

# **Case Study on the Human Development and Economic Costs/Spillovers of Armed Conflict in Bicol**

By

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## I. Introduction

Following the fall of the Marcos regime and President Aquino's assumption of office in 1986, achieving the goals of peace through national reconciliation and development has become a paramount concern of the government. As a result, peace efforts have, over the years, increasingly focused on the country's internal strife with various rebel groups, notably the CPP-NPA movement, the Muslim secessionists and the Cordillera rebels.

The causes of armed conflicts in the Philippines involve legitimate issues such as relative/absolute deprivation, (political, social and cultural) marginalization, landlessness, militarization, human rights violations, and resource exploitation (Ferrer 2004). These concerns parallel those identified by the National Unification Commission (NUC) in its 1993 sectoral consultations as the root causes of government armed conflict with the CPP-NPA-NDF and the Muslim rebels. As reported, the causes of rebellion were traced to: (1) massive poverty and economic inequality; (2) poor governance and lack of basic social services; (3) injustice, abuse of power and human rights violations; (4) the control of political power by a few; and (5) the exploitation of cultural communities and lack of recognition of their ancestral domain. Through the same sectoral consultations, differences in political and ideological beliefs, foreign intervention and domination, moral decadence, and continued military operations were also found to be conditions feeding armed conflict. That inequality, marginalization and discrimination weigh down more heavily on the consciousness of the sectoral groups is quite evident from these Sectoral consultation results. .

The above data speak of armed struggle as a visible consequence of the suppression of people's rights to share equitably in the benefits of social, economic and political development and of the pervading fear among them as military operations continue in areas where CPP-NPA forces operate. From the humanists' point of view, peace is an imperative to effectively address threats to human security brought about by sustained armed conflict. This perspective looks at a just and lasting peace as the path to a better life -- one that is free from want and fear.

Of late, the notion of human security has taken on a new dimension with the shift from a purely state security approach to a human security model. The new paradigm does not only look at armed conflict as the result of extreme poverty, but also recognizes it as deeply rooted in grave injustice and inequity, as well as other oppressive situations that undermine the dignity of a person. Clearly at issue here are the threats to human security that result from marginalization, discrimination and humiliation. To the extent further that armed conflict hinders people's participation in social and political development, political security may also viewed as another dimension of human security.

It may be argued that, since by present definition human development is anchored on literacy, freedom from poverty, and opportunity for long and health life, the risks in human security must first be addressed before total human development is expected to take place. And since the existing armed conflict with the CPP-NPA-NDF represents the most serious threat to human security, the realization of a just and lasting peace is perceived to be the most decisive path to follow. This approach gives substance to the theme *Peace, Human Security and Human Development in the Philippines* that the Philippine Human Development Network (HDN) has adopted for the 2005 Philippine Human Development Report.

To achieve the objectives of the 5<sup>th</sup> PHDR, several background papers and case studies will provide the needed data for a comprehensive assessment of the country's state of "unpeace" in order to determine to what extent the present armed struggle has affected human development outcomes at the community and national levels, and to see how the various government institutions and civil society organizations are responding to end the conflicts.

This report presents the results of one of the case studies conducted in support of the objectives of the 5<sup>th</sup> PHDR. Based on the expanded human security framework, the case study takes into consideration the non-economic dimensions of human security. By focusing on the Bicol region, specifically, the provinces of Albay and Camarines Sur, the study hopes to explore the state of the country's armed conflict with the CPP-NPA-NDF forces<sup>2</sup>. Several recent reports identify Albay and Camarines Sur as areas where the most intense armed conflicts are taking place in Bicol (Calara 2002; Natividad 2003; PA 2003; Barcia 2003).

This case study hopes to examine from a human security framework the state of CPP-NPA armed struggle in Bicol along the following aspects:

1. Costs and spillovers within and between municipalities and provinces to include
  - Financial and economic costs in terms of damage to lives, properties, environment, foregone investments, poor access to social services, etc.;
  - Social costs and psychosocial trauma;
  - Political costs (e.g., quality of governance and politics including corruption);
2. Geographic impact of negative and positive spillovers;
3. Gender- and age-disaggregated (intergenerational ) impact
4. Possible approaches to ending conflict or preventing potential ones from escalating.

### **A. Methodology**

The bulk of the data for this research were gathered from secondary sources which included newspaper reports, periodic reports from the regional offices of Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Commission on Human Rights, as well as a local radio station in Albay, (i.e., DWBS Radyo Veritas Legazpi), and the Philippine National Police city and municipal stations (Camalig, Ligao and Libon, in Albay). The internet also provided most of the secondary data for the case study including regional military and PNP reports.

Pre-selection and contacting of key informants were also conducted as secondary data were being gathered. Based on the objectives of the case study and initial analysis of the secondary data, guide questions for identified key informants (KI) were developed. Some of the KIs were coordinators of cause-oriented groups, residents of areas where CPP-NPAs maintain zones, and human rights advocates. Interviews with KIs from the AFP and PNP commands were also conducted. As a basic strategy, responses of individual KIs were validated with other KIs.<sup>3</sup>

### **B. The Bicol Region**

Located at the southeastern most tip of Luzon, the Bicol Peninsula is surrounded by natural barriers -- seas that can be highways for contact with people from other provinces outside the region. The area is bounded on the north by Lamon Bay and Pacific Ocean, on the East, the Sibuyan Sea and Ragay gulf, on the west. It has land access to the rest of Luzon through its neighbor province on the which is Quezon (see Figure 1, Map of the Bicol region).

