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29 DEC 1988

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Congressional Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20505  
Telephone: 351-6136

**TO:** Mr. Michael O'Neil  
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Mike,

Enclosed are the comments you requested  
on the New York Times article "Torture Said  
to Rise in Philippine Drive on Rebels."



House Liaison

Enclosure

STAT

FORM 1533 OBSOLETE PREVIOUS EDITIONS.

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**MEMORANDUM: Comments on the December 18 New York Times Article, "Torture Said to Rise in Philippine Drive on Rebels"**

We believe that this article is typical of the mounting Philippine and international criticism that human rights abuses in the Philippines are increasing. The tactics mentioned in Amnesty International's report are not new, having long been used by some ill-disciplined Philippine military and law enforcement officials. However, they are neither standard procedure nor official policy, and we cannot confirm whether these abuses are more frequent now than during the Marcos era. It is very difficult to collect unbiased data on human rights abuses in the Philippines. Many human rights groups there -- particularly the Task Force on Detainees, a primary source of information for Amnesty International and other organizations -- are linked to the Communist Party and probably exaggerate to undermine the government's credibility while ignoring abuses perpetrated by the communist insurgents. [REDACTED]

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This is not to imply that all allegations are leftist propaganda. Local civilian and military officials are certainly aware of and participate in human rights violations, and many economic, political, and personal scores are traditionally settled by violence. Manila has been reticent about cracking down on violators primarily because President Aquino wants to avoid any confrontation with the military. [REDACTED] the Philippine judicial system is so inefficient and corrupt that most political killings are never resolved. In an effort to strengthen the government's commitment to human rights, President Aquino recently set up an advisory committee to monitor violations and appointed several government prosecutors to help relatives search for missing kin. [REDACTED]

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December 18, 1988, Sunday, Late City Final Edition

SECTION: Section 1; Part 1, Page 8, Column 1; Foreign Desk

LENGTH: 528 words

HEADLINE: Torture Said to Rise in Philippine Drive on Rebels

BYLINE: AP

DATELINE: LONDON, Dec. 17

BODY:

Torture cases in the Philippines have increased as the Government has stepped up its fight against Communist insurgents, Amnesty International said in a report this week.

"Military intelligence agents are reported to have subjected detainees to severe beatings, electric shocks, stabbings, near suffocation with plastic bags or water, and sexual abuse," the report by the London-based group said.

"Similar abuses in police stations have been reported," it said. "Soldiers on patrol have been accused of rape and other abuses in villages suspected of sympathizing with rebel forces." This "pattern of torture" has re-emerged even though President Corazon C. Aquino's Government enacted constitutional and legal measures to outlaw brutality, the report said.

"Amnesty International believes that immediate action is still needed to enforce legal safeguards against incommunicado detention, to investigate fully all allegations of torture, and to bring those responsible to justice."

In Manila, Mrs. Aquino responded to the report, which was issued on Thursday. "I am in touch with the progress of these cases," she said. "The final reports are not yet in as not all witnesses have been heard." She urged human rights organizations to submit reports of violations to a new committee she created this week to investigate reported abuses.

Last Saturday, Mrs. Aquino acknowledged that violations were continuing, but blamed the Communist insurgency led by the New People's Army for most of them. She said that the abuse of human rights was not a policy of her administration and that it was unfair to blame the problem exclusively on the military.

"They have to give us a chance," said Mary Concepcion Bautista, chairwoman of the Commission on Human Rights in Manila. "We have to investigate. We cannot be Amnesty International, which just publishes reports. They are being unfair." Amnesty International said it knew of no instance of a military or police officer being convicted of a serious human rights offense since Mrs. Aquino came to power in February 1986 in the military-civilian uprising that ousted President Ferdinand E. Marcos.

Rebels Report Being Tortured

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© 1988 The New York Times, December 18, 1988

Alleged members of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines and its military wing, the New People's Army, are among those who have said they were tortured, the report said.

