out from their cells. According to them, Maulo was told by SAF to return to his cell and then they heard shots. Later they saw on TV that Maulo was one of the dead suspected ASG detainees.

Meanwhile, information was passed that a suspected ASG detainee on the first floor was ordered by SAF to carry Commander Robot to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. After putting Commander Robot down, he was ordered to crawl away. When the said detainee heard shots and tried to look back, one of the SAF stepped on his head.

### Clearing up

Detainees, stripped down to their briefs, were made to sit on the rooftop under the sun for hours, with hands on their napes or backs. They suffered sunburn as evidenced by the

redness on the nape, back, and arms. SAF were then calling out the names of Commanders Global and Yusop. The latter however did not present himself but Global did. Nadzmi Sabdulla (Cmdr. Global) was then kicked and punched after that. Sabdulla was ordered to run but when he did, he was shot. One of the detainees recounted this. He saw Commander Global running and he heard shots afterwards. SAF threatened the detainees not to look up or look around, otherwise their heads would be blown off. They were thus not able to identify the perpetrators because they did not dare raise their heads because of fear.

At around 11 a.m., Sec. Reyes announced that the crisis was over and proclaimed the operation a success. Immediately after, there was a grenade blast. A round of firing on each of the first and second floors by siege forces was heard. Some PNP personnel admitted that they earlier threw two grenades on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor that did not explode.

The total death count from March 14 to 15 was 29 people. The official police statement released to media said that the raiders recovered from the scene eight handguns and two unexploded grenades. Others disputed this accounting as to the actual number and kind of weapons used by Kosovo and company.

### Burial

The bodies of all dead detainees, including those of Galib Andang (Cmdr. Robot), Nadzmi Sabdulla (Cmdr. Global) and Alhamser Manalad Limbong (Cmdr. Kosovo), were brought by two ambulances to Maharlika Village to prepare them for Islamic burial rites at the Imam Kusim Memorial Park. The ambulances had to shuttle several times beginning 1 a.m. to bring all the bodies. Sometime past 9 AM, the burial ceremonies were held. ■

*Prepared by the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA)*



## ABU SAYYAF GROUP

# How it began, what came out of it



Photo ops for ASG  
[cfrterrorism.org/groups/abusayyaf.html](http://cfrterrorism.org/groups/abusayyaf.html)

Janjalani's minority sentiment could have just died a natural death had his group been able to fully participate in the GRP-MNLF peace negotiations

**B**ORN OUT of the great ideals for Muslim Mindanao, the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) had been reared in deadly warfare. Now, it finds a home in terrorism and banditry.

The ASG had broken ties with the Moro National Liberation Front because of disagreements over substantive issues of the peace talks between the MNLF and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). The spread of Islamic Fundamentalism and the United States-GRP policy of supporting groups poised to fight with them against their perceived enemies had facilitated the breakup.

Abdurajak Janjalani, a young religious MNLF activist,

founded the ASG in 1991. Janjalani, a talented and educated young leader, who had studied Islamic Jurisprudence for three years in Mecca, Saudi Arabia as a scholar, had questions with the MNLF leadership. Purportedly, in 1987, Nur Misuari sent Janjalani to Tripoli, Libya in a bid to cool him down from criticizing what he perceived as Misuari's "sellout policy" in pursuing peace negotiations and political settlement with the national government. Misuari's leader-

ship style also had been an object of disapproval by Janjalani's group.

Janjalani's minority sentiment could have just died a natural death had his group been able to fully participate in the GRP-MNLF peace negotiations and the ideas acceptable to all major Moro forces like the MILF, been considered.

But this was not the case because the MNLF leadership became hooked up with the national government. Misuari had secured a pledge from the late Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, and later from his widow Cory Aquino, that once in power, the settlement of the Mindanao problem would be top priority in accordance with the aspirations and liking of the MNLF. But when President Cory Aquino became President and Commander-in-Chief of the GRP in 1986, she found herself trapped in the military lair riddled with factionalism.

The military factions in the Aquino government, supported by Christian warlords and former Marcos henchmen having business stakes in Mindanao, made it impossible for the Cory government to keep her pledge. That time, the general sentiment of the government panel in the negotiating table could be summarized as follows: "Why negotiate with a spent-out and weak force (the MNLF)?" and "Why give Mindanao to Muslims when they are just a minority?"

Dissent among the MNLF rank-and-file members was brewing as the national government failed in coming up

with an agreeable solution. But instead of negotiating for the MNLF's goals, its leaders acquiesced into attending various discussions organized by the government where they were lectured on matters that were anathema to the Moro aspirations.

Nur Misuari stuck it out with what was becoming a farce. The concessions the government was willing to offer shied away from the Tripoli agreement. To the dissenters, the government had grown insincere as it shifted focus to finding ways and means to pamper and bribe the MNLF leaders with power, money and privileges and promises of more. The trade-off being that the MNLF must forget the Moro aspirations that had been fought with much Moro blood for decades.

Moreover, Misuari's critics saw the national government was weak being wracked by one *coup de etat* attempt after another, even as it continued fighting against the growing forces of the New People's Army throughout the archipelago. Despite all these developments, Nur Misuari remained hooked up with the government, hoping it would eventually fulfill its pledge.

So, a political settlement was eventually forged, and Misuari disgraced himself in the eyes of many Muslims with his poor performance as governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. In spite of all his efforts, Misuari would later be disowned by the GRP. He rebelled once again as he used to, but his luck couldn't be pushed further. Now, he languishes in prison. Meanwhile, the MILF and the Abu Sayyaf have gained strength from Misuari's failures.

This was the political milieu that pushed Janjalani to set up a religious movement in 1991, and subsequently called for *Jihad* and the establishment of an Islamic State. In Libya he formed a small core of like-minded young Filipino activists. After four years of studies, he returned to the Philippines and

started organizing work.

Back in the country, he found fertile ground for his mission and began linking up with and working within the Tabligh, a self renewal movement that is very popular among Muslims not only in the Philippines but also worldwide. He was able to touch base in and through the Muslim youth and their local leaders, and captured their idealism. Finally, he found international connections with Islamic Fundamentalists. (Marites Dañguilan-Vitug, Glenda Gloria: *Under the Crescent Moon*, 1999.)

### CIA trained ASG in deadly warfare

Finding a good opportunity to bleed the Soviet Union in a war of attrition, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Philippine military assisted the Abu Sayaff, directly and indirectly, in acquiring military capability. The duo supported the international *Jihad* call of Muslims all over the world, to assist their fellow Muslims that had been subjugated by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

The CIA poured out millions of dollars to finance the recruitment and travel expenses of volunteers, sponsored training camps and even sent instructors to teach demolition missions and the use of highly advanced portable weaponry that included Stinger missiles. The MILF

was able to send 600 of its men as volunteers (Vitug, Gloria).

Scores of Abu Sayyaf would-be warriors volunteered and were given first-class guerrilla training in Afghanistan, and they fought for a time against one of the best armies of the world—the Soviet Army. It was also in those training camps where they undertook religious lessons in Islamic Fundamentalism and got to know the latest tactics in guerrilla warfare that are now being (ironically) used against US troops in Iraq.

The CIA accomplished its tactical mission of building an effective guerrilla resistance against the Soviet Union leading to total collapse of the vast Soviet Empire. But in doing so, it also helped build an army of guerrilla cells all over the world that were to fight a *Jihad* against the US. One of these guerilla cells is the Abu Sayyaf.

In the home front, the ASG played a vital role against Misuari. Although the CIA gave the ASG military training, it was the Philippine military that gave it "seed" weapons. The formation of MNLF break-away groups was welcomed and encouraged by the military factions in government so that Nur Misuari would have less and less bargaining chip in the negotiating table—a tactic culled from the long tradition of divide and conquer strategy.