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<sup>2</sup> It will be recalled that, in 1995, the primary responsibility for internal security for the country was transferred to the Philippine National Police by virtue of RA 6975. Along with Mindanao, the Bicol region, southern Quezon and the Cordilleras were not covered by this law reflecting the critical state of armed struggle in these areas during that period.

<sup>3</sup>It should be noted that some KIs failed to give complete information about the activities of the CPP-NPA and the AFP for fear of being mistakenly identified with either of the two parties. The security of their families was their primary concern.

Bicol is accessible to Manila and the rest of Luzon through air, land, railway and sea. It takes about 9 hours to reach Naga City for those taking the south road of the Manila–Bicol route, and about 45 minutes by air transportation.

The region is composed of 6 provinces with 4 contiguous provinces comprising the mainland: Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, and Sorsogon. Isolated from the mainland by sea are the two island provinces of Catanduanes and Masbate. There are seven cities in the region: Naga and Iriga in Camarines Sur; Legazpi, Tabaco and Ligao, in Albay; Sorsogon, and Masbate.

The Bicol region has a total land area of 1,763, 249 hectares or approximately, 17,632.42 square kilometers. In terms of area, Camarines Sur is the biggest province, with 526,682 hectares (Naga City and Iriga City included) and Catanduanes, the smallest with 151,148. The other provinces occupy smaller land areas relative to Camarines Sur: Albay-Legazpi – 255,257 has.; Camarines Norte – 211, 249 has.; Masbate – 404,769 has., and Sorsogon, 214,140. Of the total land area of the region, 1,250,460 hectares are alienable and disposable while 359,789 hectares are public forest areas.

The region’s topography is generally hilly and mountainous except for a few stretches of plains extending from Camarines Sur to the southwestern part of Albay and several smaller coastal and inland plains in other parts of the peninsula. This characteristic of the region’s terrain makes it highly favorable for the growth and movement of armed dissident groups (see Figures 2 and 3, maps of Camarines Sur and Albay).

As of 2000, the Bicol Region registered a population of about 4.675 million, which is about 6% of the country’s total population.<sup>4</sup> In terms of population, the province of Camarines Sur is the largest with 1,551,549 and accounting for one-third of the total regional figures (33.19%). The second most populated province is Albay with 1,090,907 or 23.34% of the total, while the least populated is Catanduanes with 215,356 or 4.61% of the total regional population (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Population distribution by province (Bicol Region 2000)**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Albay	1,090,907	23.34%
Camarines Norte	458,840	9.82
Camarines Sur	1,551,549	33.19
Catanduanes	215,356	4.61
Masbate	707,668	15.13
Sorsogon	650,535	13.91
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,674,855</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>76,498,735</b>	

*Source: NSO as cited by NEDA Region V*

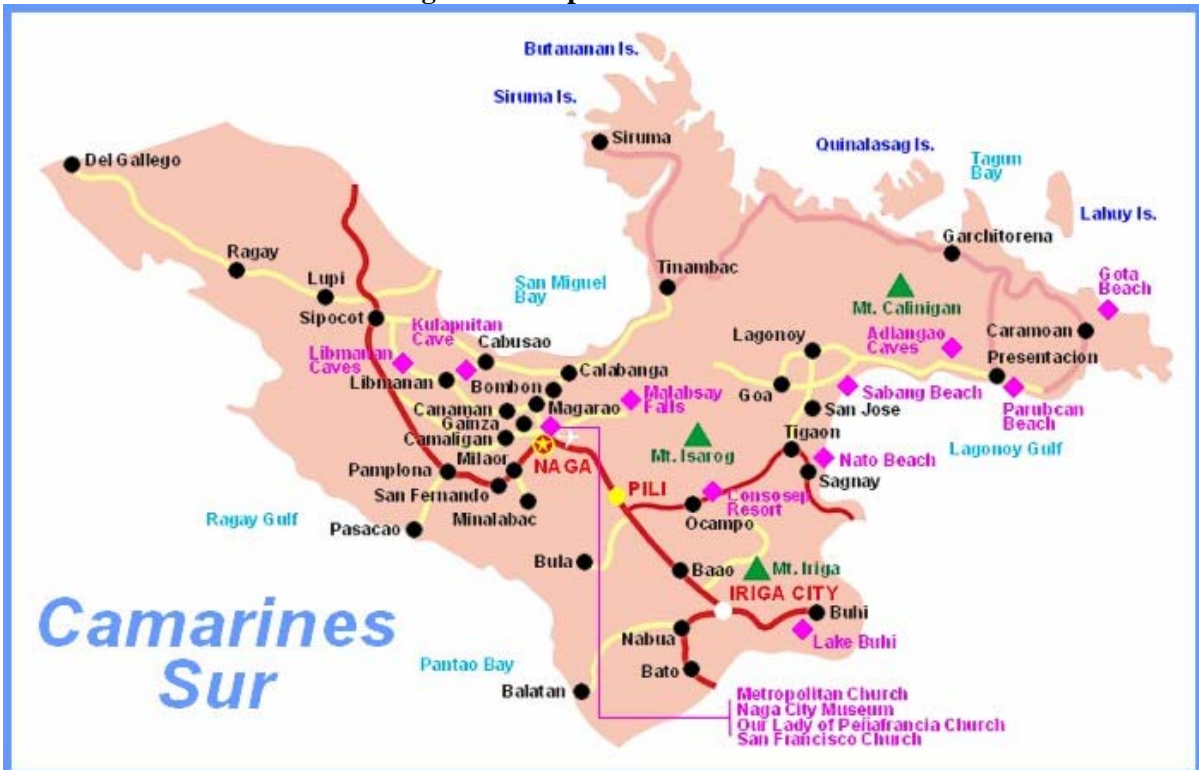
<sup>4</sup>NEDA Region V Regional Medium Term Development Plan 2004-2010.

