



The Association of the Bar of the City of New York

Office of the President

PRESIDENT

Bettina B. Plevan
(212) 382-6700
Fax: (212) 768-8116
bplevan@abcny.org
www.abcny.org

April 15, 2005

Ms. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines
Malacanang Palace
J.P. Laurel St., San Miguel
Manila, NCR 1005
Phillipines

Dear President Arroyo:

I am writing on behalf of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. The Association is an independent non-governmental organization with a membership of more than 22,000 lawyers, judges, law professors and government officials, principally from New York City but also from throughout the United States and from 50 other countries. Founded in 1870, the Association has a long history of dedication to human rights, notably through its Committee on International Human Rights, which investigates and reports on human rights conditions around the world.

We write to express our grave concerns over the recent assassination attempt against Romeo T. Capulong. Mr. Capulong is a leading human rights lawyer in the Philippines and also serves as an *ad litem* judge of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Most recently, he has been serving as counsel to striking workers at Hacienda Luisita, the sugar estate owned by the family of former President Corazon Aquino.

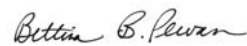
On March 7, 2005, unidentified gunmen tried to kill Mr. Capulong at his farmhouse in Nueva Ecija. This plot was apparently connected to Mr. Capulong's work with the Hacienda Luisita strikers and seems to fit within a larger scheme of intimidation aimed at political activists, particularly those identified with such organizations as BAYAN MUNA, BAYAN, Anakpawis and GABRIELA. As you know, Philippine military and police attacked the Hacienda Luisita picket line last November, killing seven and wounding many. Since then, death squads have killed supporters Abelardo Ladera, a city councilor; William Tadena, a priest; and Marcelino Beltran, a peasant leader and a key witness to the November massacre. Five more individuals have been abducted and

are believed dead. Human rights groups have documented that in January and February of this year alone, 40 political activists have been killed or otherwise brutalized by military or paramilitary forces in the Philippines.

We are deeply troubled by this pattern of killings, abductions and general intimidation. We strongly urge you to publicly denounce these acts and to conduct an open and thorough investigation of them. We further ask that you take all affirmative steps necessary to ensure the safety of Judge Capulong. His safety will be an ongoing concern of the international legal community.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,



Bettina B. Plevan

Cc: Mr. Purificacion Quisumbing
Commissioner
Commission on Human Rights
SAAC Bldg., Commonwealth Avenue
U.P. Complex, Diliman, Quezon City
PHILIPPINES

Eduardo R.C. Capulong
Acting Assistant Professor
The Lawyering Program
New York University
245 Sullivan Street
New York, N.Y. 10012-1301

Sec. Teresita Quintos-Deles
OPAPP (office of the Presidential Adviser on the
Peace Process)
Government Peace Negotiating Panel for Talks with
the CPP-NPA-NDF
4th Flr. Agustin 1 Bldg. Emerald Ave. Ortigas Center
Pasig City, Philippines

Mr. Avelino J. Cruz Jr.
Secretary, Department of National Defense
Room 301 DND Bldg.,
Camp Emilio Aguinaldo
E. de los Santos Avenue, Quezon City
PHILIPPINES

Atty. Jasmin N. Regino
Regional Director
Commission on Human Rights (CHR III)
3/F, Kehyeng Bldg.,
Mc Arthur Highway, Dolores
San Fernando, Pampanga
Philippines