Seeing this opportunity,

PNP redeployed one of their deep penetration agents to the Abu Sayyaf lair, the late Edwin Angeles, a half-Tausog. Angeles took the opportunity to earn big by playing double agent. On the one hand, he helped the Abu Sayyaf grow strong while on the other, helped his PNP controllers by giving them a good "facelift" to make them look good to their bosses. He asked for money and arms for the Abu Sayyaf so they would have the means to resist MNLF pressures. The Philippine National Police poured in money and weapons to the ASG, who by now has maintained sanctuaries in MNLF territory. Because of this, the military cast a blind eye on the group's fund-raising activities that included kidnapping and robberies.

Not to be outdone, enterprising military commanders and politicians also forged an "unholy" alliance with the ASG to be able to run a multi-million illegal logging operation in the area. (Vitug, Gloria)

Right after its founding, the ASG conducted a string of bombing and kidnapping operations. Its targets, mostly civilians and foreign tourists, differentiate the ASG from other armed groups in the Philippines. All other armed groups consider the ASG terrorist. To some sections of the civil society, the ASG is simply a bandit. ■

—PhilRights Research Team



Abu Sayyaf group pose for a picture on July 16, 2000.

([www.cpj.org/Briefings/2000/Lorenz/Lorenz.html](http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2000/Lorenz/Lorenz.html))

■ By Ezra Zara

THOSE of us who are thirty and above saw how the whole nation sang, danced, and laughed as the dictatorship crumbled at the people's victory at Edsa 20 years ago. After that, we witnessed how our democratic institutions rose from among the rubbles. We felt so free, hopeful, and invincible then.

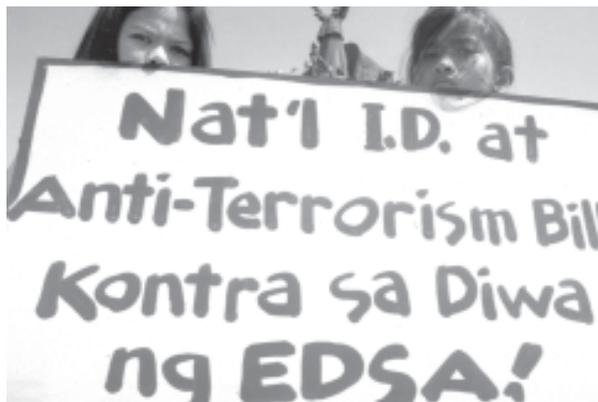
# 'RUSH' I.D. SYSTEM

But now, under the aegis of the war on terrorism, what democratic freedoms we have achieved as a people through decades of struggle, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo might nullify in a few month's time, armed with the Executive Order 420. The proposed National ID System (NIS) had been approved too quickly and launched unceremoniously, but its possible toll on our basic rights and liberties could be devastating and enduring.

The reasons why we should have a national ID and how it should be implemented are still unclear. What is clear by now is the emergence of a global "anti-terror" regime led by the US and embraced by member-countries of the "coalition-of-the-willing" — RP included.

The NIS is hardly a solitary and honest initiative by government to ease up the troublesome lives of Filipinos whose wallets bulge, not with money, but with numerous IDs for various transactions. It is part of a global plan of the mighty and paranoid states realizing that terrorism is a necessary consequence of their global tyrannical policies.

One super-ID for all transactions to be done by Juan dela Cruz is desirable. But using the same ID to hunt down "terrorists" and perceived "enemies of the state" is abominable and dangerous. The



Members of a militant group protest against the National ID system at EDSA. JOJO PANSA

latter, however, is the most likely reason for the "rush-ID" system's approval.

If so, one thing is certain: The infrastructures of monitoring every citizen's movements from place to place, one's past and present addresses, persons one having associations with, and a host of vital information every individual would rather keep within himself, is now being worked out — everyone remains clueless, except those most trusted by Malacanang.

#### Quoted intentions

President Arroyo has stated that the NIS is one of the "key elements" in the fight against terrorism.

But there is also one "socially acceptable" purpose floated around by NIS apologists (as an

after thought?); The NIS is nothing more than a way to facilitate government transactions and to speed up business.

Yet, more quotes add up to the cacophony of "official voices" confusing everybody about the real intention of the ID system. Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye had been quoted as saying, "under the proposed ID system everyone is presumed a suspect." Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes has hinted the NIS is a move to "make Filipinos' lives easier" and only those who have something to hide could possibly oppose it.

Critics oppose the ID system, especially after hearing the declaration of Secretary Bunye. They argue that abusive lawmen could do "illegal shortcuts" with





the ID system; that the ID could be used to restrict freedom of movement and; loss of this "super ID" could deprive citizens of their rights to access services. Lastly, it is like a "big brother" measure whose real intent is to spy on an individual or group's activities.

Like it or not, the national ID system is in place. There is already a standing order to consolidate individual information from the BIR, SSS, GSIS, LTO, and other government agencies. Before long, profiling of individuals would be possible with much ease using computer technology. With the NIS, who could escape from the watchful eyes of the state and the few whose interests the state represents?

#### **The MATRIX**

The special report of the Focus of the Global South on NIS post some questions like how would the NIS catch "terrorists?" The report ventures into an answer: The MATRIX (or Multi-State Terrorism Information Exchange) project the US is operating would do all the magic for RP.

The report says that the MATRIX is a massive database that contains millions of personal information, including physical features, ethnicity, current and past addresses, phone numbers, among others. The report continues: the MATRIX includes not only personal information from the five states that are pilot testing the database but also information culled from many other databases from other states. It is maintained by a private company, Seisint, Inc. and partly funded by the US Department of Justice.

It is most likely that the template for the information gathered by the Philippine NIS is the same with that of the MATRIX. And since RP is part of the "coalition of the willing" in fighting international terrorism, global sharing of RP citizens' individual information is possible—RP database would be open to global data sharing for sure.

#### **Guilty unless proven innocent**

With this hi-tech system, it seems no one could escape the eyes of the "gods"—those who control and have access to the MATRIX. In the same way, the "lesser gods" in RP—those running the state—would have full access to all the individual information of every holder of the super-ID. Those who don't have an ID would be automatically tagged a suspect and therefore an outcast or even dragged into prison (or even into shallow graves).

Operators of the MATRIX in the US have allegedly formulated a "terrorism quotient" (TQ) based on the information they gathered on individuals being lodged in the database. If RP NIS database copied the template from the US and used the same TQ to determine whether a person is a security "high-risk", what could it mean to us?

Presuming that everybody is a suspect in the government's frantic hunt for terrorists, as Bunye has hinted above, everyone would then be guilty unless proven innocent. All the information gathered by concerned government agents and agencies on an individual are secrets not even the "suspect" would know. And if they (those operating the system) would find on the records that one has "high terrorism quotient", then one is doomed because the system holds "secret evidences" denied to anyone who would want to know except those allowed by the state.

The database and the system of analyzing data are not 100 percent errors-proof due to human factors and system slips-up. In such case, how would one accused of being a terrorist defend oneself? Who would stand as witness for the accused? In a reverse legal sense, it is now the guilty that has the burden of proving that he is innocent, while totally blind of the dossiers that the state possesses against him. If we are to think about civil liberties in the context of an NIS regime, forget about it. ■



1996 demolition operation at Sitio Mendes, Proj. 8, Q.C.

■ By Luis B. Gorgonio

**T**HE policemen were idly sitting on tombstones inside the Our Lady of Lourdes Cemetery as the residents of the slum area in Barangay Tonsuya, Malabon City clashed with the members of the demolition team on March 11, 2005.

# VIOLENT ILLEGAL DEMOLITION



Demolition operation in North Triangle, Q.C. in 1996

As the demolition activity began, gunshots rang out, stones flew from all directions; walls, doors, and roofs of houses crumbled, there was wailing of children and women. Yet, the cops were there, keeping their individual peace as they relished every puff of smoke from their cigarettes, unmindful of the violence just under their noses.

