

# High-level ILO mission to probe extrajudicial killings in RP

by MAYEN JAYMALIN  
Philstar.com

MANILA – A high-level mission of the International Labor Organization (ILO) is set to investigate the unexplained killings in the country.

Lawyer Allan Montaño, national president of the Federation of Free Workers (FFW), reported on Thursday that the Philippine government has formally accepted the request of the ILO, made two years ago, to look into the killings.

Montaño said in a statement that the ILO mission will look into the allegations and reported violations of trade union rights, including killings, attempted murders, death threats, abductions, disappearances, assaults, torture, military interference in trade union activities, violent police dispersion of marches and pickets, and arrests of trade union leaders.

He said Labor Undersecretary Rosalinda Baldoz, head of the Philippine delegation, noted in her speech at a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland that “the (Philippine) government favorably considers the request to accept the mission.”

“Accepting the High Level Mission proves the willingness of the government to follow the processes of the ILO,” Montaño said.

“This will serve as the most appropriate forum for those who have complaints to be heard and to substantiate their claims and allegations. Such decision, we believe, shows our country’s commitment to the ILO’s ideals of social justice and peace,” Montaño added.

The ILO’s two-year-old request for a High Level Mission stemmed from a report of the ILO’s Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR).

In its individual observation concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87), which the Philippines ratified as early as 1953, it raised the

need for the Mission “so as to obtain a greater understanding of all aspects of this case.”

ILO members gather annually in Geneva for the International Labor Conference to discuss the adoption of new standards and look into reports of violations of the conventions or international treaties on freedom of association and collective bargaining, among others.

“All and every instance of extrajudicial killing is condemnable, be this committed by the armed forces of duly constituted governments or by the armies of rebel forces or by pure and simple criminal elements,” Montaño said.

He called on the government to mobilize its resources to further continue the investigation and prosecution, and finally, penalize the perpetrators.

Montaño said the ILO mission is not doing the probe to find fault or to ascertain guilt but to dig into the causes on why these incidents happen, so it can make the appropriate responses.

“We are confident that the ILO mission to the Philippines will take a similar tack of combining fact-finding with concrete technical cooperation programs that will help the Philippines eliminate these obnoxious extrajudicial killings and assist the social partners in complying with ILO standards,” Montaño said.

**GMA scraps legal team against communist rebels**

President Arroyo abolished a special team that was tasked to file criminal charges against communist rebels following a recommendation from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights.

Arroyo issued Executive Order 808 last May 15 abolishing the three-year-old Inter-Agency Legal Action Group (IALAG) that is under the supervision of National Security Adviser Norberto Gon-

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DO-IT-YOURSELF FLAG. Students of Bell-San Francisco Elementary School in Magarao town, Camarines Sur, make their own flag as a class project. On Thursday, they proudly display their handiwork and get so into the spirit of the Philippines’ 111th Independence Day albeit playfully. Inquirer.net photo

# SC grants writ of amparo to Fil-Am activist

by TETCH TORRES  
Inquirer.net

MANILA – Filipino-American activist Melissa Roxas, who was abducted for six days, is a step closer to getting court protection after the Supreme Court on Tuesday granted her appeal for a writ of amparo.

Finding basis for her appeal, the high tribunal also ordered the Armed Forces of the Philip-

ppines to respond to Roxas’s petition, Supreme Court spokesman Jose Midas Marquez said.

The high court likewise ordered the Court of Appeals to immediately conduct a hearing on the case.

Roxas, who is back in the States but who is planning to come back and whose relatives remain in the country, is a member of Bayan-USA, the overseas chapter of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

Abducted by armed men in La Paz, Tarlac last May 19, she surfaced six days later.

While in captivity, she said she was blindfolded and handcuffed in what she suspects was a military camp in Nueva Ecija, possibly Fort Magsaysay, headquarters of the 7th Infantry Division, which is a short distance from where she was abducted.

She concluded that it was a military camp due to the sounds of gun-firing, hammering, and planes taking off and landing.

She said her abductors told her that she was a member of

the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army.

Upon her release, she was given a SIM card through which her abductors said they would communicate with her. Her abductors also warned her to be wary of Karapatan because the group will tell her to go against them. Her abductors dropped her off a few feet from her relatives’ house in Quezon City.

She said her abductors warned her that they will monitor her movements.

In her petition, she said the police and military authorities as well as the Office of the President have not conducted any investigation on her abduction.

Petitioner added that her right has been violated when she was abducted and interrogated as being a suspected member of the CPP-NPA without the presence of a counsel.

Also, her abductors took from her a memory card, an Ipad, a laptop, a journal, a sphygmomanometer, a stethoscope, and P15,000 in cash. ■



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Stephen H. Mattern is a cum laude graduate of Southwestern University School of Law, where he served as an editor of the prestigious Southwestern University Law Review.

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