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TFDP-Mindanao

# URGENT ACTION

UA 008  
10/27/88

CASE: DISAPPEARANCE (with report of Arrest)

VICTIM: VIRGILIO TUNDAG, 27 years old, single, and a resident of barangay 9 Pasil, municipality of Buenavista, province of Agusan del Norte, Mindanao, Philippines.

At around one o'clock in the afternoon of September 30, 1988, Virgilio Tundag went to the house of a friend, Ebonita Sasutel, in barangay Rizal of Buenavista town. He was asking a favor to borrow Sasutel's carabao to be used in hauling some logs. As the conversation progressed, a certain Isidro Tabanao, alias Dondon - a well known Alsa Masa member of Rizal - suddenly came and interrupted which later turned out to a misunderstanding. Moments after, Tabanao left and proceeded to the detachment of the 30th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army (IB PA) based in the same barangay.

Minutes later, a certain Boy Cascara of the 30th IB PA arrived aboard a motorcycle. Without much ado, he apprehended Tundag and brought him to the 30th IB PA detachment.

Rosita Tundag, the victim's mother, after being informed by Sasutel, immediately went to the detachment to make a follow-up. She was told by Boy Cascara that her son was apprehended because he was a stranger to the place but he was released right after interrogation.

However, Mrs. Tundag said that her son has not returned home. She also checked her relatives for her son's whereabouts but her efforts yielded negative results.

The case was then reported to the police station of Buenavista. Lt. Leonides Montillano, the police station Commander, summoned Boy Cascara together with Isidro Tabanao. During the investigation Cascara was firm on his statement that Tundag was released in the presence of the Rizal barangay Captain, Esteban Domosnog. On the other hand, Domosnog's testimony claimed that Virgilio was released on September 30, 1988 at around 10:00 o'clock in the morning. This however, contradicted the statement of the eye-witness, Ebonita Sasutel, who testified that the victim was arrested at around 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon of September 30.

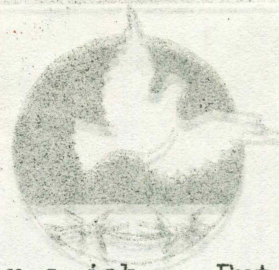
On October 7, Mrs. Tundag received a letter allegedly from Virgilio which claimed that he was released by his captors and

- more -

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Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) is a human rights organization established by the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines. TFDP believes in the inviolable dignity of the human person and his/her basic inalienable rights to life; to freedom and to the means necessary and suitable for the proper development of life. TFDP, therefore, strives to live up to the imperative of "action on behalf of justice... appear as a constitutive dimensions of the preaching of the Gospel of the Church mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from the very oppressive situation" (1971 Synod of Bishops Statement).

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that he proceeded to Cagayan de Oro City to look for a job. But Mrs. Tundag could hardly believe that it was indeed her son's letter because the signature and the penmanship were different. She further added that her son's nickname is "Sikoy" and not "Oting" as the letter was signed.

Mrs. Tundag further related to TFDP Butuan Unit that in another incident on January 25, 1980, Pablo Tundag, her husband was reportedly killed by Floro Tabanao, an elder brother of Isidro Tabanao, on suspicion that her husband was an NPA member. The case filed against Floro Tabanao was not pursued because of the family's financial difficulty and fear of the Tabanao's who were very close to the military unit in their place. However, on May 4, 1988, Floro Tabanao was killed by unidentified armed men believed to be NPA members. And the Tabanao's suspected that her son, Virgilio, masterminded the killing.

It is strongly believed that Virgilio's disappearance is related to the death of his father and Floro Tabanao. A writ of Habeas Corpus is being filed by the relatives. But as of this writing TFDP-Mindanao Regional Office has not received report regarding the victim's whereabouts.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- Send telegrams/express letters/airmail letters
- = expressing concern about the safety of Virgilio Tundag who was apprehended by Boy Cascara of the 30th IB PA based in Rizal, Buenavista, Agusan del Norte, Philippines.
  - = urging the authorities to conduct an immediate and thorough investigation into the "disappearance" and if he is kept in detention, to guarantee his physical safety.

## Send Appeals to:

President Corazon Aquino  
Malacañang Palace, Manila  
Philippines

Secretary Fidel Ramos  
Department of National Defense  
Camp Crame, Quezon City  
Philippines

General Renato de Villa  
AFP Chief of Staff  
Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City  
Philippines

Col. Miguel Sol  
Commanding Officer  
2/4 Brigade, 4th ID  
Bancasi, Butuan City  
Agusan del Norte, Philippines

Major Joseph Cabalit  
30th IB PA Commanding Officer  
Jamboree Site, Alubijid, Buenavista  
Agusan del Norte, Philippines