

More Human Rights Violations in the Philippines

Soldiers, police arrested 10 peasant activists en masse ; mother & child not spared

By [Global Research](#)

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Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

We, in KARAPATAN, protest the use of the state's armed might in a purely agrarian dispute to favor a self-styled landgrabber inside a government-declared timberland area. (*see briefer*)

We are deeply concerned over the safety and welfare of ten (10) peasant activists arrested *en masse* by joint elements of the 78th Infantry Battalion and of Tuburan PNP Municipal Station on early morning last Sunday (18 November 2007) in Brgy. Marmol, Tuburan, Cebu. Among the victims are spouses Ceasar and Avelina Balibad and their **9-month-old baby Rose**, the 11th victim. (*see Fast Facts*)

Since the arrest, the victims, including baby Rose, were detained at the Tuburan PNP station until they were remanded to the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center, Cebu City yesterday (20 November 2007).

KARAPATAN has tried to ascertain their plight at the said jail but as expected was denied entry by jail authorities as per policy imposed by Byron Garcia, brother and security consultant of Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia-Codilla

Brief Account

The victims were doing their chores, when the perpetrators swooped down on their village at about 7:20AM Sunday.

The eight (8) PNP elements came in through highland route, while the 78th IB soldiers followed the river banks. Pleas fell on deaf ears as they forcibly rounded up the victims from their homes and then brought them to the municipal police station at gunpoint.

Fast Facts

VICTIMS: **Jocelyn Arias, Florencia Mojado**, spouses **Arsenio & Anastacia Pasumala**, spouses **Abello & Lolita Arias**, spouses **Tomas & Elizabeth Mainit**, and **Ceasar & Avelina Balibad** and their **9-month-old baby Kindel Rose Ann**; farmers and residents of Brgy. Marmol, Tuburan, Cebu, and members of the local peasant group *Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Marmol (NAMAMA)-KMP*

PERPETRATORS: about 20 joint AFP-PNP elements led by a Sgt. Jomar Pipit of Charlie Coy-78th IB, and SP03 Lino de los Santos & SP01 Carlo Conseco of the Tuburan Municipal PNP Station

MOTIVE: desperate effort of a landgrabber to get the victims out of the land, which is actually part of a timberland area

PLACE: Brgy. Marmol, Tuburan, Cebu

DATE: 18 November, 2007

Background

The mass arrest is part of an ongoing court feud between the peasants and a certain Balbuena, the self-proclaimed landowner.

A separate set of victims were first accused by the alleged landowner of stealing crops the victims themselves planted. They were hauled to court on Aug. 8, 2003 on charge of Qualified Theft. The charge was subsequently dismissed by the court on Dec. 17, 2004.

Yet, the alleged landowner filed the same charge this time on the present set of victims on Dec. 25, 2004. Like the first case, it did not stick and thrown out of court on Feb. 23, 2005.

With resources on their side, the alleged landowner and heirs appealed the case before RTC-7, Br.29 in Toledo City and allegedly secured a warrant recently for the arrest of the victims.

As early Dec. 9, 2003, the Illuminado Lucas of CENRO, has already declared the disputed land in Brgy. Marmol as part of a timberland area, which means it can not be titled or owned by private individuals.

Action Requested

Please write letters of concern to:

Ricardo J. Cardinal Vidal, D.D.

Archbishop of Cebu

Archbishop's Residence

PO Box 52, 6000 Cebu City

Atty. Alejandro Alonso

Regional Director

Commission on Human Rights-7

Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia

Province of Cebu

Capitol Bldg., Escario St.,

Cebu City 6000

Benjamin Lascaña

Warden

Cebu Provincial Rehabilitation and Detention Center

Brgy. Kalunasan, Cebu City 6000

Reference: Mara Arcilla, Coordinator, Tel. No.:(032) 255-5549

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