Amnesty International said it is aware the rebel army has killed captives. It said it "condemns such abuses by opposition groups, but stresses they can never justify human rights violations by government forces."

The organization said it had received no official response from the Philippines to its March report detailing allegations of murder by military and paramilitary forces and instances of "disappearances."

The organization did note that Mrs. Aquino has dissolved the National Intelligence and Security Agency, which was accused of torture under President Marcos.

The Philippines' Commission on Human Rights issued guidelines on the rights of prisoners in May, the report said, and those guidelines were affirmed by leaders of the military and the national police force.

SUBJECT: TORTURE; CIVIL WAR AND GUERRILLA WARFARE; ARMAMENT, DEFENSE AND MILITARY FORCES

ORGANIZATION: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (ORGN)

NAME: AQUINO, CORAZON C (PRES)

GEOGRAPHIC: PHILIPPINES, REPUBLIC OF THE

LEVEL 1 - 2 OF 4 STORIES

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The Christian Science Monitor

December 15, 1988, Thursday

SECTION: News in Brief; Pg. 2

LENGTH: 94 words

HEADLINE: Amnesty report charges abuses in Philippines

DATLINE: London

BODY:

Consistent and apparently reliable reports of torture increased when the Philippine government stepped up its counterinsurgency campaign against communist rebels, Amnesty International said yesterday.

This "pattern of torture" has re-emerged despite constitutional and legal measures by President Corazon Aquino's government to outlaw brutality, Amnesty International said in a report.

The organization said it knew of no instance of a military or police officer being convicted of a serious human rights offense since Mrs. Aquino came to

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power in 1986.

GRAPHIC: Map, Philippines, STAFF

LEVEL 1 - 3 OF 4 STORIES

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Los Angeles Times

December 15, 1988, Thursday, Home Edition

SECTION: Part 1; Page 5; Column 1; Foreign Desk

LENGTH: 244 words

HEADLINE: TORTURE SEEN ON INCREASE IN PHILIPPINES

BYLINE: By AP

DATELINE: LONDON

BODY:

Reports of torture in the Philippines have increased since the Manila government stepped up its counter-insurgency campaign against Communist rebels, Amnesty International said today.

This "pattern of torture" has re-emerged despite constitutional and legal measures by President Corazon Aquino's government to outlaw brutality, Amnesty International said in a report.

The London-based organization said it knew of no instance of a military or police officer being convicted of a serious human rights offense since Aquino came to power in February, 1986.

Alleged members of the banned Communist Party of the Philippines and its military wing, the New People's Army, are among those who have said they were tortured, the report said.

Amnesty International said it is aware that the rebel army has killed captives. It said it "condemns such abuses by opposition groups, but stresses they can never justify human rights violations by government forces."

The organization, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977, also said it had received no official response from the Philippines to its March report detailing allegations of murder by military and paramilitary forces and instances of "disappearances."

"Several consistent and apparently reliable reports of torture show that extensive legal safeguards against incommunicado detention, ill-treatment and torture are being ignored," Amnesty International said in its report released for publication today.

TYPE: Wire

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SUBJECT: TORTURE; TERRORISM -- PHILIPPINES; PHILIPPINES -- REVOLTS;  
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL; PHILIPPINES -- GOVERNMENT

LEVEL 1 - 4 OF 4 STORIES

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December 15, 1988, Thursday, Final Edition

SECTION: FIRST SECTION; PAGE A45; AROUND THE WORLD

LENGTH: 69 words

HEADLINE: Amnesty Cites Philippine Torture

BYLINE: From News Services and Staff Reports

DATELINE: LONDON

BODY:

Torture of suspected communist rebels and sympathizers by Philippine government forces appears to be reemerging as a "common practice," Amnesty International said in a report released at its headquarters here.

The 21-page document cited reports of military intelligence agents subjecting prisoners to severe beatings, electric shocks, stabbings, near-suffocation with plastic bags or water and sexual abuse.

TYPE: FOREIGN NEWS

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS; PHILIPPINES

ORGANIZATION: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL