

On the Implementation of the Offer-Reward for the Capture of the Abu Sayyaf and its Leaders

Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has offered a reward for the capture of the Abu Sayyaf and its principal leaders involved in a series of kidnapping for ransom. This offer is laudable move to encourage all civic-minded and well-meaning citizens to cooperate in facilitating the early capture of the said Moro bandits.

Incidents, however, have occurred especially in Basilan that in their desire to avail of the benefits of the reward, human rights have been violated among citizens, the armed forces personnel and the police.

The Commission on Human Rights has received reports on the abuses among the citizens suspecting even the innocent to belong to the Abu Sayyaf group. The Armed Forces personnel and the police personnel operating in Basilan allegedly indiscriminately arrest and detain innocent civilians on mere suspicion that they belong to the bandit group.

Article 9 (1 and 2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights reads:

"Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law."

"Anyone who is arrested shall be informed at the time of his arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him."

No derogation of said rights may be made even under emergency situations (*Article 4(3), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*). Accordingly, extreme care must be made to avoid any abuse of human rights in the implementation of the Executive Order on the reward.

Pursuant to its constitutional function of monitoring Philippine Government's compliance with international instruments on human rights, the Commission on Human Rights issues this Advisory for the guidance of all concerned.

CHR Region IX Director Jose Manuel S. Mamauag is directed to translate this Advisory and to publish it in the areas of concerned.

Quezon City 10 July 2001