



## **QUICK REACTION MISSION REPORT on the disappearance of James Jazmines and Felix Salaveria Jr.**

The quick reaction mission was conducted from August 28, 2024 to August 31, 2024 in Tabaco City, Ligao City, and Legazpi City in Albay, in response to initial reports of a case of possible abduction.

Members of the FFM were able to gather the following information regarding the reported abduction of James Jazmines and Felix Salaveria Jr.:

James Jazmines, 63 years old, and Felix Salaveria Jr., 66 years old, are both cycling enthusiasts and residents of Tabaco City, Albay. Jazmines lived in a rented studio in Barangay San Lorenzo while Salaveria lived in a house in Barangay Cobo.

James, the youngest brother of NDFP consultant Alan Jazmines, is a 1978 graduate of the Philippine Science High School and a BS Psychology student of the University of the Philippines in Diliman. He served as information officer of the League of Filipino Students from 1977 to the early 1980s. He later became the executive director of the Amado V. Hernandez Resource Center, a cultural institution, from 1984 to 1988. From 1988 to 1992, he served as information officer of the Kilusang Mayo Uno labor center. Up to the mid-2000s, he was the information technology (IT) consultant of a development NGO and has been working freelance in the IT sector since then. He was known in his community as quiet and unassuming, but also a frequent biker.

Salaveria, a 1976 graduate of San Beda High School and a former Sociology major at the University of the East in Manila, is a founding member and former president of Cycling Advocates (CYCAD), a group that promotes biking as a low-cost, healthy and non-polluting form of transportation. He is also a founding member of Tunay na Alyansa ng Bayan Alay sa mga Katutubo (Tabak) and Kabataan para sa Tribung Pilipino (Katribu), groups advocating for indigenous people's rights. He was likewise a member of the staff of the now defunct Ethnic Studies and Development Center's Minority Rights Advocacy Program.

In Tabaco City, Salaveria became known as an avid eco-waste management advocate who encouraged the proper disposal of waste. He coordinated with other groups based in Tabaco for alternative ways of transporting waste for conversion to compost for permaculture, and even donated a bike for this purpose. In addition to his waste disposal advocacy, he also maintained a small community garden in his residence. He was well-liked in his community both for his advocacies and for being a kind and helpful neighbor.

On the night of August 23, 2024, Salaveria celebrated his 67<sup>th</sup> birthday at Patang Siram restaurant in Barangay San Roque, Tabaco City. James Jazmines was among those invited to Felix's birthday celebration along with other friends who were also cycling enthusiasts.

At around 10 p.m., they all went home after the birthday dinner. The restaurant is about a kilometer away from James' house and Felix expected him to arrive home easily. They also had the habit of sending texts to each other once they arrived home, so Felix was puzzled why he did not receive a message from James confirming his arrival at home.

The day after, Felix messaged James again but the latter still did not reply. So by Sunday (August 25), he decided to find out what happened to James. He thought that James may have met an accident as he was going home on the night of August 23. He received information that James did not arrive at his rented studio and he had been "taken" by a group of men and forced into a white van at around 10 p.m. The van used in the abduction had been parked since 8 p.m. at the street corner where James would have turned to go to his house. There was also another man on a motorcycle trailing the van. This man carried James' bike after the latter was forced into the van.

At this point (August 26), Salaveria decided to call the Karapatan National Office's hotline to report James' abduction. Karapatan contacted its Bicol chapter to inform them about the abduction and coordinate with them on a quick reaction and search mission. Karapatan dispatched its paralegals to join the team on August 27, 2024 along with James' wife Elna Corazon Jazmines and began the search on the morning of August 28 with the help of Karapatan-Bicol and Altermidya.

However, on August 28, 2024, after 10 a.m., while Felix Salaveria Jr. was on his way home after buying food, he was abducted by men in plain clothes and forced inside a silver van. The abduction was witnessed by his neighbors. It was also recorded on the barangay's CCTV. The footage showed that the van's plate number was VAA 5504 and there was a logo (ATEC) on the vehicle's side. Upon checking, the plate was found to be registered to a Toyota Rush (a sports utility vehicle model) and the ATEC logo that of a tech company in Cabuyao, Laguna.