The Presidential Commission on the Urban Poor (PCUP) did not seem to know of the demolition activity even if it is the sole clearing-house for all demolitions and evictions. It is also PCUP's mandate to require the concerned departments and agencies, including Local Government Units, to issue checklists, guidelines, and compliance certificates on demolition and eviction activities prior and after the implementation thereof. Officials from the city government came only after 40 houses have been ravaged.

In those three long hours of fight, the residents felt abandoned by the people whom they believed could defend them from illegal demolition.

## Guns, clubs, stones

As early as six o'clock in the morning on March 11, the residents noticed the arrival of some members of the demolition team. They also noticed, on the evening of March 10, the unusual massing up of about 200 security guards inside the Our Lady of Lourdes Cemetery adjacent to the 5.8-hectare slum area.

Sensing something ominous, the residents rounded up some members of the demolition team earlier in the day and called the Police Community Precinct-3 to turn over those they apprehended.

To prepare for the looming demolition attack, groups of residents massed up on the bridge serving as entry point to the area, fronting the main road. They mounted hurdles made of planks of wood and other roadblocks.





Demolition operation in Brgy. Manggahan, Q.C. in 1996.

## DEMOLITION BACKGROUND

THE 5.8-hectare informal settlers' colony in Barangay Tonsuya, Malabon City has 2,000 structures occupied by around 6,000 families (more or less 30,000 individuals).

Fernando Gozon, Inc. claims ownership of the area. He has a land title, the authenticity of which is being questioned by the occupants. They have reasons to do so because the area used to be a marshland. It should be under the supervision of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

During the early '80s the area was reclaimed by the Ministry of Human Settlements, for a housing program for employees and teachers of Malabon and Navotas.

At the height of the EDSA People Power uprising on February 24 and 25, 1986, people began occupying the area.

The National Housing Authority (NHA) filed a case contesting the authenticity of the Gozon family's land title but lost in 1992. In 1996, the Gozon Family filed a case against the 365 couples residing in the reclaimed area.

In 1997 the 365 couples filed a counter suit versus the Gozon family at the Malabon Municipal Trial Court, Branch 56, but lost in the case.

On August 12, 2001, the Supreme Court's First Division ordered the 365 families to vacate the area. And each of the 365 families was to pay the Gozon Family P1,500 per month starting September 1997 up to the present, on top of it, they also have to pay P1,000.00 each for attorney's fee and the cost of the suit.

On June 6, 2002, the first notice of eviction was served, and on July 19, 2003 came the 2<sup>nd</sup> notice of eviction.

In 2003, the respondents petitioned for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) but it was denied due to technicality. After a couple of months, the respondents filed a case again invoking their rights as beneficiaries under the Urban Development and Housing Act (UDHA)—R.A. 7279. The regional court rejected their plea.

On February 4, 2003, the Malabon City council passed an expropriation ordinance for housing purposes. The ordinance was not enforced because city officials were then busy for the forthcoming elections as alleged by the residents.

On April 11, 2004, respondents resurrected the expropriation case at the RTC, Branch 170. On July 2004, the RTC sent notice for the Gozon family to comment on the content of the case. The Gozons did not give a comment. (At this instance the Gozons defaulted on their claim), and a motion to take possession of the area could have been possible if the city government acted on it.

In October 2004, the Gozons wrote to the court asking for the implementation of the special order of demolition.

On January 31, 2005, the case was dismissed for lack of interest on the part of the defendants but the slum dwellers learned about it only on March 3, 2005. It was also during this time that the notice of eviction was served, giving the residents five days to vacate the area.

On March 7, 2005, the residents conducted an indignation rally that resulted in a dialogue attended by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) and Malabon Mayor Tito Oreta. It was during that occasion when Mayor Oreta declared that there would be no police assistance that would be given to the demolition team.

Five days prior to the demolition, copies of the notice to vacate were given to some residents of the area. One copy was given to Maximo Almasora (a non-resident who was there for a visit to relatives), and who was then photographed as the paper was handed to him.



In those three long hours of fight, the residents felt abandoned by the people whom they believed could defend them from illegal demolition.

---

But the demolition team launched the assault from along the wall of the cemetery where there was no blocking force, and where some of the houses were vacated earlier on.

Residents said truckloads of youths numbering more than a thousand (whose ages range between 23 and below) went straight inside the cemetery and climbed over the cemetery wall (also serving as the walls to some houses of the residents) and onto the roofs of the houses and began tearing down walls and roofs. Wearing red, green, blue, and orange uniforms, the demolition team members were armed with mallets, hammers, jackhammers, clubs, and stones. A few of them attempted to torch houses using Molotov bombs but didn't succeed.

The residents claimed that the demolition team looted their houses, carting away any valuables (cell phones, clothing, necklaces, wedding rings, television sets, pants, clothes, and cash, among others) they chanced upon inside the rooms, kitchen, and the living rooms.

Meanwhile the "white guards", armed with .45, .38 caliber pistols, and shotguns

were firing their guns at the houses while those with mallets and hammers began tearing down walls, roofs, and doors of houses. As concrete walls began to cave in, the guards were ready with their guns pointed at any resident showing resistance.

The riot that lasted for three hours began at around 10 o'clock in the morning. The residents fought with clubs and stones as they tried to stop the demolition crew. More than an hour later, several homes were riddled with bullets and 13 persons sustained contusions and bruises in their arms, feet, faces, and heads.

The residents saw some policemen seated on tombstones inside the cemetery—they did not intervene. The one who was in command of the demolition team was a short, stout guy wearing a suit resembling that of a presidential guard's. Team members addressed him as OIC.

As fighting between the residents and members of the demolition team rages, a second batch of children and women were brought to safety inside the covered barangay basketball court outside the slum area, on

the order of Barangay Chairman Antonio Criss Jr. The first batch was brought in on the eve of the demolition.

Meanwhile, a news report (Philippine Inquirer March 16, 2005) says that a certain Osmundo Manapat, 50, supervisor of Malabon City Solid Waste Management Office, allegedly a recruiter of demolition team, was shot dead by three unidentified men inside the city dump in Barangay Catmon.

Avoiding possible fatalities from indiscriminate firing of guns, torching of houses, looting, and destruction of their properties, 40 families transferred for three nights and four days to tents they set up along the sidewalks of Letre Road.

"Had the police force acted promptly, they could have prevented the demolition crew from destroying and looting our homes," a resident said during a fact-finding mission conducted by representatives from POs and NGOs namely: Phil-Rights, Initiatives for Peace and Justice, Alab Katipunang, and UMALAB-KA.

Had the PCUP done its job...; had the municipal local

government...; and a host of subjunctives is all the residents could say.

PCUP should require under oath the proponent of demolition that: a) adequate consultations with the affected families have already been undertaken at least twice; b) adequate resettlement site and relocation facilities are available and; c) the provisions of Section 3 paragraph 1 of Implementing Rules and Regulations of Section 28 of Republic Act 7279 (Pre-Relocation) have been complied with. Such field trip to the proposed relocation area, posting of demolition order in conspicuous areas, explaining the reason for demolition and for what purposes the contested land will be used.

One item in the demolition checklist was not complied with during the demolition as we can see from the agreement reached during the dialogue of March 11 done after the incident. Agreement No. 6 says: ...The two areas will be inspected (Panghulo and Dampalit) as possible relocation sites the next day (March 12) at 9 a.m. by the three association leaders in the slum area, LGU, and PCUP.

## Education, still not government priority

THE government continues to turn a blind eye on education. By doing so, it deprives the Filipino youth of their right to quality and affordable education.

Government failure to increase much-needed allocation for education is a glaring neglect of such right. Only 11.68 percent of the national budget goes to education resulting in a shortage of 42,000 teachers, 50,000 classrooms, and lack of basic facilities like 50 percent of existing classrooms have zero electricity and 27 percent with zero ventilation.

DepEd's annual 4.5 percent budget increase is not enough to cope with 4.5 percent inflation rate and 2.5 percent annual enrollment growth. Drastic slashes in subsidies for state universities and colleges (SUCs) have forced these institutions to increase tuition and miscellaneous fees between 50 to 400 percent to ensure normal operations. These budget cuts contradict the promise of the present administration to promote quality education.

