



# ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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Mr. Pedro Acharon Jr.  
City Mayor  
Office of the City Mayor  
City Hall Building  
General Santos City  
PHILIPPINES

Fax: +63 83 554 4212  
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AHRC-UAU-047-2008

Dear Mayor Acharon,

**PHILIPPINES: Please take action to ensure that cases involving vigilante killings are solved at once**

The AHRC writes with deep concern, about the deaths in May and June of 2008 of fourteen persons, including a minor, in separate incidents, by vigilantes.

In our previous appeal, in a letter to you on 23 May 2008, we requested two things. That the local police office take appropriate action insuring that effective investigations of vigilante killings and the murders of drivers over motorcycle robberies are taken. All those responsible should be held to full account.

Sad to say, not only have we failed to receive a response from you, but we are also unable to obtain any response from your office and the police regarding actions that have been taken, if any, in these cases. Previously, we raised concern over the police practice of either prematurely concluding investigations into the victims' deaths or of justifying their murders for supposed involvement in criminal activities. None of these cases have seen any substantial progress.

We likewise expressed our concern regarding the public statements you made. In these you give acquiescence to police action, and affirm police claims that justify the murders of the victims rather than thoroughly investigating and identifying the perpetrators. As you are keenly aware, neither the police inaction nor your statements have helped in resolving these cases. The perpetrators remain unidentified while the families of the dead have not obtained justice.


Given the continued failure by your office and the police to take adequate measures in the solution of these cases, we have deep reservations that those cases sent previously and these cases below will show any progress in future. However, we do trust that you will now begin to give serious attention to these and that you will use your considerable authority to ensure that each of these attached cases are effectively investigated and those responsible held to account.

Furthermore, we urge you to ensure that the local police, whom we know have a minimal level of supervision, would exhaust all efforts. They should pro-actively reassure potential

witnesses that they will be given the full protection of the law, that they would be covered under the Witness Protection Security and Benefit Act (6981).

We, however, feel deep concern that any of these cases will ever reach the Courts. The continuing failure of the police to ensure and give assurance that witnesses are protected results in two things. First, there is the subsequent immunity for the perpetrators from being held to account for their actions. Second, there is the continuing endurance of the families of the dead to contend with on-going threats and deprivation of legal solutions.

Yours sincerely,

  
MOON Jeong Ho  
Programme Officer  
Urgent Appeals Programme



CC:

1. P/Sr. Supt. Robert Po, City Police Director, General Santos City Police Office (GSCPO), General Santos City, PHILIPPINES
2. Ms. Leila De Lima, Commissioner, Commission on Human Rights, Quezon City, PHILIPPINES
3. Mr. Quinciano V. Bueno, Officer-in-Charge (OIC), Commission on Human Rights, Region 12, Koronadal City, PHILIPPINES
4. Deputy Director General Avelino Razon, Chief, Philippine National Police (PNP), Camp General Rafael Crame, Quezon City, PHILIPPINES
5. Mr. Raul Gonzalez, Secretary, Department of Justice (DoJ), Manila, PHILIPPINES
6. Mr. Philip Alston, Special Rapporteur on Extra-judicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions, OHCHR-UNOG, Geneva, SWITZERLAND

