

The first quarter of 2010 is marked by mass arrest, detention and torture of health workers and farmers. Arresting security forces utilized fabricated charges and unfounded accusations. Consistent with 2010 as the end-year of the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo administration's *Oplan Bantay Laya* (OBL), extrajudicial killing and harassment and vilification of legal organizations and personalities continue. Of special concern is the unexplained death of a civilian employee in the U.S. military barracks in Marawi City.

Arrest, torture and detention

Several cases of arrest, torture and detention reported and documented this quarter illustrate an all-out attempt by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in achieving OBL's objective of dismantling the insurgency by using inordinately large number of troops and massive logistics.

Such is the case of the illegal arrest, detention and torture of the 43 health workers, now called the **Morong 43**. On 6 February, 43 participants and trainers of the First Responders Training of the Community Medicine Development Foundation (COMMED) were illegally arrested by the combined forces of the Morong, Rizal Philippine National Police (PNP) and the 202nd Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army. The health workers were manhandled, blindfolded, their hands bound behind their backs and forcibly brought to the military camp of the 2nd Infantry Division of the Philippine Army in Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal by around 300 heavily armed elements of the military and police. They were all subjected to mental and physical torture to force them to admit to being members of the NPA.

During this "operation," four 6x6 military trucks, two armored personnel carriers (APC), a KIA Pride car and an ambulance were used in the illegal arrest.

The raid very early in the morning shocked the residents of Barrio Maybangcal, Morong, the location of the farm resort of Dr. Melecia Velmonte, a renowned infectious disease specialist, where the training was being held.

For more than 36 hours, the victims remained blindfolded and bound, and their movements restricted. Women and men were subjected to such indignities as guards they could not see because of the blindfold pulled down their underwear when they had to go to the toilet.

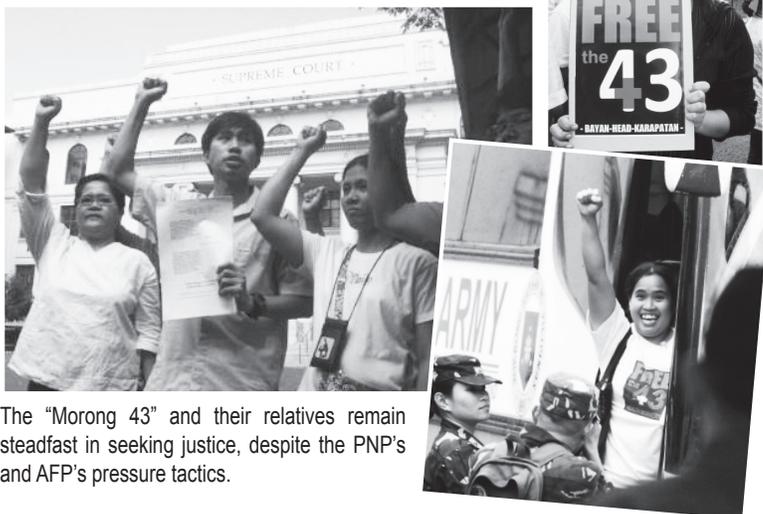
The health workers were accused of making explosives and being members of the underground armed movement. Dr. Alexis Montes, 62 years old and one of the trainers, was preposterously accused as the one commissioned to "neutralize" retired Gen. Jovito Palparan, Jr, the notorious general accused of being involved in many of the killings and enforced disappearances.

To cure the illegality of their arrest, their captors commandeered a prosecutor, brought him inside the camp and proceeded to inquest the detainees. Ignoring the victims' repeated invocation of their right to counsel, the military authorities charged 40 of them with illegal possession of arms and explosives, a criminal non-bailable offense, and the remaining three with illegal possession of arms and ammunitions, a bailable offense.

To date, the detainees remain in a military camp, and subjected to pressure tactics by their military captors thru threats to their persons and to members of their families.

