



Joint Press Statement

August 24, 2007

Reference: Ruth Cervantes, Karapatan Public Information Officer (Mobile No. 09189790580)
Ghay Portajada, Desaparecidos National Coordinator (Mobile No. 09058234907)

Save the lives of Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño! Surface them and other desaparecidos!

The families of victims of enforced disappearances under the banner of Desaparecidos and the human rights alliance Karapatan today welcomed the news that the Manalo brothers had escaped their military captors and tormentors. We likewise share the hope of the Cadapan and Empeño families with the news that the Manalo brothers saw Sherlyn and Karen alive.

We laud Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo's bravery in telling the world of the plight of other compatriots who have been abducted and held in 'ghost prisons' by members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

They have corroborated the statement of other survivors like Oscar Leuterio and Lourdes Rubrico. Their experience confirms our allegation that it is a policy of the AFP and the Macapagal-Arroyo government to kill and make people disappear.

The Supreme Court, with its pledge to give remedy to victims, must be able give protection to Manalo brothers who were victims of enforced disappearance. They may be already free but they are still in danger. The SC must likewise be able to dispense justice for victims and their families.

The question that is of paramount importance now is this – who will rescue Sherlyn, Karen and 60 other victims of enforced disappearance in Central Luzon and all the rest of the 183 missing persons all over the country? They are still at the mercy of their captors. They are experiencing torment and torture and their lives are in danger every minute of every day.

Who has the power to return them to their families? Who will assure us and all our citizens that none of us or our loved ones will ever be taken by force and made to disappear without a trace? Where is the rule of law?

The Commander-In-Chief Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo must be tasked to bring an end to the sufferings of relatives of hundreds of victims who continue to go through the pain of loss and uncertainty over the fate of their loved ones.”

Open safe houses, military camps and pinpoint secret places of detention to determine the fate of victims of enforced disappearances!

Surface Sherlyn, Karen and all desaparecidos! ###

ATTACHMENT 11

Submission by the Non-Government Organization KARAPATAN Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights Related to the PHILIPPINES for the UPR First Session April 2008