The quick reaction team was informed of Salaveria's abduction on the afternoon of August 28.

In the course of the search, the mission team members were able to make inquiries at the Patang Siram restaurant in Barangay Roque; and the San Lorenzo and Cobo barangays halls, all in Tabaco City. They inquired at the Tabaco and Ligao Prosecutor's Office and Regional Trial Court on whether James was facing cases in these courts. Both offices said that no one by the name of James Jazmines was facing cases in their courts.

They filed a blotter report on James' abduction with the Tabaco City PNP on August 29 but had to file it again on August 30 because the Tabaco police failed to make the report on the first day. They also went to the Albay Police Provincial Office to report the abduction. At the PNP-CIDG Region 5 headquarters, the policemen they talked to refused to accomplish the inquiry form into a reported disappeared person's whereabouts (as per Republic Act No. 10353 or the anti-enforced disappearance law), saying they were unfamiliar with the law against enforced disappearances. But the team was brought to the CIDG detention area to show that James was not there.

The team also reported to incident to the office of Albay Governor Edcel Greco Lagman and to the Commission on Human Rights regional office and sought assistance in searching for James. The team reported Salaveria's abduction to Barangay Cobo and the Governor's office.

In the course of the mission, the team members noted that they were constantly being tailed by men on two motorcycles as they made their rounds in Tabaco City.

**The findings of the FFM are as follows:**

1. There is high probability that State actors are involved in the abduction of Jazmines and Salaveria.
  - a. In terms of pattern, the use of stolen plates for vehicles used in State-sponsored abductions was seen in the case of the Jonas Burgos abduction in 2007 where the plates used in the abductors' vehicle was traced to a vehicle impounded in a military camp. This modus, which is clearly meant to throw searchers off the trail, was also used in Salaveria's abduction.
  - b. Salaveria was abducted by men in plain clothes, but witnesses said uniformed policemen entered his house on the night, after he was abducted, to take away his belongings, including his laptop and cellphone. The speed with which the uniformed policemen arrived after the abduction points to the distinct possibility that the abduction and the seizure of Salvatiera's belongings are parts of the same State-sponsored operation against him. Salaveria had likely been rendered vulnerable after he began inquiries on James' whereabouts and reported his disappearance to Karapatan.
  - c. Jazmines and other members of his family, on the other hand, have long been harassed and subjected to surveillance because of relentless military operations to find and arrest NDFP consultant Alan Jazmines. James Jazmines' wife has also been red-tagged and even erroneously referred to by NTF-ELCAC talking heads as the wife of Alan Jazmines.
2. Under RA 10353, State actors have the duty and obligation to conduct thorough and impartial investigations on cases of enforced disappearances. However, when presented with the inquiry form as per the law, the PNP CIDG in Region 5 refused to sign it, claiming that they were unaware of such a law.

**The FFM members recommend the following:**

1. For the Commission on Human Rights to conduct an independent and thorough investigation on the abduction incidents, by conducting unannounced and unrestricted visits or inspections in all places of detention or confinement, including but not limited to police and military camps, safehouses, and detention facilities and by obtaining all CCTV footages from Barangays San Lorenzo, Cobo and San Roque not only to obtain information on the abduction incidents themselves, but to determine the events leading to the abductions, and possibly identify the persons who conducted surveillance on the victims.
2. For members of the State security forces to stop intimidating human rights organizations assisting in the search of the two missing men, the way they did when they tailed the mission members in Tabaco City.
3. For law enforcement officers to comply with RA 10353 and not feign ignorance about this law that has been in existence since 2012;
4. For the appropriate Committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate to conduct independent investigations into these abduction incidents in aid of their oversight functions on the implementation of RA 10353;

5. For non-governmental/human rights organizations to further conduct independent investigations into the abduction incidents, without fear of reprisals including threats and surveillance, and report on updates regarding the incident; and

6. For international human rights watchdogs and rights bodies to support the call for the surfacing of the two victims and to ensure their rights and integrity.