## **LIST OF VICTIMS IN GENERAL SANTOS CITY:**

1. **GERMAN SANCHEZ**, 27 years old; of Upper Matibay, Barangay (village) San Isidro, General Santos City. On May 24, German was driving his passenger tricycle going towards the downtown area from his place when he was shot dead, allegedly by his two passengers. The witnesses have claimed that it was his passengers, who he had just ferried, that shot him in the head. The gunmen, who had escaped after the incident, have not been seen since.
2. **ALCON RAMIREZ**, of Litan Phase 1, Barangay Sinawal, General Santos City. On May 24, Alcon whose elder brother, Danny (see Story No. 1 of our previous appeal) was shot dead in a robbery was himself killed. Alcon was driving his motorcycle together with his nephew, Laro Martinez, when they were attacked by five gunmen. Alcon suffered gunshot wounds to his head. The gunmen, who apparently had positioned themselves along the roadside, simultaneously open fired at them. Laro survived the shooting unhurt. Five empty shells from a .45 calibre pistol were found at the crime scene.
3. **DALMACIO TIEWEN**, 28 years old; of Purok Balunto, Barangay Labangal, General Santos City. On May 22 at around 9:30am, Dalmacio's dead body was found at a village in Conel. Dalmacio's colleague, Sammy Toremocho, last saw him alive on his way to claim his salary. His body bore several stab wounds and his right arm tied with a wire to his neck. The police investigator, Police Officer (PO2) Marvin Caresma, in absence of identification cards and documents from the victim, has implied that the victim was an unlikely target since he had no "tattoo", an indication PO2 Caresma claimed as proof of bad character.
4. **VIENVINIDO AGUSTINES**, 22 years old; of Dagohoy Paradise, Barangay North, General Santos City. On May 20, at around 8:40pm Vienvinido was walking on his way together with his two other companions when he was shot dead. The five men were apparently waiting for him at the roadside. He suffered gunshot wounds to his chest while his companions were unhurt. The gunmen immediately escaped onboard their motorcycle. Vienvinido's neighbours immediately went to his rescue. They took him to a nearby hospital but he died on his way. But even before the police complete their investigation, they had already started looking into the victim's background and his supposed criminal records.
5. **ALVIN TULIO**, of Zone 4, Barangay Labangal, General Santos City. On May 19, at around 1:30pm Alvin was approached by two men, who had introduced themselves to him as soldiers, who pretended that they were looking for his place. However, when Alvin pointed to them where he was living, they shot him in the head from behind using a .45 calibre pistol. He died on the spot due to fatal gunshot wounds. The gunmen had immediately escaped onboard their motorcycle. Alvin's death had also been reported as yet another case of vigilante killing.
6. **JERRY LAPATIS**, 34 years old; of Purok 1 extension, Barangay Conel, General Santos City. On May 19, at around 8:30pm Jerry was together with his wife, Fe, taking part in his neighbour's birthday party, when two of his five attackers shot him dead. He was seated outside his neighbour's house when the attackers, armed with a .45 calibre pistol, suddenly appeared and shot twice in the head.
7. **DANILO AUGUIS**, 38 years old; of Barangay Bula, General Santos City. On May 26, he was together with his sister Gina when an unknown man approached them. The man asked them if

they knew Jun Jorie. Gina told the man to ask someone else instead as she did not know the person he was looking for; and when she turned to the man's back, the man shot his brother, Danilo, on the head with a .45 caliber pistol. He escaped on board a motorcycle waiting nearby. Danilo had been detained due to a charge for theft of mobile phone but was later released after it was returned to owner.

8. **REZEMIAS BENSOLANO**, 17 years old, of Barangay Calumpang, General Santos City. On June 3, when he was sitting outside his house with a friend after dinner, he was stabbed repeatedly by two unidentified men armed with bladed weapons. They also attempted to stab his unnamed friend but failed. The attackers escaped on their motorcycle from the area. Rezemias died on his way to the hospital due to stab wounds to his chest and his back.

9. **JERRY NASIAD**, a laborer at the public market; of 39.2 FVR Village, General Santos City. Jerry had just been released after having been detained on a charge of murder. On May 29, while he was standing in the public market, two unidentified persons repeatedly stabbed him before fleeing. He suffered at least 18 stab wounds, dying on the way to the hospital. The police claimed to have recovered illegal drugs in the victims' possession. They prematurely concluded his death had something to do with gang war.

10. **DEMAS MINDO**, of legal age, of Purok Saway, Zone 3, Barangay Labangal, General Santos City. On June 15, when Demas was sitting outside his house, two gunmen on motorcycles appeared and shot him in the chest and head. They fled on board their motorcycles. Demas died three hours later. No adequate police investigation has taken place.

11. **RONALD JAPITANA**, 23 years old and an **UNIDENTIFIED MAN**; of Silway, General Santos City, **EDISON NUEVO**, 20 years old; of Barangay Apopong, General Santos City. On June 16, while they were waiting for a ride on their way home, two unidentified men shot them. Japitana and his unidentified companion died due to gunshot wounds to the face and head. Nuevo was hit at the back and stomach and was sent to hospital. Police though prematurely claimed the killing could have been related to the victim supposed involvement in illegal drugs.

12. **ALDREN ALBA**, 22 years old; of Purok Intik, Barangya Mabuhay, General Santos City. On June 17, Alba was shot dead by two unidentified men while he was sipping coffee with his common law wife, Irene Salazar. Irene said Alba tried to escape from his attackers towards their house after being shot but the suspects followed him and shot him dead. Alba's father said his son had been trying to reform as he had just been released after being detained for robbery.