**Figure 1: Map of the Bicol Region**



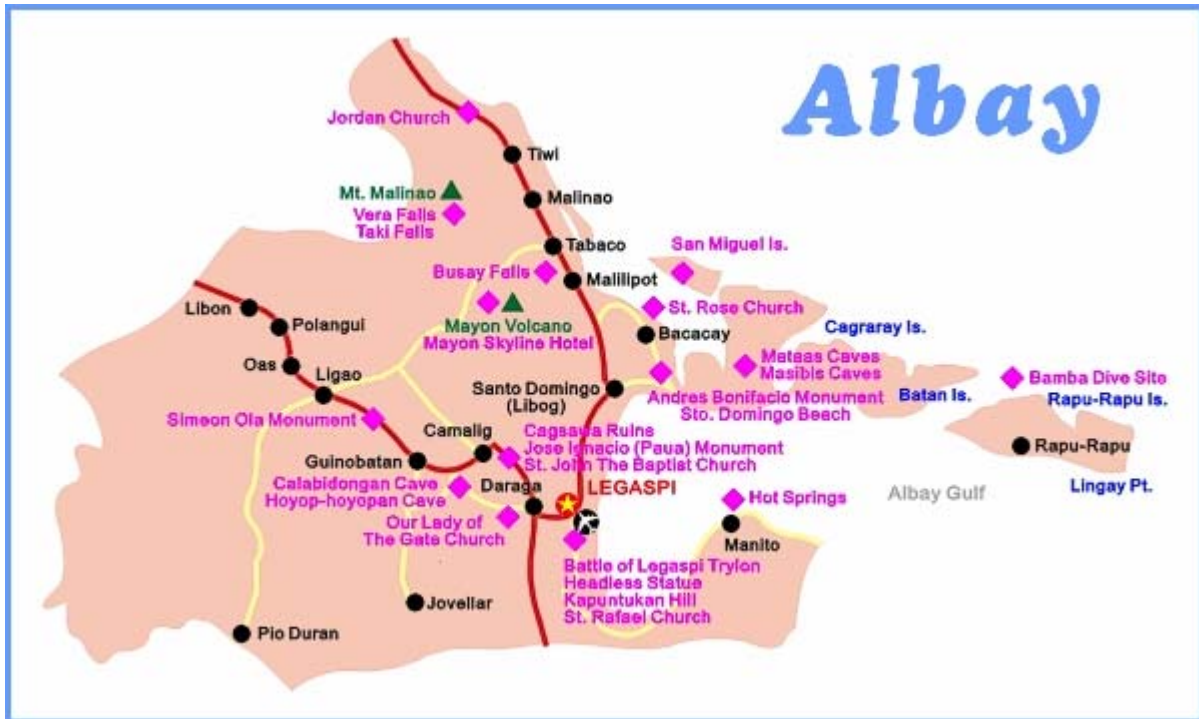
Source: <http://www.evis.net.ph/subregions/subregion5.htm>

**Figure 3: Map of Camarines Sur**



Source: [http://www.globalpinoy.com/travel/province/albay\\_map.htm](http://www.globalpinoy.com/travel/province/albay_map.htm)

FIGURE 2: MAP OF ALBAY



Source: [http://www.globalpinoy.com/travel/province/albay\\_map.htm](http://www.globalpinoy.com/travel/province/albay_map.htm)

## II. The Poverty Situation in Bicol

The Bicol region is basically an agricultural area with the average rural Bicolano family living on rice, corn, and coconut production, farm labor, and small-scale fishing. Among the regions in the country, Bicol exhibits one of the lowest levels of productivity mainly because of its frequent exposure to typhoons and floods and also because it is often affected by such weather phenomena as the *El Niño* and *La Niña*. For this reason it has remained to be one of the poorest regions in the country – in fact, it has the worst poverty situation in Luzon and the third poorest in the country. As of 2000, the incidence of poor population in Bicol is 53.1 or 19 percentage-point higher than the national figures of 34 percent (see Table 2). The two regions exhibiting poverty incidence higher than Bicol are the ARMM and Central Mindanao (Region 12).<sup>5</sup> Bicol stands out as the poorest in Luzon, with CAR ranking next but markedly better off with a poverty incidence of 38 percent as of 2000.

Table 2. Magnitude and Incidence of Poor Population by Region (1997 & 2000)

Region	Magnitude of Poor Population		Incidence of Poor Population	
	1997	2000	1997	2000
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>23,952,927</b>	<b>26,540,094</b>	<b>33.0</b>	<b>34.0</b>
National Capital Region (NCR)	660,758	848,962	6.5	7.6
Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR)	578,894	541,927	42.8	38.0
I Ilocos	1,508,503	1,461,555	37.7	35.5
II Cagayan Valley	920,642	803,385	32.6	29.7
III Central Luzon	1,253,735	1,622,461	16.8	20.9
IV Southern Tagalog	2,618,666	2,947,770	26.9	25.9

<sup>5</sup> NEDA Region V Regional Medium Term Development Plan 2004-2010.