The consistent poor performance of students in the High School Readiness Test (HSRT) manifests the deterioration of the quality of Philippine education. This trend is significantly attributed to the government's inadequate budget of P10 per elementary student, and P35 per secondary student per month in 2004.

Teachers are not spared of this predicament. They face an enormous challenge of providing quality education amidst less and less instructional resources and poor learning conditions. Even if 89 percent of DepEd's budget goes to teachers' salaries and personal benefits, the teachers are still forced to leave their profession to do lowly work in other countries or to *call centers* because their take-home pay cannot even take them home.

If the first-quarter figures were to indicate government prioritization scale, then in no time Philippine education would

be doomed.

- Amarado, Romy G. Negros State University to Hike Fees. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. March 30, 2005; page A20
- Javier, Conrad. Teachers' Low Salaries Shows Education Not Government Priority. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. March 29, 2005; page A16
- Barcelo, Vito. More Teachers To Teach More Pupils in June. *Manila Standard Today*. March 16, 2005; page A2
- Papa, Alcuin. Graduating Students Read Poorly-DepEd. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. March 14, 2005; page A1-A4
- Barcelo, Vito. Inflation Wrecks Education Budget. *Manila Standard Today*. March 7, 2005; page A2
- Caluza, Desiree. Student Groups Say Budget Cuts To Hike Tuition. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. March 1, 2005; page A19
- Jaime, Joana Liz. Youth Welfare Not Government Priority. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. February 19, 2005; page A16
- Pazzibugan, Dona Z. Now, government losing English teachers to call centers. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. February 15, 2005; page A5
- With P10 Per Pupil, Poor Scores Not Surprising. *Manila Standard Today*. February 5-6 2005; page A1
- Pazzibugan, Dona Z. 65 students crammed into a room? Yes or No. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. January 11, 2005; page A3

## Political will in the *Ligtas Buntis* program, wanting

DURING the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2005, stories about Filipino women's reproductive rights were on the headlines of daily newspapers. Sadly however, the reports only showcased the government's uncertain stand on reproductive rights in particular and the population issue in general.

According to the National Statistical Coordinating Board (NSCB), the projected population for the country in 2005 is 85.2 million, given a 2.36 percent annual growth rate.

To address population boom, the Philippine government, with the Department of Health (DOH) coordinating the country's population program, initiated the *Ligtas Buntis* Program. Launched on February 25, this month-long reproductive health program

entailed setting out 15, 000 health workers nationwide to educate some two million target couples about responsible parenthood. The program conducted house to house survey on the fertility control methods used by couples, and popularization of sex education.

On the surface, this seemed an improvement in the government's previous stand on the population issue, which was characterized by indecision.

Prior to its launching, the cracks in the supposedly proactive program started showing up. Another government agency, the Commission on Population assailed the *Ligtas Buntis* Program as ineffective as it will not be conducted hand-in-hand with the distribution of contraceptives. It added that the effort will only end up in a frustrating hunt for supplies by Filipino couples.

Giving in to calls from influential church groups that assailed the program as going against the basic tenets of the Catholic church, President Arroyo backtracked and clarified that the *Ligtas Buntis* program promotes responsible parenthood and pushes for natural methods of family planning.

What these developments clearly show is that the government is not serious in addressing the citizens' health and reproductive rights. This also shows that the programs to address the right to health are, at best, stop-gap measures and do not promote enjoyment of these rights.

- Rivera, Blanche S. *DOH going door-to-door on birth control campaign*. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. January 13, 2005. p. A6.
- Aning, Jerome. *Bishops say gov't 'Ligtas Buntis' campaign assault on family*. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. February 22, 2005. p.A2.
- Gonzalez, Mia. *Palace defends Ligtas Buntis*. *Manila Standard Today*. March 5, 2005. p. 4.
- Dayrit, Manuel. *Can Ligtas Buntis save lives?*. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. March 13, 2005. p. A16.
- Esguerra, Christian V. *DOH insider comes out to assail 'Ligtas Buntis'*. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. March 15, 2005. p. A1.
- Esguerra, Christian V. *'Ligtas Buntis' foe launches own campaign*. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. March 28, 2005. p. A6.

## Where have the 1-M jobs gone?

CREATING a million jobs a year for six years is one of the cornerstones of the 10-Point Agenda of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. But the trends in the first quarter of 2005 seem to show that promised jobs will not be available. Job generation falls short of its target by 400,000 a year.

As of January of this year, unemployment is at 11.3 percent of the entire labor force, an increase from October of last year's 10.9 percent. Loosely translated, this means that 4.03 million Filipinos are unemployed. This increase is mainly attributed to slashes in the workforce due to sluggish economy.

Unemployment problem is compounded by an estimated 400,000 graduates joining the labor force every year, considering the weak absorptive capability the labor market and failure of the government to deliver on its promises.

So how is the government addressing these issues?

Recognizing the unavailability of jobs, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) advised parents to convince their children to take vocational courses—demands for such courses is higher.

In a bid to paint a brighter picture of the labor situation, the DOLE also changed the definition of unemployment. The unemployed are "those who are not working but looking for work." The new definition cuts down the unemployment figures from 3.9 to 2.7 million in January.

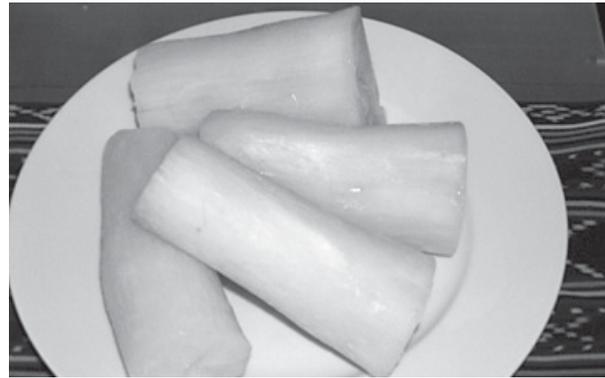
A change in the definition of joblessness does not translate to more jobs. Concrete efforts are yet to be shown by the government to provide jobs it has promised. To break this promise is tantamount to renege on its duty to provide access to jobs for its citizens.

- *Manila Standard Today*; March 9, 2005. pA2, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*; March 16, 2005. pB1
- *Philippine Daily Inquirer*; January 14, 2005. pA1, [www.http.neda.gov.ph](http://www.neda.gov.ph)

■ By Pepito Frias

**C**ASSAVA is a root crop like *camote* (sweet yam), *ubi* (purple yam), and *gabi* (*taro*). It looks like wood that is why it is called *kamoteng kahoy* or in the Visayan regions *balanghoy*. It has two common varieties, the white and yellow and both have brown outer layer or skin.

Rural folks prepare cassava by simply peeling and boiling, and with just salt or sugar, a full meal is ready. It can also be paired with *ginataang dahon ng balanghoy* mixed with sardines. These and other cassava sweets like *suman*, *pitse-pitse* or *niyubak* is good substitute for a full meal in the absence of rice.



Boiled cassava read for serving [www.tribo.org/.../boiledkamotengkahoy.html](http://www.tribo.org/.../boiledkamotengkahoy.html)

# ‘POISONOUS’ CASSAVA

Reports say that there is a growing demand for its use in livestock and poultry feeds; it is also raw material for starch, tapioca, and snack foods.

Cassava is a versatile root crop. Aside from food, it has various industrial uses. Reports say that there is a growing demand for its use in livestock and poultry feeds; it is also raw material for starch, tapioca, and snack foods. “Cassava starch is used as additive in cement manufacturing and used as glue in paper production. It is also a material for powder in cosmetic industries,” *Manila Standard Today*, March 15, 2005 reports.

Both businessmen and industrialists profit from cassava.

