

10 February 2017

Press Statement



CDRN CONDEMNS THE ARREST AND DETENTION OF DEVELOPMENT WORKER ROGINA QUILOP

The Citizens Disaster Response Network, a national network of 17 humanitarian aid organizations in the Philippines, decries the arrest of Rogina Quilop, administration and finance officer of the Center for People's Resources and Services (CPRS), our regional center in Bacolod City, Negros. She and her husband had just left the office for home around 6:30 PM last February 7 when they were blocked by members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and served with a warrant for murder.

In an incident report submitted to the national secretariat of CDRN, CPRS reports that CPRS staff had been subject to military harassment before, most recently in October 2016, when field staff were approached and interrogated by soldiers at their organic farming training in Escalante City.

Quilop herself had reported being under surveillance and this had heightened recently. Last January 31, CPRS staff observed a white Chevrolet with no license plate idling in front of the office. In the morning of February 7, Quilop told officemates that when she was entering the gate, she saw someone sitting at the store in front looking at her intently. When she peeped through the gate, the man was seen hurriedly texting on his phone. Later that afternoon, an hour before Quilop was arrested, the same white Chevrolet was seen slowly passing by.

When the CIDG arrested Quilop and her husband, they immediately seized her bag, which contained her Macbook and office documents. It hasn't been returned to her yet even after she was visited in jail by her lawyer Attorney Baribar. It is feared that the laptop will be tampered with and used as evidence against her.

We at CDRN are alarmed at the CIDG's preposterous claims that Rogina Quilop is a member of the New People's Army and head of the finance bureau of the Communist Party of the Philippines in Negros. How can she be a member of the armed group when she has been legally serving the NGO in her capacity as administrative and finance officer? There are numerous pictures and witnesses to her attending to relief and rehab projects in beneficiary communities.

On ABS-CBN's website, the headline reads "Suspected NPA rebel arrested in Bacolod". This is very irresponsible and most certainly red-baiting, in keeping with the AFP's counterinsurgency tactics. Ms. Quilop is one of the many development workers and activists who are tagged as armed insurgents and slapped with trumped-up charges to criminalize and put them behind bars. Add to this the continuing harassment during relief and rehabilitation projects, such as the experience of the staff of Alay Bayan-Luson Inc (ABI) after the twin typhoons Karen and Lawin hit Central Luzon. They had to postpone relief operations after the 7th ID of the Philippine Army intimidated the community leaders and asked for the numbers and names of the field staff.

CDRN asks President Rodrigo R. Duterte to investigate and put a stop to this spate of attacks on development workers. We call on the public and private sectors to protest the continuing harassment of those serving the poor in remote areas, who are the most vulnerable in times of disasters.

**STOP HARASSMENT AND CRIMINALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT WORKERS!
DEFEND AND PROTECT HUMANITARIAN AID ORGANIZATIONS!
FREE ROGINA QUILOP!**

##

For more information, contact:

Jazmin Jerusalem
CDRN chairperson
0939-916-7621