<b>V Bicol</b>	<b>2,757,743</b>	<b>2,566,781</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>53.1</b>
VI Western Visayas	2,695,541	2,846,530	43.2	45.7
VII Central Visayas	1,803,756	2,086,283	34.7	37.4
VIII Eastern Visayas	1,753,838	1,658,498	47.4	45.4
IX Western Mindanao	1,064,404	1,387,217	37.1	44.5
X Northern Mindanao	1,198,565	1,093,642	43.3	38.7
XI Southern Mindanao	1,692,406	1,941,028	37.1	36.5
XII Central Mindanao	1,130,878	1,336,992	51.6	55.3
Caraga	1,051,165	1,055,648	51.0	50.2
Autonomous Region for Moslem Mindanao (ARMM)	1,263,432	1,634,333	55.6	62.9

Source: NSCB as cited by NEDA Region V

Among the Bicol provinces, Masbate emerged as the poorest in 2000 with a poverty incidence of 70.9 percent, representing a two percentage-point increase from the 1997 figures of 68.9 percent (see Table 3). In 1997, Albay and Camarines Sur exhibited the lowest poverty levels in the region (47.8% and 48.7%, respectively). Table 3 shows that these figures reflect significant improvements in the 1997 situation which saw both provinces somewhere in the 50-percent mark in terms of poverty incidence. During the same period, Sorsogon and Catanduanes were the least poor among the 6 provinces (poverty incidence 48.7% and 48%, respectively). The rise in the poverty incidence in these provinces along with the observed improvement in the poverty situation in Albay and Camarines Sur significantly changed the poverty ranks of the six provinces in 2000.

**Table 3. Magnitude and Incidence of Poor Population by Province (1997 & 2000)**

Province	Magnitude of Poor Population		Incidence of Poor Population	
	1997	2000	1997	2000
<b>ALL AREAS Bicol Region</b>	<b>2,757,743</b>	<b>2,566,781</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>53.1</b>
Albay	584,140	546,844	50.0	47.8
Camarines Norte	280,858	301,147	57.6	57.3
Camarines Sur	847,717	790,552	51.1	48.7
Catanduanes	114,913	120,572	48.0	53.2
Masbate	564,292	487,714	68.9	70.9
Sorsogon	365,823	319,952	48.7	51.4

Source: NSCB as cited by NEDA Region V

#### **A. Poverty Measures: Incidence, Depth and Severity**

The 2002 PHDR (see Table 4) confirms Masbate as the poorest Bicol province with its poverty incidence of 70.8 percent (see Table 4). Catanduanes, Albay and Camarines Sur emerged with the lowest poverty levels (43.2%, 44.1% and 44.6%, respectively). With the exception of Albay, which exhibited a decline in poverty incidence from 1997 to 2000, the rest of the region experienced increases in poverty levels. The poverty situation in Catanduanes significantly deteriorated with the 13.6 percentage-point it gained in poverty incidence. Countrywide, Masbate and Sorsogon were included among the bottom 10 provinces in terms of poverty incidence. All Bicol provinces, however, display markedly higher poverty levels vis-à-vis the entire Philippines.

In year 2000, measures of depth and severity of poverty point to Masbate as the most disadvantaged while Catanduanes appears to be the least deprived among the six provinces (ibid.). The data generally reflect the worsening poverty situation in the region as marked by consistent increases in incidence, depth and severity of poverty across provinces. A deviation from the general trend is Albay province, which displayed a decline in poverty

incidence from 49.8% in 1997 to 44.6% in 2000. Such improvement, however, failed to reflect even a slight drop in poverty depth and severity between 1997 and 2000 (ibid).

Camarines Sur, with its bigger population, came closer to Albay in terms of poverty incidence as of 2000 (44.1% and 44.6%, respectively). Unlike Albay, however, the Camarines Sur figures in 2000 represent an increase in poverty level from 35.1 percent in 1997.

**Table 4. Incidence, Depth and Severity of Poverty(Bicol region, 1997 and 2000)**

PROVINCE	Incidence		Depth		Severity	
	1997	2000	1997	2000	1997	2000
Albay	49.8	44.6	13.8	12.0	5.14	4.68
Camarines Norte	39.5	49.3	9.7	12.9	3.27	4.92
Camarines Sur	35.1	44.1	8.5	11.9	2.94	4.39
Catanduanes	29.6	43.2	6.7	10.7	2.21	3.56
Masbate	64.9	70.8	20.6	24.2	8.47	10.46
Sorsogon	50.3	52.9	14.6	15.1	5.60	5.31
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>2.71</b>

Source: Philippine Human Development Report 2002

## B. Household Population and Income Stratum

The acute poverty experienced in the Bicol region also finds support in the 2002 APIS data. Within Luzon, the region has the largest proportion of families (62.8%) falling within the lowest 40 percent income range. These figures represent 22.83 percentage points higher than the national figures of 40% (see Table 5). The Bicol figures closely approximate the national statistics for rural areas (60.39%) but reflect a far worse situation than the Cordillera Autonomous Region (41.4%). Also, the average family size for the region is high (5.2) relative to the other Luzon provinces, a factor which more likely contributes to the poverty of the Bicolanos.

Compared to Bicol, three other regions outside Luzon have higher proportions of families living within the lowest 40 percent income level: Eastern Visayas (63.47%), Western Mindanao (63.48%), and Caraga, with 66.51 percent (ibid.).