When the news about food

poisoning involving cassava broke out, many were surprised especially those who, for years, subsist on it as alternative to rice or corn. Temporarily, some became cautious on eating cassava and consumption has declined disrupting cassava-eating-and-producing areas.

Residents of Mabini, Bohol, are affected the most. In this town, eating cassava is a way of life. People here were shocked when on 8 March 2005, 27 children died after eating *maruya* or sweetened cassava delicacy during a school recess. Another 104 students were downed and hospitalized. All children affected by contaminated cassava aged between 7 to 13.

Reports say that immediately after the incident, the Bohol provincial government ordered the uprooting of white cassava believed to be the cause of food poisoning. Residents were also told not to eat this variety pending investigation of the real cause of the incident.

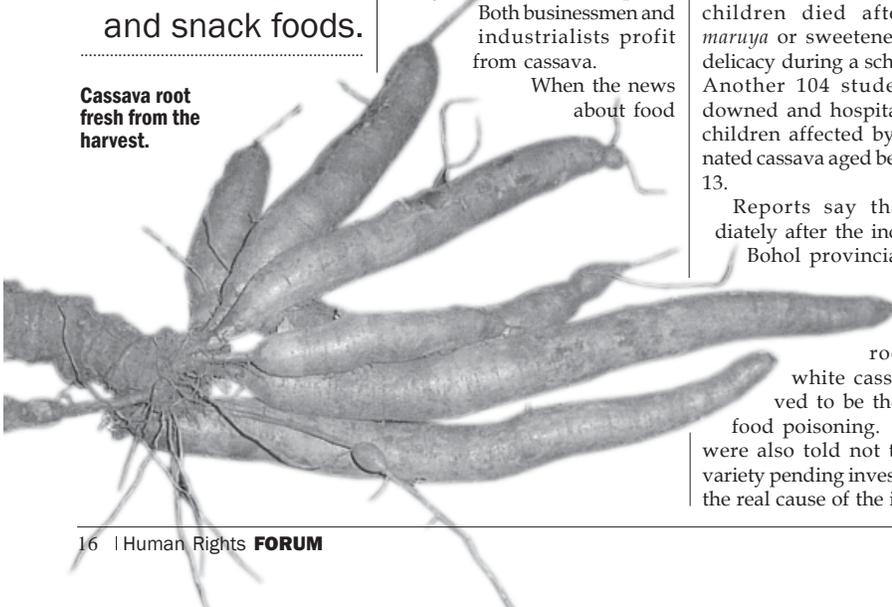
For a time, confusion over the real cause of the food poisoning prevailed. A man said, “I am still lucky. I have been eating cassava for almost 30 years now.” Before this incident, “fate” had kept many ignorant of such a “poisonous” cassava.

Subsequently, government authorities announced it was pesticide that caused the poisoning. Officials of the Department of Health (DOH) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) ruled that the vendor responsible for the food poisoning has unintentionally mixed either a carbamate or coumaphos substance—deadly chemicals found in household and agricultural pesticides—in the food preparation.

The finding allayed fears. People who eat cassava as part of their daily meal are unburdened by the scare of the cassava poison that killed many children and downed more than a hundred people. Neglect in the food preparation by an individual vendor rather than cassava poison or curse of God caused the disaster.

The food poisoning in Bohol revealed one thing: Cassava is one of the community’s preferred foods. The *Philippine Daily Inquirer* in its March 12, 2005, issue quoted Mabini Mayor

Cassava root fresh from the harvest.





**Cassava *suman* sold in the streets.**

PEPITO FRIAS

Stephen Rances as saying “They had gotten used to eating *balanghoy* (cassava), camote and ube to conserve on inadequate rice supply they produced so that they would have enough left until the next harvest.”

This preference indicates the level of economic condition (source of livelihood, agricultural production, purchasing power, among others) the people of Mabini have. Maybe the government needs to account how many communities are like Mabini that uses pesticides in their cassava cultivation and augment their rice shortage with cassava produce and other root crops. The government, then, could draw lessons from the Mabini experience and ensure that what happened there would not happen again in other communities.

One way to avoid such incident from happening is for the local governments to strictly implement *The Consumer Act of the Philippines (RA No. 7394)* that mandates the State to protect consumers against hazards to health and safety. Under this Law, food adulteration is punishable. Food is said to be adulterated “if the food has been prepared, packed or held under unsanitary conditions whereby it may have become contaminated with filth or whereby it may have been rendered injurious to health.”

Government responsibility to protect the rights of the consumers does not end by just having the violator prosecuted and penalized. Instead, the local government could launch an information drive on the proper handling of hazardous che-

micals or the national government strictly enforces control on more deadly substances.

Also, an information drive on what other foodstuffs have natural poisonous content and their levels of toxicity when eaten, can caution people and further help prevent future food poisoning incidents. This could also prevent unnecessary disruption of the normal way of life as in the case of uprooting of cassava crops as ordered by the Bohol provincial government. Such knee-jerk reaction has denied the residents of their only alternative source of food for the time being. The decision to uproot cassava was unwise and could have been avoided if the local government, as well as the populace is educated on this matter.

But among others, it is important for the government to promote cassava delicacies and support local residents engaged in cassava food preparation, production of cassava additives, and consumption. It means that the government needs to provide portions of agricultural land that would be planted not only to cassava but other crops including rice as the Filipino staple food.

Finally, it also means that because of the higher demands for cassava by industrialists and businessmen, the government has to regulate its production and consumption in a way that more cassava produce would still be available to ordinary folk—in its costless, purist and natural form. Because whether cassava has poisonous content or having nutrient content, it would still be a favorite Filipino food. ■



**Cassava plant.**

PEPITO FRIAS



■ By **Roel A. Andag**

**I**MAGES of Rome's grandeur flooded my mind when Sr. Rosanne, my boss at the Caritas Philippines, informed me that my officemate Carlito and I will be going with her to Rome. The three of us were participants to the First World Congress of Ecclesial Organizations Working for Justice and Peace that was to be held in the Ancient City on 27-30 October 2004. I applied for my Schengen visa with alacrity, excited over the thought of seeing Europe for the first time.

# WISH UPON A POPE

Winter was approaching and so the air was nippy when we arrived at the Da Vinci International Airport. We billeted ourselves at the Colegio Pontificio Filippino, a dormitory for Filipino priests pursuing higher studies in the city.

Every day for three days in a row, we get up at 5:00 a.m., brave the freezing shower while still half-asleep. One hour later, we would start walking to the venue, Ergife Palace Hotel, to catch the early morning mass.

The multilingual sessions are always on time. Watching and listening to interpreters skillfully translating speeches into Italian, Spanish, English and French inside their booths is a delight.

Rafaele Cardinal Martino, congress organizer and chair of Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, announced on day-two that Secretary of State Angelo Cardinal Sodano had secured a papal audience for us. Hearing the news, the plenary erupted in applause. It was to be an unscheduled activity for the next day and so the program schedule was adjusted.

On the night before the papal audience, I was excited over the thought of meeting Pope John Paul II for the first time. I mentally rehearsed over and over again what I would say when the Pope finally turns my way and traces a sign of the cross on my forehead. For this opportune moment, I settled on three wishes and ranked them well: a prestigious international job, a PhD scholarship abroad, and papal benedictions for my family.

I woke up and took a bath earlier than usual. After dressing up, I gamely walked, unmindful of the biting air, to the venue with Sr. Rosanne and Carlito. Participants donning colorful native costumes strolled in the hotel lobby. Cardinals with wide crimson belts and skullcaps added up to the spectacle. An Orthodox bishop outstood in his vestment.

Luca and Teresa,

Cardinal Martino's assistants, herded us into several buses. The Philippine delegation rode the lead vehicle. Tight security at the Vatican gate stopped the convoy. At that moment, thoughts of terrorist threats at the Vatican flashed in my mind. "Autonomous country," Sr. Rosanne reminded me. I nodded in agreement. We were final-

ly ushered in after Luca explained to the sentinel that the Pope was expecting us.

