

## **3 militants killed in Laguna, Surigao, Sorsogon**

Wednesday 22 November 2006, by [Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) (Date first published: 22 November 2006).

By Inquirer Staff

AT LEAST three militants were killed in separate incidents around the country amid demands by international business groups for an end to political violence.

The Melo Commission, formed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in August to look into allegations of extrajudicial executions, also announced yesterday it was resuming its hearings after a two-month break. Proceedings have been boycotted by leftist and human rights groups questioning the panel's independence.

Police said four gunmen shot and killed Andrew Iñeza, 48, union president at the Alaska Milk Factory, in San Pedro, Laguna, yesterday morning. A tricycle driver, Ramon Laude, was wounded in the attack.

In Surigao City, four armed men wearing bonnets shot and killed Roderick Aspili, 24, an organizer of the United Workers of Surigao del Norte, on Monday evening while he was watching television in his house with his family, police said. Aspili's wife and 8-month-old daughter were unharmed.

At Barangay Lungib, Pilar, Sorsogon, the body of Domingo Marbella, 22, was found bearing bullet wounds and signs of torture. Marbella, a relative of an official of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, was one of two farmers abducted by armed men on Nov. 13. The other was still missing.

Last week, the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce of the Philippines (JFC) comprising businessmen from the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan urged the Arroyo administration to put an end to political violence, saying it risked losing foreign aid and investments.

Seven US-based apparel makers have issued a similar joint appeal.

Leftist and human rights groups said political violence has claimed the lives of more than 700 people, including those killed in military operations and cases not reported by relatives fearing reprisals, since Ms Arroyo assumed the presidency in 2001. The Inquirer count is 259.

### **Hearings in Bacolod, Davao**

Retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo, 74, commission chair, announced hearings would be held in Bacolod City on Nov. 27-28 to discuss a complaint by a farmer that a landlord was using guerrillas of the communist New People's Army to discourage agrarian reform and in Davao City on Dec. 4, also on a land dispute.

"We will wind up after Bacolod and Davao. You can wait for our report," Melo told the Inquirer.

The commission has held only five hearings since it was created by Ms Arroyo in August amid a local

and international outcry against an apparent surge of extrajudicial executions.

On the killings of media men, Melo said the National Press Club had expressed its cooperation with his panel in investigating killings of media people.

Leftist and human rights groups have stayed away from the commission, saying the inclusion of the National Bureau of Investigation director and the state prosecutor in the panel put its independence into question.

## **7 gunshot wounds**

Police said Iñoza, president of the 319-strong Alaska Milk Workers Union and provincial chair of the leftwing Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino-Partido ng Manggagawa (BMP-PM), sustained at least seven gunshot wounds and died on the spot.

Sergio Dimandal, San Pedro police chief, said Iñoza was driving his blue Honda Wave motorcycle at around 7:30 a.m. when the assailants blocked his path in Cataquiz 2 Subdivision, Barangay Poblacion, and opened fire.

Dimandal said five spent shells of a .45 cal. pistol and five shells for a 9mm pistol were recovered from the scene.

Witnesses said the suspects took the victim's mobile phone, wallet and other personal belongings, which were placed under the motorcycle's seat, before they fled on foot.

"This killing is part of the 'grand design' of the government to silence those who criticize it. We hold the Arroyo government responsible for this latest crime against the labor movement," said Ronnie Luna, BMP-Calabarzon chair.

Relatives of the victim, however, believe that the scheduled election of AMWU officers on Dec. 5 might be linked to the killing. Iñoza, a warehouse checker in the milk company's factory at Barangay United, has been the union president for 10 years.

## **Surigao City attack**

In the attack at Barangay Trinidad in Surigao City, police said Aspili sustained at least three gunshot wounds in the head and in the neck. Two .45-caliber slugs had been recovered. The gunmen fled in a van.

Analyn Lumawag, spokesperson of the human rights group Karapatan, said Aspili might have been killed because of his work as chair of the leftwing Student Christian Movement of the Philippines. She said the military was the logical suspect.

In Sorsogon City, Judge Adolfo Fajardo of the Regional Trial Court Branch 65, ordered the Philippine Army to produce the body of Bernardito Caporal, who was kidnapped with Marbella on Nov. 13 at a restaurant there. Fajardo was responding to a petition for a writ of habeas corpus filed by Caporal's family.

## **Cop abducted**

Also on Tuesday, the NPA Celso Minguez Command confirmed in a statement that it had in its custody PO1 Edwin Estavillo and assured his family of his safety. Estavillo was visiting a relative in Barcelona town a week ago when he was reported missing by his kin.

Samuel Guererro, the command spokesperson, said Estavillo was “arrested” based on complaints of local residents for abusive behavior. The statement did not say if Estavillo would be released. With reports from Fe Zamora and Marlon Ramos and Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Franklin M. Caliguid, Chris V. Panganiban and Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao.

---

**P.S.**

\* Published on Page A1 of the November 22, 2006 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

[http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view\\_article.php?article\\_id=34028](http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/nation/view_article.php?article_id=34028). Copyright 2006 Inquirer.