**Table 5. Percentage of families to total family population by average family size by income stratum, Region and Urban/Rural Residence (2002).**

Region	Total		Income Stratum			
	Number ('000)	Average Family Size	Lowest 40%		Highest 60%	
			Percent to Total	Average Family Size	Percent to Total	Average Family Size
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>15,925</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>40.00%</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>60.00%</b>	<b>5.3</b>
<b>Urban</b>	<b>7,949</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>19.54</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>80.46</b>	<b>5.2</b>
<b>Rural</b>	<b>7,976</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>60.39</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>39.61</b>	<b>5.6</b>
NCR	2,318	4.9	5.31	3.4	94.69	5.0
CAR	285	4.8	41.40	4.3	58.60	5.2
I Ilocos	849	5.0	42.40	4.2	57.60	5.5
II Cagayan Valley	577	4.7	48.70	4.2	51.30	5.1
III Central Luzon	1,627	5.1	21.20	4.2	78.80	5.3
IV Southern Tagalog	2,452	4.9	27.73	4.1	72.27	5.2



<b>V Bicol</b>	<b>939</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>62.83</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>37.17</b>	<b>5.7</b>
VI Western Visayas	1,281	5.0	50.51	4.5	49.49	5.5
VII Central Visayas	1,146	4.9	53.40	4.4	46.60	5.5
VIII Eastern Visayas	775	5.0	63.74	4.7	36.26	5.5
IX Western Mindanao	638	5.0	63.48	4.8	36.52	5.4
X Northern Mindanao	572	5.1	57.69	4.7	42.31	5.5
XI Southern Mindanao	1,129	5.1	50.66	4.7	49.34	5.5
XII Central Mindanao	540	5.1	58.70	4.7	41.30	5.6
Caraga	430	4.9	66.51	4.7	33.49	5.5
ARMM	368	5.6	56.79	5.2	43.21	6.2

Source: National Statistics Office, 2002 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS)

### C. Human Development Index and Poverty Index

A more meaningful assessment of human development is provided by the provincial human development index (HDI) and human poverty index (HPI). These two outcome-based measures for the Bicol provinces are presented in Table 6. In year 2000, Masbate ranks 72nd among the 77 provinces in terms of both HDI and HPI measures indicating it as one of the poorest performing provinces in the country. Masbate's HPI is 29.9 followed far behind by Camarines Norte in the 64<sup>th</sup> rank with 22.7. In terms of HDI-I, Sorsogon (0.512) closely trails behind Masbate's 0.433 in rank 63rd. The HDI-II measures place Camarines Norte in rank 47th next to Masbate in rank 68th (HDI-II 0.671 and 0.660, respectively).

In year 2000, the top three performing provinces in Bicol as indicated by their HDI-II and HPI measures are Camarines Sur, Catanduanes and Albay, in that order (*ibid.*). On the other hand, Catanduanes topped the HDI-I measures in the region with (0.561) followed by Albay (0.548), and Camarines Sur (0.546). In the same year, Camarines Sur emerged as the least poor among the six provinces (HPI 13.5) while exhibiting the highest human development performance along with Catanduanes (HDI-II 0.686). Catanduanes ranked highest in terms of HDI-I with the second and third closely shared by Albay and Camarines Sur (0.548 and 0.546, respectively).

**Table 6. Human development index and poverty index for Bicol provinces (2000)**

Area	Human Poverty Index		Human Development Index			
	HPI Rank	HPI	HDI Rank	HDI-I 2000	HDI-II Rank	HDI-II 2000
Albay	25	14.7	38	0.548	24	0.683
Camarines Norte	64	22.7	60	0.521	47	0.660
Camarines Sur	14	13.5	39	0.546	22	0.686
Catanduanes	15	13.6	35	0.561	23	0.686
Masbate	72	29.9	72	0.433	68	0.671
Sorsogon	46	18.3	63	0.512	36	0.507

Source: Philippine Human Development Report 2002

### D. Non-income Poverty Indicators

#### 1. Employment

The PHDR 2002 employment data for Bicol reveal a not so encouraging trend in employment, with all provinces exhibiting substantial increases in unemployment rate from 1997 to 2000. Such negative development is particularly severe in Camarines Sur and

Catanduanes, Camarines Sur displayed a 4.6 percentage-point increase in unemployment while Catanduanes registered a 4.3 percentage point increase (see Table 7). Generally, the 1997 and 2000 unemployment data do not significantly depart from the national figures. The country's unemployment rate in 1997 was 8.6, which increased to 11.1 in 2000.

The situation of underemployment, on the other hand, varies markedly among provinces both in terms of underemployment rate at specific periods and within particular periods. Thus, while underemployment declined slightly in Albay, Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur from 1997 to 2000, the reverse is observed in Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon. Catanduanes, in particular, displayed a pronounced change with a 27.1 unemployment rate in 1997 dramatically increasing to 49.7 percent in 2000. The 2000-underemployment data for the region indicate more people looking for additional employment in Albay, Camarines Sur and Catanduanes than in Camarines Norte, Masbate, and Sorsogon (ibid.).

**Table 7. Unemployment and underemployment in the Bicol region (1997 and 2000)**

Province	Unemployment		Underemployment	
	1997	2000	1997	2000
Albay	9.6%	10.3%	43.3%	41.4%
Camarines Norte	8.4	10.5	33.6	27.4
Camarines Sur	5.8	10.4	52.2	48.9
Catanduanes	6.1	10.4	27.1	49.7
Masbate	4.1	6.2	22.9	26.6
Sorsogon	10.0	13.0	23.4	25.9
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>21.9</b>

Source: *Philippine Human Development Report 2002*

## 2. Schooling

An examination of the schooling status of the population discloses that only a little more than two-thirds of the Bicol population 6 to 24 years old (70.5%) are currently attending school, closely approximating the national situation of 69 percent (see Table 8). When disaggregated by age group, a slight deviation from the national picture is observed with 60.3 percent of the Bicol children aged 6 to 12 attending school as compared to 56.8 percent countrywide. The reverse is true for the 17 to 24 age group where the proportion of those attending school in Bicol (14.2%) is slightly lower than the national level (17.5).