After Secours Catholique's Michel Roy fixed my tie, I jostled my way to lead the crowd earlier estimated at 300. "I have to be near the Pope," I thought. I negotiated two flights of stairs as if in a trance. I was just three steps away from the topmost landing leading to

## More than a bishop of Rome

■ By Luis Gorgonio

POPE John Paul II had captivated both the Christian and the non-Christian worlds not because he is a Christian or a Catholic or a Pope. His virtues of peace, love, and forgiveness made him a "catholic"—a truly universal figure representing the best side of humanity.

Despite his being a Catholic pontiff, he is a man that cannot be defined by his religious affiliation—he has a character that is more catholic than the dogma of the Catholic Church that he led for decades.

Progressive theologians say that the Catholic Church is not a universal church as the word "catholic" suggests because it is a *local church* in Rome, invoking universality and arrogating upon herself the same.

True. In fact, the pope, by jurisdiction, is only the head of the church in Rome. Yet, by tradition the Roman Church calls the shots over other local churches (Catholic dioceses) all over the world. Well, the intricacy of the politics of the Catholic Church is one story. Pope

John Paul II is another, and perhaps the best part of the story of the Catholic Faith across the ages.

When news about his deteriorating health broke out, many peoples across religious and political divides expressed anxiety and fear, and wished and prayed that the good man would recover from illness.

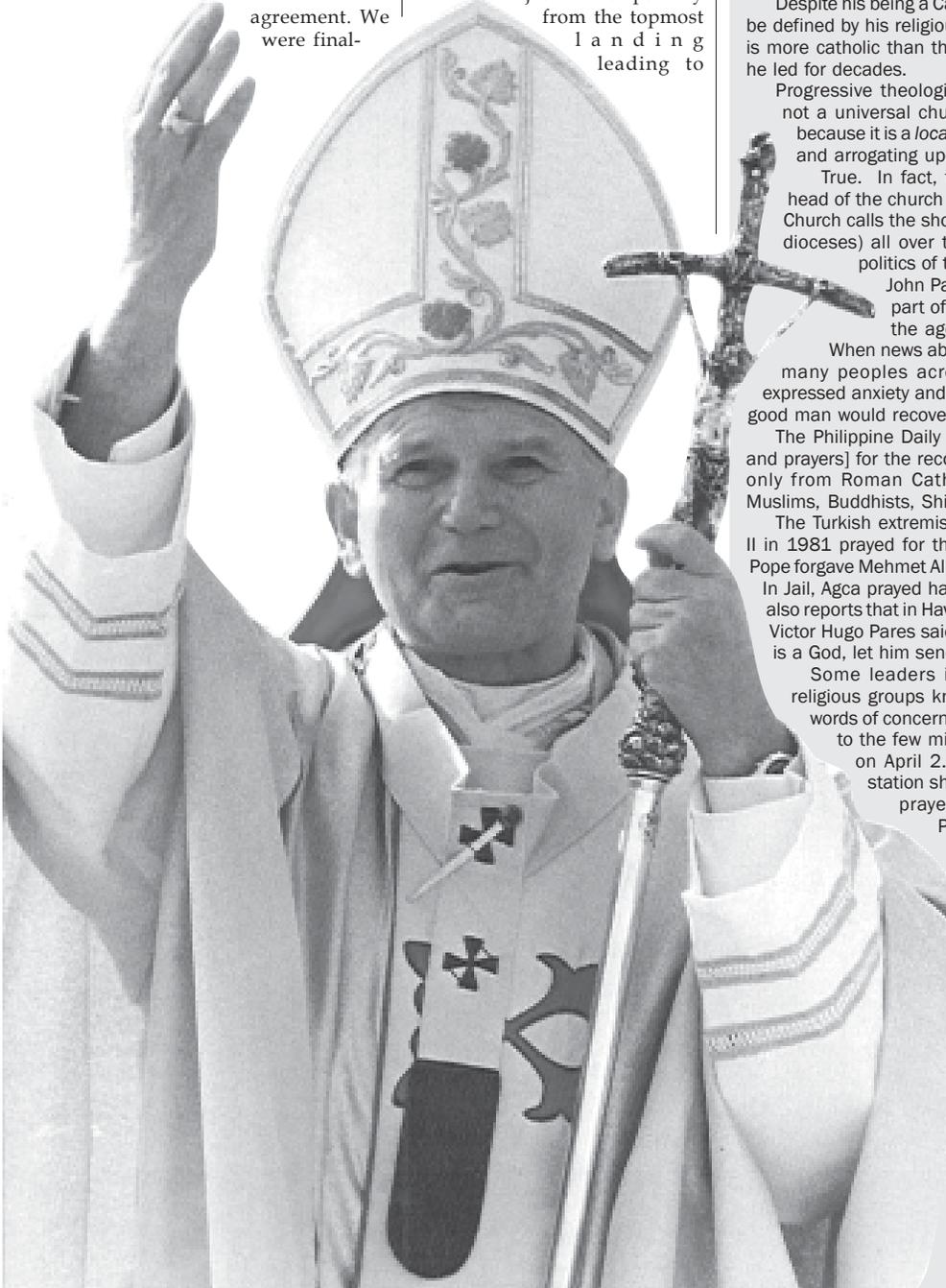
The Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) reports: [The concerns and prayers] for the recovery of Pope John Paul II poured not only from Roman Catholics but from Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Shintoists and atheists.

The Turkish extremist who tried to assassinate John Paul II in 1981 prayed for the man he called his "brother". The Pope forgave Mehmet Ali Agca after the assassination attempt. In Jail, Agca prayed hard for the recovery of John Paul. PDI also reports that in Havana, Cuba, self-confessed communist Victor Hugo Pares said: "I don't believe in God. But if there is a God, let him send us a pope as good as this one."

Some leaders in China, Russia, Cuba, and other religious groups known to be hostile to Christians sent words of concern and prayers for John Paul as he clung to the few minutes of his life in a Vatican hospital on April 2. Days before his death, a local TV station showed Filipino Muslims and Christians prayed together in a gymnasium for the Pope.

That John Paul II drew the world together in one fervent moment in united prayer was not because he heads the Catholic Church. It is his person—his being a man of peace, love and forgiveness felt by those whose lives he had touched through his words, deeds and his loving presence.

The character that Pope John Paul II possessed makes all the difference. Throughout his life, he had shown to the world that peace, love, and forgiveness are the things that really matter—not religious affiliation, not dogma, and not the religious "truths" we are ready to kill and die for.



the Clementine Hall when Luca, perched near the door leading to the hall, shouted: "Cardinales e consultares!" I don't know any Italian but it sounded like I wouldn't get near His Holiness after all. I was dismayed. But my disappointment melted away as we entered Clementine Hall—frescoes bathed in warm light carried me away. I sat near the aisle admiring the frescoed walls and ceiling. I transferred when Sr. Rosanne prodded me to join her at the other side, three seats from the aisle. The 30-minute wait was spent in taking pictures on snappy Swiss guards assembled in front and of those escorting foreign dignitaries passing through the hall. "We are at a Vatican crossroads with a medieval army controlling traffic," a fellow delegate joked.

We were surprised when four close-in aides suddenly wheeled in Pope John Paul II from behind us. Gasps, standing ovation, picture-taking tussle ensued. Cardinal Martino introduced the group to the Pope. Punctured by labored breathing, the Holy Father read his brief message in slurred Italian. I thought he talked about the importance of applying the *Church Social Teachings* on our work. But checking out later on the Vatican website ([www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)) for an official English translation of the message, I realized that the Pope urged us "to live in society as a witness to Christ the Savior and open ourselves to the horizons of charity."

Luca really meant it. Only cardinals and consultants to the Pontifical Council could go near the Pope. I sensed the difficulty his ailment was causing him. Blessing each of them with his right hand, he steadied his face with his left. He would straighten his back from time to time. His face seemed devoid of emotion but his eyes alertly flickered.