Five of the 43 detainees were already isolated from the rest for allegedly admitting to being members of the NPA. Relatives of the five were separately taken aside by camp guards and forcibly brought inside the camp to see their detained loved ones. They were warned that they themselves might not be allowed to leave the camp premises.

In another incident, on 7 March, **13 farmers, including two minors**, were arrested and tortured in Sitio Kalabirahan, Barangay Upper Ulip, Monkayo, Compostela



The "Morong 43" and their relatives remain steadfast in seeking justice, despite the PNP's and AFP's pressure tactics.

Valley by elements of the 25th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army (25th IBPA) and Scout Rangers. The victims were accused of being members of the NPA and were interrogated about their alleged hidden guns.

The soldiers had an armed encounter with the members of the NPA two days before. The next day, the farmers were brought by the soldiers to a military depot in Mt. Diwalwal. At around 10:00 p.m, the victims were transported to the 25th IBPA headquarters accompanied by 60 soldiers in 6x6 military trucks.

They were photographed holding signs with the word “commander” written on them and made to sign documents that they could not understand. The victims were held incommunicado by the soldiers until March 10 before they were turned over to the police and brought to the Monkayo Police Station.

At the police station, they were again photographed holding signs with their alleged charges on it. They were detained for one night at the police station. The following day, 11 of them were brought to the Provincial Prosecutor in Nabunturan by the combined forces of the PNP and the 25th IBPA while the two minors were brought to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The 11 were charged with multiple frustrated murder, murder and violation of the election gun ban. But the victims were released when Prosecutor Graciano Arafol ruled on the illegality of their arrest because the prescribed period of filing of charges had already lapsed. The two minors were also turned over by the DSWD to their relatives.

These cases show, on the one hand, the might, resources, firepower that the military can utilize and the extent to which the security forces can violate human rights just to reach the

armed forces’ objective of supposedly ending the insurgency through the OBL. On the other hand, they are also proof of a desperate counterinsurgency program that victimizes unarmed civilians and members of legitimate people’s organizations.

Killings continue

On March 18, **Ronelo Perez**, resident of Brgy. Alfonso XII, Libacao, Aklan went to his farm in Sitio Marandan, Mali-ao, Tapaz, Capiz. Perez was alone in his farmhouse when

soldiers conducting a military operation in the vicinity opened fire at him with high-powered automatic rifles.

The soldiers, mostly trainees, were from the 3rd Infantry Division (3rd ID) training unit under Capt. Adolfo V. Delizo. They were on a long-range reconnaissance patrol within the 33,310-hectare military reservation where Camp Peralta is located.

When the firing stopped, Perez, his thigh smashed by the gunfire, staggered out of his farmhouse. A soldier went to him and shot him on the head, thus killing him.

The Philippine Army through the 3rdID Public Information Officer 1Lt. Mark Andrew Posadas justified the killing by saying that a firefight occurred. He said that Perez was “part of the group of illegal loggers under the command of the NPAs”, although not a rebel himself.

The village chief of Mali-ao, Virgilio Santiago, belied the Army’s allegations. He said Perez was a civilian and a bona fide resident of the place.

In a separate incident on 23 February at around 6:25 a.m., **Ronald Capitanea**, a health worker was riding on his motorcycle when two men on a white and black DT motorcycle



Farmers, including 2 minors, were illegally arrested and accused of being members of the NPA.

Table 1
Victims of EJK and ED under
the Arroyo Government (by region)

January 21, 2001 to March 31, 2010

Region	EJK	ED
Ilocos	7	2
Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR)	34	2
Cagayan Valley	30	4
Central Luzon	154	66
National Capital Region (NCR)	41	6
Southern Tagalog (ST)	177	29
Bicol	196	10
Eastern Visayas	126	27
Central Visayas	26	4
Western Visayas	30	6
Northern Mindanao	32	2
Caraga	34	11
Soccsargen	26	5
Western Mindanao	28	10
Southern Mindanao	105	13
Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)	144	8
Total	1,190	205
<i>Organized</i>	470	68
<i>Women</i>	153	31

Based on reports gathered by Karapatan

shot him at close range from behind. The incident occurred while the victim was on the road along Hacienda Mabuhay, Brgy. Gil Montilla, Sipalay City, Negros Occidental.