Overall, the disaggregated data by gender show the predominance of female population who attend school relative to their male counterparts both in Bicol and throughout the country (ibid). The difference in favor of the females is 5.4 percentage points at the national level and 8.3 in the Bicol region, indicating the greater discrepancy in the latter. Within the age groups 6 to 12 and 13 to 16, the predominance of schooling female population persists but the discrepancies are again markedly higher in Bicol compared to the national level. However, within the older age cohort (17-24) more males are in school relative to the females both at the national and local levels and the predominance of the males is observed to be greater in Bicol compared to the entire country (4.7 and 1 percentage points, respectively).

A cursory analysis of the Bicol data seems to support the observation that in poor rural areas, young female children and those old enough to be in high school are more likely to be continuing their studies compared to their male counterparts who are more pre-disposed to dropping out or quitting school in favor of working or helping in the economic activity of

the family, or because, for some reasons, they have lost interest in studying. As the present data show, the situation is reversed among the high school graduates or those belonging to the age-group 17 to 24 years. In the rural setting, male members seem to more determined to finish a college course than their female counterparts who are more likely to be getting married or starting a family at these age levels.

Three major reasons emerged in the Annual Poverty Indicator Survey (APIS) data for the non-schooling status of a large segment of the school-age population. The data provide some support to the analysis presented earlier. The three ranking reasons are consistent with both the national and Bicol situations: (1) the need for employment or to look for work; (3) not being able to afford the expenses on schooling; and (3) lack of personal interest. Other factors that hinder school-aged population from attending school are problems that need to be addressed by the government. They include: the absence of school within the barangay or the school is located at some distance and there is no regular transportation facilities or good road network, illness or disability, or having difficulty coping with school work.

**Table 8. Percent of Population 6-24 years old currently attending school by age group (Philippines and Bicol region 2000).**

Age group	PHILIPPINES			BICOL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Currently attending school	66.4%	71.8%	<b>69.0%</b>	66.6%	74.9%	<b>70.5%</b>
6 to 12 years	56.8%	56.8%	<b>56.8%</b>	59.6%	61.0%	<b>60.3%</b>
13 to 16	25.3	26.1	<b>25.7</b>	23.9	27.2	<b>25.6</b>
17 to 24	18.0	17.0	<b>17.5</b>	16.4	11.7	<b>14.2</b>

*Source: National Statistics office, 2002 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS)*

### 3. Household poverty indicators

Data on at least five non-income poverty indicators used in the APIS provide a rough assessment of the living condition of the families in Bicol. The indicators include the following: (1) type of roof construction materials; (2) presence of electricity in the home; (3) source of water supply; (4) type of toilet facility; and (5) ownership of household conveniences.

While the large majority of the families in the country (78.6%) live in houses with roofs predominantly built of strong materials, only a little more than half of those in Bicol (56.5%) dwell in similar houses (see Table 9A). The next largest proportion of Bicol families (42.9%) are living under roofs made of light materials (cogon, nipa, anahaw, etc.) The national data indicate that only 23 percent of the families live in such type of dwelling places.

Only about 65 percent of the families in Bicol have electricity in their homes (see Table 9B). This is 14.3 percentage points lower than the national figure (79%). For this reason, the proportions of families owning household electrical appliances such as stereo/VCD, television, refrigerator, and washing machine are consistently smaller than the national data (Table 9C). Wider variations at the national and local levels in the proportion of families with household conveniences are observed for refrigerator (41.1% and 23.9%, respectively) and washing machine (29% and 10.7%, respectively).

Table 9 shows that the faucet is the most common source of water supply both in the country and in Bicol (49.1% and 47%). The second most frequent source is the tubed or piped-from-well type which is used by 31 percent of the families in the country and almost 27 percent of those in Bicol. A third source which is still more common among the Bicol

households is the dug well which is used by 18 percent of the Bicol families and 9.4 percent throughout the country.

Only 67.5 percent of the families in Bicol make use the water-sealed type of toilet facility, more than a 10<sup>th</sup> (11.1%) use the closed pit, and 4.4 percent have the open pit (see Table 9E). However, a significant proportion (16.6%) of Bicol families do not have any toilet facility. Country level data disclose more than 3 out of 4 families using the water-sealed type while the rest have the closed or open pit and other types. Less than a 10<sup>th</sup> (8%) of the families in the country were reported to have no toilet facility.