Having blessed the *cardinales e consultares* individually, and the audience commonly, his aides whisked him out of the hall, again, passing through the aisle. Awed by the Pope's

radiance, I elbowed aside Sr. Rosanne and Carlito just so I could touch him. I briefly squeezed his left forearm while uttering a totally unrehearsed wish "Get well, get well." I forgot all the personal wishes I rehearsed the night before. I snatched my camera from my pocket to capture him waving his hand before retreating to his quarters adjoining the hall.

Back in the hotel, in a workshop on the identity of church organizations, Bishop Christopher Toohey of Australia exclaimed: "We just met a sick old man who might as well be in a retirement home but who keeps on with his task of evangelization. Now we are asking ourselves our identity!" The theme of the congress was "Announcing the Gospel of Justice and Peace".

The following day, the official photographer displayed in the hotel lobby the pictures he took during the papal audience. I was lunging at the Pope, with Sr. Rosanne and Carlito partly covering me. The best spot for photos was the aisle seat I vacated, later on occupied by a Vietnamese priest.

The weather was cold but I felt warm inside. We left Rome after a pleasurable exhausting marathon tour on the first day of winter.

Tears streamed down my cheeks when Sr. Rosanne sent me a text message at five in the morning of 3 April 2005, informing me of the death of Pope John Paul II. "Transcended into immortality," I thought. I attended the 4 p.m. mass at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Tayuman, Manila. A picture of the Pope hugging a child, probably taken during one of his two visits to the Philippines, was prominently mounted in the altar. I cried once more when we sang the Our Father.

At the office the following Monday, I was riveted at CNN's footage of the Pope lying in the Clementine Hall. I recounted the day I met Pope John Paul II in the same hall—the day his selflessness crushed my selfishness. *Grazie, Santo Padre.* ■

## Alamin ang inyong mga KARAPATAN

### Ano ang dapat gawin kapag hahalungkat in inspeksyunin ang inyong bahay o opisina ng mga pulis o iba pang awtoridad?

- Karapatan mong huwag pahintulutan ang inspeksyon kung walang valid na **search warrant** mula sa isang huwes.
- Karapatan mong pigilin ang pagkuha ng mga bagay na hindi nakasaad sa warrant.
- Ang isang warrant ay valid kung:
  - a. pirmado ng huwes
  - b. nagsasaad ng isang sala (offense) lamang
  - c. naglalarawan ng eksaktong lokasyon at address ng lugar na iinspeksyunin
  - d. nakalista ang mga bagay o gamit na dapat kunin
  - e. ginamit ito sa loob ng sampung (10) araw mula sa paglabas nito
- Itanong sa mga pulis ang mga pangalan, ranggo (rank), opisina o yunit na kinabibilangan nila. Kunin din ang pangalan ng nakatataas na opisyal.
- Samahan ang mga pulis sa kanilang pag-iinspeksyon para maiwasan ang "pagtatanim" ng ebidensya o pagkuha ng mga bagay na hindi kasama sa warrant.
- Pwede lang isagawa ang paghahalungkat sa harap ng nakatira o may-ari o sinumang miyembro ng pamilya. Kung walang tao sa bahay o opisina, dapat kumuha ng dalawang testigong nakatira sa komunidad bago makapagsagawa ng inspeksyon.
- Kailangang magbigay ng resibo ang mga pulis kung may kukunin sa iyong tirahan. Siguraduhing may pirma ng pulis at ng isang kapit-bahay ang resibo.

### Ano ang dapat gawin kung kayo ay inaaresto?

- Manatiling kalmado.
- Kumuha ng testigo o saksi sa pag-aresto (kamag-anak, kaibigan)
- Kunin ang pangalan, posisyon, at pangalan ng opisina ng mga taong nang-aaresto.
- Humingi ng kopya ng "warrant" at suriin itong mabuti. Dapat nakasaad sa "warrant" ang partikular na pagsasalawanan o pangalan ng taong aarestuhin. Dapat nakalagay din dito ang ibinibintang na krimen sa taong huhulihin.
- Kapag may depekto sa 'warrant', ipaalam ang iyong protesta sa mapayapang paraan (huwag gumamit ng dahas).
- Itanong kung saan ka dadalhin. Humingi ng pahintulot na makapagsama ng kamag-anak, kaibigan o kahit na sinong taong testigo sa pag-aresto.
- Humingi ng pahintulot na makatawag ng abogado. Kapag ito ay ipinagbawal, ipag-utos sa kamag-anak, kaibigan o iba pang testigong tumawag sa abogado.
- Huwag na huwag lumaban o pumalag kapag ikaw ay inaaresto. Kung kinakailangan, ipaalam ang iyong protesta sa pagka-aresto at hindi mo isinusuko ang kahit alin sa iyong mga karapatan, ngunit ikaw ay kusang sumasama upang maiwasan ang dahas.
- Huwag kang sasama kapag ayaw ibigay ng mga pulis ang kanilang mga pangalan. Huwag pumayag na lagyan ka ng piring sa mata.

# F A C T S A N D F I G U R E S



**TABLE 1. COMPARATIVE WAGES IN SELECTED ASIAN COUNTRIES**

COUNTRY	MINIMUM WAGE
Singapore	\$14.25-\$44.80
South Korea	\$20.04
Malaysia	\$4.24-\$9.10
Philippines (NCR)	\$5.54
Thailand	\$3.36-4.25
Indonesia	\$1.36
China	\$0.31-\$1.28
Vietnam	\$0.93



Foreign exchange rates against the US dollar: Peso-54.171, Dong-15,845, Yuan Renminbi-8.2865, Rupiah-9,530.5, Baht-39.554, Ringgit-3.8006, Won-1,002 and Singapore Dollar-1.6369.

Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

**TABLE 2. MINIMUM WAGES ACROSS THE PHILIPPINES**

REGION	MINIMUM WAGES (IN PESOS)
Region 1 (Ilocos)	P185-200
Region 2 (Cagayan Valley)	P185-193
Region 3 (Central Luzon)	P232-243.50
Region 4 A & B (Calabarzon & Mimaropa)	P197-255
Region 5 (Bicol)	P147-194
Region 6 (Western Visayas)	P165-190
Region 7 (Central Visayas)	P178-208
Region 8 (Eastern Visayas)	P195
Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula)	P180
Region 10 (N. Mindanao)	P195-202
Region 11 (Davao Region)	P207-209
Region 12 (Soccksargen)	P200
ARMM	P170
CAR	P199-205
Caraga	P189
NCR	P263-300



Source: Inquirer Monitor. Philippine Daily Inquirer. April 30, 2005; p.B1



**TABLE 3. PHILIPPINE EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS**

January 2005 / preliminary	
Labor Force Participation Rate (In %)	66.1
Employment Rate (In %)	88.7
Unemployment Rate (In %)	11.3
Underemployment Rate (In %)	16.1
Visible Underemployment Rate (In %)	10.4

Source: NEDA Updates on the Economy

# F A C T S A N D F I G U R E S

**TABLE 4. PHILIPPINE CORE INFLATION RATE JANUARY 2003 - APRIL 2005**

Month	2005	2004	2003
AVERAGE		5.7	3.4
December		7.8	3.8
November		7.6	3.9
October		6.9	3.8
September		6.6	3.9
August		6.4	3.7
July		6.2	3.6
June		5.3	3.2
May		4.7	2.5
April	7.8	4.3	2.6
March	8.0	4.3	2.4
February	8.1	4.1	2.9
January	7.9	4.1	2.9