Capitanea was the Public Information Officer of Camindangan Small Farmers Association (CASFA) an affiliate of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and of the Community Health Workers (CHW), an affiliate of the Negros Health Integrated Program (NHIP).

Capitanea managed to escape and survived the attack after spending eight days in the hospital.

Prior to the incident, Capitanea received numerous threats and harassment from the elements of the 61st IBPA.

Vilification and harassment

Vilification campaign against members of people's organizations delivering services to the poorest sections of society and harassment of individuals continue.

Benjie Paldas, 30, is the head of the health committee of Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Sibulan or United Farmers of Sibulan (NAMAS), a peasant group in Davao del Sur that aims to empower the community through education and organizing. Affiliated with Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) or the Peasant Movement of the Philippines), NAMAS also struggles for genuine agrarian reform while providing services for the residents of remote rural areas gravely neglected by the government.

Paldas's involvement in delivering free community service has earned him the love of the people in their community. But not of the AFP.

On February 18, Paldas, as well as six other peasant leaders of Davao del Sur, were subpoenaed to submit counter-affidavits, in response to a frustrated murder charge filed by Cpl. Bert L. Ulaog of the 39th IBPA and Antonio T. Omo, a CAFGU member under the 72nd IBPA.

In their respective affidavits, both Ulaog and Omo claimed to have personal knowledge that the seven peasant leaders were members of an NPA team, headed by Commanders "Jagjag," "Marvin" and "Jasmin," which ambushed Ulaog's military unit on January 31, 2010. Omo claimed to have been hit in the leg and back during the incident.

NAMAS along with other people's organization has been included in the list of so-called front organizations of the NPA.

Attempts of harassment have turned from desperate to absurd. Such is the case of **Irma Pamat**, Executive Director of the Women's Development Center (WDC), a non-government organization. On January 31, the local newspaper Bohol Chronicle published an article that came from the 2nd Special Forces Battalion of the Philippine Army maligning Pamat as a member of the "white area committee" of the CPP-NPA.

WDC is a member organization of the government's Bohol Provincial Development Council where a representative of the Philippine Army also sits. The military representative meets with Pamat in the council's regular meetings.

The military brazenly admitted to having monitored the meeting of the WDC in the afternoon of January 9 at Sitio Taytay in Brgy. Montesuerte, Carmen, Bohol. The meeting was a voter's education training on the automated election system which will be used, for the first time, in the country's forthcoming May 10 elections.

Death of a civilian employee inside the barracks of U.S. troops

Gregan V. Cardeño, a father of three, was so happy to have landed a job as a Bahasa Indonesia interpreter for the U.S. troops under the BALIKATAN program of the Joint Special Operations Task Force - Philippines (JSOTFP). In the early morning of February 1, he was accompanied by

Table 2
Victims of Extrajudicial Killing and Enforced Disappearance
under GMA's Presidency*
(by sectoral and multi-sectoral organizations)
January 21, 2001 to March 31, 2010

Organization	EJK	ED
Bayan		
KMP	132	15
KMU	23	3
Anakbayan	15	3
Pamalakaya	8	2
Kadamay	11	0
LFS	5	0
Courage	4	0
PCPR	2	0
CPA	0	1
Kamp	11	0
SCMP	1	0
Kalikasan	1	0
Piston	1	1
Secretariat	8	2
Karapatan		
Selda	4	2
Kasimbayan	1	0
Chapters	24	1
NUPL	1	0
Other organizations	20	5
Partylists		
Bayan Muna	142	12
Anakpawis	49	7
Gabriela Women's Party	2	0
Kabataan	2	0
Suara Bangsa Moro	2	2
Anak ng Bayan	0	1
NDF Consultants/Staff	1	11
Total	470	68
Women	153	11

*Based on reports gathered by Karapatan
* Same as 2009 data*



Cardeno was found dead in the U.S. troops barracks, 2 days after arrived in Camp Ranao, supposedly to work as an interpreter.

his wife, Myrna to the Edwin Andrews Air Base (EAAB) in Zamboanga City where he would be airlifted to Camp Siongco in Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao, his supposed place of assignment.