**Table 9. Percent of families by selected non-income poverty indicators (2002)**

INDICATOR	PHILIPPINES	BICOL
A. <u>% of Families by Type of Roof Construction Materials</u>		
- Strong materials*/mixed but predominantly strong	78.6%	56.5%
- Light materials**/mixed but predominantly light	23.0	42.9
- Salvaged/makeshift materials/mixed but predominantly salvaged	1.2	0.7
B. % of Families with Electricity in the Home	79.0%	64.7%
C. <u>% of Families by Selected HH Conveniences</u>		
- Radio/Stereo/VCD	78.6%	70.7%
- Television	64.3	44.4
- Refrigerator	41.1	23.9
- Washing Machine	29.0	10.7
- Telephone/Cellphone	28.5	14.4
D. <u>% of Families by Main Source of Water Supply</u>		
- Faucet (owned or shared)	49.1%	47.0%
- Tubed/piped well (owned or shared)	30.9	26.6
- Dug well	9.4	18.3
- Spring/river/stream	6.1	6.1
- Peddler	3.6	1.3
- Other sources (rain, etc.)	0.9	0.6
E. <u>% of Families by Type of Toilet Facility</u>		
- Water Sealed	77.3%	67.5%
- Closed Pit	8.8	11.1
- Open Pit	4.7	4.4
- Other types	1.1	0.3
- None	8.1	16.6

\*includes galvanized iron, aluminum tile, concrete, brick stone, asbestos;

\*\*includes cogon, nipa, anahaw, sawali, etc.

Source: National Statistics office, 2002 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS)

### E. Income Inequalities

In terms of income distribution as measured by the Gini index, Table 10 shows Albay and Masbate having the greatest income inequality in year 2000 (42.1 and 38.9, respectively). Sorsogon exhibits the lowest, with 32.3. While the drop in their gini measures from 1997 to 2000 figures projects an improved income distribution for Catanduanes, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, and Sorsogon, the slight increase in income inequality exhibited by Albay and Masbate over the three-year period presents an interesting contrast. It may be noted that

in 1997, the greatest income inequality is found in Catanduanes and Camarines Norte (48.7 and 42.5, respectively).

**Table 10. Income Inequality measure -- Gini Index (Bicol region, 1997 and 2000)**

PROVINCE	Gini index	
	1997	2000
Albay	42.1	40.4
Camarines Norte	34.5	42.5
Camarines Sur	36.7	40.4
Catanduanes	38.1	48.7
Masbate	38.9	37.0
Sorsogon	32.3	36.1
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>42.9</b>

Source: *Philippine Human Development Report 2002*

### F. The Poor in the Bicol Region

Differences in the poverty situation among Bicol provinces are generally reflected in their income classification. Albay and Camarines Sur are first class provinces while Camarines Norte and Catanduanes are third class LGUs. Masbate and Sorsogon are both second class provinces.

The large majority of the poor in Bicol can be found in the agricultural sector, which includes mainly crop farmers. Other poverty groups under this sector consist of subsistence fishermen, cultural minorities and small-scale miners.

The poorest crop farmers are represented by at least three groups. One group consists of **small farm owner-cultivators** who either own the land they till or have recognized rights to till it. Another group represents the **landless rural agricultural workers** or those farmers who work in agriculture but own neither land nor recognized rights to farm the land. These are the most numerous among crop farmers in Bicol. The third and poorest farming group in Bicol is composed of **marginal upland farmers** or the subsistence farmers of marginal land found in rolling hills and on steep mountain slopes. These farmers mostly raise corn, rootcrop, vegetables and fruit trees and sometimes cultivate upland rice but receive very low returns for their products. They also comprise the most vulnerable group because they live close to areas maintained by rebel groups. They are also the most disadvantaged in terms of access to basic social services like education and health care. Given this, they also make up the group least empowered to compete in the employment market.

### G. Selected Socio-economic Indicators

Agriculture and agriculture-related economic activities represent the major sources of income of families in the region with 39.8 percent receiving income from such activities in 1997 and 41 percent in 2000.

Food was the major expenditure item of families accounting for 50.3 percent of total family expenditures in 1997 and 49.5 percent in 2000. Annual per capita poverty threshold increased from Php 10, 378 to Php 12,825 resulting in an increase in the incidence of poor families from 1997 to 2000 by about 5 percentage points. Annual inflation rate was placed at 5.7 percent in 2000 and 6.6 percent in 2001.

## **1. The Industry Sector**

As of 1999 there were a total of 30,656 establishments in the region with the greater proportion (36.9%) located in Camarines Sur. Wholesale and retail establishments comprised 52 percent of the total number of establishments.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) programs in the region generated total investments amounting to Php 6,307.2 million in 2001 representing a 39 percent increase over the 2000 level with the province of Albay accounting for 46.8 percent of the total investments in 2001. Increase in investment was also noted in three of the 6 provinces in the region.

A total of 42 establishments chose to close down or retrench in 2001 resulting in the displacement of some 730 workers.

## **2. Tourism**

An increase in the number of domestic visitors from 3.1 percent in 2000 to 5.6 percent in 2001 was noted in the region. Foreign tourist arrival dropped by 40.5 percent between 2000 and 2001. Albay was the most visited province with 33.5 percent share of the total tourist arrivals in the region in 2001.

## **3. Health and Nutrition**

The majority of deaths in 1998 (63.2%) was not attended by a qualified medical practitioner while 42 percent of children 0-7 were reported to be suffering from malnutrition in 2001 representing an improvement from 44.5 percent recorded in 2000.

# **III. The CPP-NPA Armed Conflict In Bicol**

## **A. Historical Background**

In 1968, Jose Maria Sison re-established the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The following year, the New People's Army (NPA) was founded by Bernabe Buscayno or Commander Dante in Tarlac. This was the start of a peasant mass base in the second district of this province. This also signaled the start of the so-called protracted people's war (PPW) strategy which was to continue with the revolutionary struggle in the countryside for land reform and mass base-building.