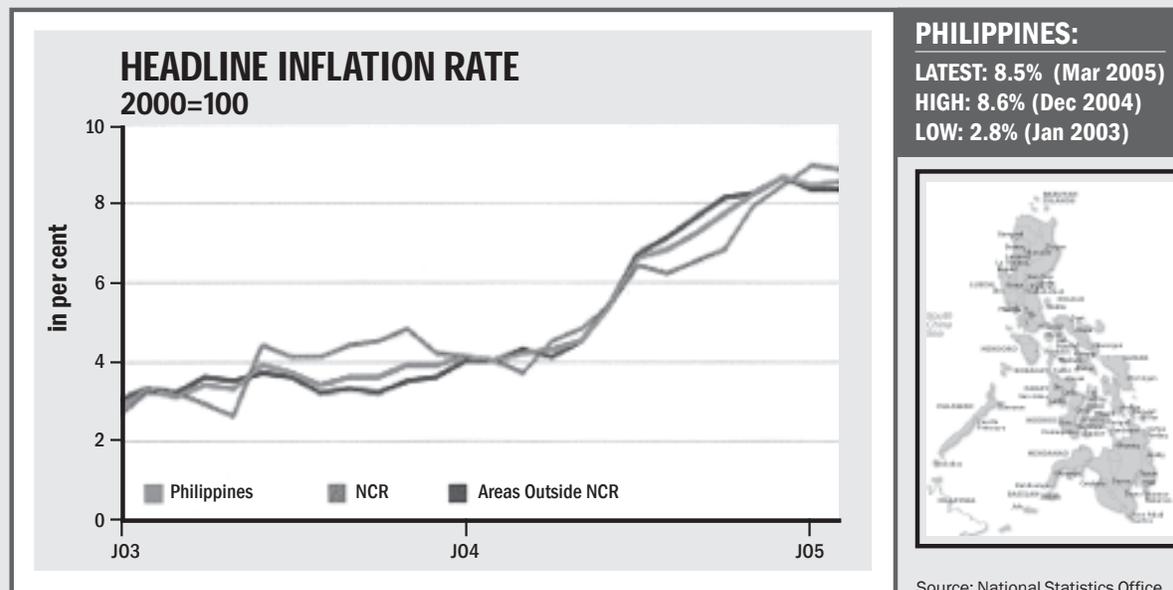
**2000=100**

Headline Inflation measures the changes in the cost of living based on movements in the prices of a specified basket of major commodities. It refers to the annual rate of change or the year-on-year change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

For statistical purposes, core inflation shall refer to the year-on-year rate of change of the monthly headline CPI after excluding food and energy items. Headline inflation is the rate of change in the overall consumer price index (CPI) currently published by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

Source: NSCB Resolution No. 6, Series of 2003. Annex BR-6-2003-1

**GRAPH 1. HEADLINE INFLATION RATE JANUARY 2003 TO MARCH 2005 (2000=100, IN PERCENT)**

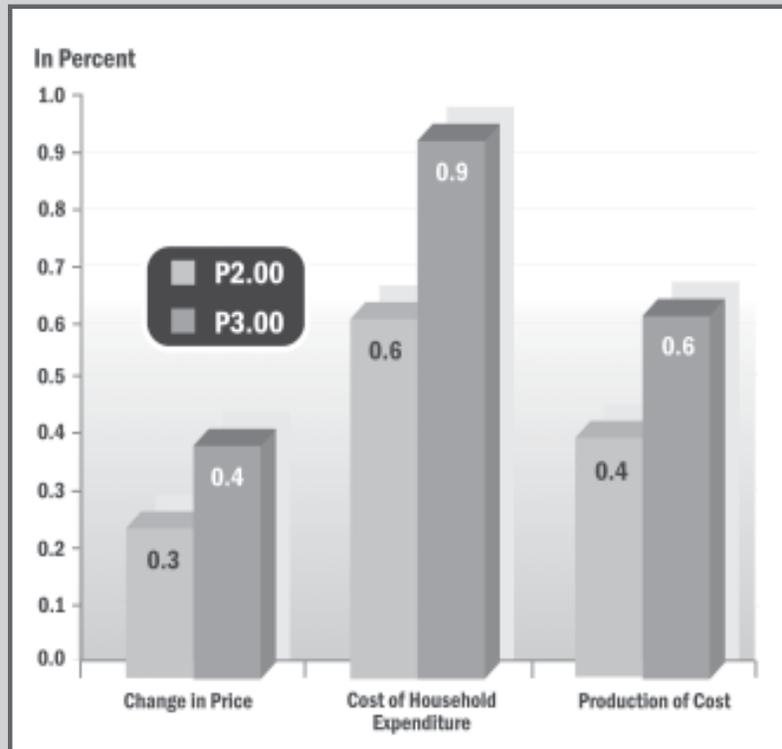


# FACTS AND FIGURES



With the continued rise in oil prices, transport groups are seeking a P2-hike in the minimum jeepney fare from P5.50 to P7.50, an increase of 36.4 percent. The last fare hike granted by the Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB) was on June 12, 2004 when the minimum fare was raised from P4.00 to P5.50.

GRAPH 2. EFFECTS OF THE P2 AND P3 INCREASE IN MINIMUM JEEPNEY FARE



Source: [http://www.nscb.gov.ph/factsheet/pdf05/fs4\\_05.asp](http://www.nscb.gov.ph/factsheet/pdf05/fs4_05.asp)

## HR TRIVIA:

### On the condition of workers

Pope Leo XIII said in *Rerum Novarum*, published in 1891:

“Workers have basic human rights that adhere to Natural Law, which says all humans are equal. Rights include the right to work, to own private property, to receive a just wage, and to organize into workers’ associations. Employers and employees each have rights and responsibilities: while the worker should not riot to create a situation of conflict with the employer, the employer should maintain an environment respecting worker’s dignity.”

### Better late than never

Leo XIII wrote *Rerum Novarum* 43 years after Karl Marx published the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848.

In This Quarter:

1. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) entered into force, in accordance with Article 27, on 23 March 1976.

2. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) entered into force on 23 March 1976.

3. The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees entered into force on 22 April 1954.

## SUBSCRIBE NOW

Be familiar with the hottest human rights updates around!



### Subscription Coupon

**YES!** Send me the Human Rights Forum for the term indicated

- 2 YEARS (8 copies) at P160.00.  
 1 YEAR (4 copies) at P90.00  
 (inclusive of local mailing cost)

*HRF* is a quarterly magazine of PhilRights that seeks to inform HR organizations and the general public on current HR issues and discourse

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- Payment method  
 Check (payable to PhilRights)  
 Cash

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# Philippine Human Rights Information Center

ESTABLISHED in July 1991 by the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), PhilRights seeks to undertake and disseminate human rights information, research, and analyses where and when they are needed.

As a service institution that exists for both PAHRA and the general public, PhilRights aims to:

- Deepen awareness, knowledge, and understanding of PAHRA and the general public about human rights conditions, issues, and mechanisms;
- Work for a dynamic human rights movement that is able to mobilize sectors and groups for timely and effective intervention in the promotion and defense of human rights by making available human rights information and tools in information handling and dissemination;
- Help ensure state compliance with its human rights obligations through active monitoring and engagement;
- Strengthen cooperation and partnership with local and international networks in the conduct of human rights activities through lively exchange and sharing of information; and
- Enhance capability of human rights organizations in the promotion and defense of human rights through education and training on research, advocacy and information handling and dissemination.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

Since April 2004, the Philippine Human Rights Information Center (PhilRights) has been accepting interns for its Internship Program. The program is open to college students, researchers or professionals who are interested in doing internship work in an NGO like PhilRights. For details, please contact Mr. Pepito D. Frias, PhilRights' Training Associate at telephone numbers 433-17-14 & 920-95-73.

**PHILIPPINE HUMAN RIGHTS INFORMATION CENTER (PHILRIGHTS)**  
53-B Maliksi St., Barangay Pinyahan  
1100 Quezon City

BUSINESS MAIL ENTERED AS  
THIRD CLASS (PM)  
at Quezon City Central Post Office  
Permit No.: PM-04-11-NCR  
Valid Until 31 December 2004

- RETURNED TO SENDER**
- Refused to accept
  - Insufficient Address
  - Unknown Subscriber
  - Person Transferred
  - Office Transferred
  - House Closed