At around 7:00 a.m. the following day, Cardeno informed his older sister through a text message that he was brought not to Maguindanao, but to Camp Ranao in Marawi, headquarters of the 103rd Infantry Brigade. He assured his sister that he was okay. But at around 2:00 p.m., he called his sister crying. He told her that it was not the job he applied for and that he was having a very difficult time.

His sister told him that she would call him back because he might run out of call credits. It took Cardeno sometime to answer his phone and when he did, he was still crying as he informed his sister that he had already called up the Skylink Security and General Services, the agency that recruited him for the job, to tell them that he could not take it anymore.

Cardeno's sister called again, and it took several rings before Cardeno answered. He was incoherent saying "Mimi and Janet said that the money should be secured." He kept telling his sister that it was not the job he applied for, that he was having a hard time there, and that he might die while he was there. He mentioned that he had only one Filipino co-worker, the cook who went home everyday and the rest of his companions were Americans.

At around 4:00 p.m., Cardeno's wife received a call from her husband. He was crying while he repeated what he told his sister. Cardeno's wife advised him to just come home first thing the following day. He replied, "If I come home, will you still accept me?" Then the line went dead.

On February 3, his wife received a phone call through Cardeno's phone. It was SPO3 Ali Rangiris informing her that Cardeno committed suicide the previous night and that they found him dead hanging inside his room.

His body was transported by U.S. soldiers to the EAAB. There was neither a death certificate nor a permit to transport his body. During the post mortem examination at the funeral homes, Cardeno's family found wounds inconsistent with suicide. They called back SPO3 Rangiris to ask for photographs from the crime scene. SPO3 Rangiris then changed his story and told the family that Cardeno was already lying on the bed when the police found him because allegedly the American soldiers tried to revive him. Upon hearing the inconsistencies in the statements of the police investigator, the

family requested for an autopsy. The autopsy report stated asphyxia as cause of death but it also noted three hematoma on the scalp and several abrasions and contusions.

Gregan Cardeno's unexplained death became the subject of a fact-finding mission of several non-government organizations that formed the Justice for Gregan Cardeno Movement (JGCM). Results of the fact-finding mission indicate complicity among the U.S. troops, PNP in Marawi City, 103rd IBPA in Camp Ranao, Datu Saber in Marawi City and the Skylink Security and General Services to hide the circumstances surrounding the death of Cardeno.

It became more compelling to investigate the case because of the killing of Major Javier Ignacio, the head of the Military Police of the Western Mindanao Command, in the evening of March 25, the day Cardeno's body was exhumed and a re-autopsy was conducted by the Commission on Human Rights medico-legal officer.

Major Ignacio Javier was one of those helping the family uncover the truth of Cardeno's death. He was the one who told Cardeno to apply for the job and was already considered a family member by the Cardenos. He reported to have received numerous threats to his life warning him to stop helping the family investigate Cardeno's death and there was even an attempt to bribe him to stop his efforts.

Table 3
Political Prisoners (PPs)
as of March 31, 2010

Region where detained	Total no. of PPs	Women	Minors	Arrested under GMA
Cagayan Valley	7	0	0	7
Cordillera	5	2	0	5
Central Luzon	17	1	0	17
National Capital	103	4	6	76
Southern Tagalog	74	27	0	74
Bicol	18	5	0	18
Eastern Visayas	15	5	0	15
Western Visayas	29	4	0	29
Central Visayas	9	0	0	9
Caraga	1	0	0	1
Northern Mindanao	13	3	0	13
Western Mindanao	22	7	0	22
Southern Mindanao	25	1	0	25
SoCSKSarGen	6	0	0	6
Total	344	59	6	317

Based on reports gathered by Karapatan

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