The first quarter of 1970 marked the beginning of student protest and mass actions in Manila – the so-called First Quarter Storm (FQS). In the same year the Southern Luzon Party Committee was established as the first regional committee. The following year (1971), open hostilities broke out in Southern Luzon when a group of government troopers was ambushed in San Pedro, Iriga City. In August of the same year, the bombing of Plaza Miranda took place. At around this time, the CPP urban guerilla movement was beginning to experience the effects of Marcos' repressive administration. Many of the CPP-NPA leaders went to NPA base areas in Eastern Luzon and the Bicol region. During this time, the seven CPP regional committees and six NPA operational commands were also established and by the

time Marcos declared martial law in September 1972, the preparatory committee for the NDF was already in place. The founding of the National Democratic Front (NDF) followed in April 1973.

In Bicol, a number of student and labor activists went back to their home towns to start their teach-ins and plant the seeds for region-wide expansion of the CPP-NPA organization. One of these activists was Romulo Jallores who, after conducting teach-ins in school campuses in Manila, returned to Bicol in 1971 and established his base area in the town of Tigaon in Camarines Sur on the eastern side of Mount Isarog known as *partido* area. Romulo Jallores belonged to a poor family of abaca farmers and strippers of this town.

In December 1971, Jallores, who was then known as *Kumander Tanqkad*, was seriously wounded following a bloody encounter with Philippine constabulary (PC) soldiers. He sought refuge in a relative's house in Naga where he was trapped by a PC team and gunned down. Six months after, his younger brother Ruben, also known as *Kumander Benjie*, was also killed by PC soldiers in a remote sitio in the town of Ocampo, Camarines Sur. It was publicly reported that he was killed in an encounter with PC soldiers although according to witnesses, the government soldiers cornered him and his five other companions in a hut while they were taking a rest. They were allegedly riddled with bullets from torso and down with their hands tied.

The cause that the Jallores brothers courageously fought for has lived on up to the present as they gained many followers in the short period that they organized the NPA in the *partido* area. The large crowd that flocked to the Catholic Church where their bodies were brought for viewing and the throng that attended the funeral procession signaled the growth of the CPP-NPA movement and the escalation of armed conflict in Camarines Sur and throughout mainland Bicol. In fact, the rebels who captured two Philippine Army soldiers in March 2004 in Tinambac, Camarines Sur and released after 6 months of captivity identified themselves with the Jallores command.

The wave of support to the CPP-NPA movement was rapidly fanned by the government's failure to institute agrarian reform and the declaration of martial law in 1972 which, under emergency provisions, suspended many of the constitutional rights of leaders of mass movement and political opponents. This effectively allowed human rights violations to escape investigation and charges both in the urban and rural areas.

## **B. CPP-NPA Objective and Strategies**

According to *military reports* in the Bicol Region, the common objective of the CPP/NPA, especially the local community movement, is to seize political power and eventually supplant the present democratic form of government with community rule. The government also perceives that this is being realized through the strategy of (a) encircling the cities from the countryside, and (b) conducting political, economic, social and psychological actions to drive a wedge between the government and the people through armed struggle with the use of the peasantry as the main force of the revolution. This is the PPW strategy described earlier.

Specifically, the CPP/NPA allies with various "legal communists," according to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, like the Bayan Muna, Gabriela, Anakpawis, Migrante, Suara Bangsamoro, Anak ng Bayan (*Philippine Daily Inquirer, February 1, 2004*), as well as other sectoral groups connected with them (labor groups, legal, students, peasant and

transport groups). With these objective and strategies, the CPP/NPA is deemed to adopt the Maoist Theory of Communism.

P/Sr Supt Rodolfo Mendoza also believes that another strategy that the CPP/NPA is using to realize their objectives is to divert 7% of the countryside development fund of several party list group leaders. The implication is that the rebels are “getting their anti-government campaign fund from the government coffers.” (*Philippine Star News, May 9, 2004*).

The above strategies are complemented by the imposition of revolutionary taxes, which implies some coercive force to ensure its compliance, according to rebel-turned priest Luis Jalandoni, chairman of the National Democratic Front (NDF) negotiating panel (*Philippine Star Nation, September 7, 2004*).

### **C. The Ebb and Flow of Armed Conflict in Bicol**

An update report on the peace and order situation in 1987 described the escalation and aggravation of human rights violation cases in Bicol to be the result of the sprouting of different vigilante groups and the official endorsement of President Aquino and Cardinal Sin of these groups. This was also perceived to be the result of the failed peace talks and the president’s declaration of a total war policy – the “unsheathing of the sword of war” against the CPP/NPA forces.

A later update from the justice and Peace Desk of SAC-Legazpi (October 1987) confirmed the growing number of vigilante groups in the region who were also perceived to be bandit groups sowing terror and fear among the Bicolanos. The situation was likewise believed to be compounding the problem of human rights violations in Albay province. During the period, Albay was identified as having the highest number of human rights abuses (28) followed by Sorsogon with 22, Camarines Sur, 18, and Masbate, 6. The majority of the victims were reported to be peasants and a number of workers and youth.

The above conditions paralleled the reported statistics on the strength of rebels at the national level during the period which reached its peak in the same year (1987) and gradually declined until 1996 when the dissidents started to regain slight strength. These data were matched by the national figures on the number of firearms in possession by the dissidents, which exhibited a sharp drop from 1987 to 1988 and continued to decline slowly until 1995.

A 1995 report of the Commission on Human Rights for the year 1994 stated that the insurgency situation in the Bicol region was rather deceptive. Except for Catanduanes where the peace and quiet was perceived to be real with the absence of insurgents, the peace and order situation in the mainland provinces of Sorsogon, Albay, Camarines Sur, and Camarines Norte was reported to be continuously threatened by the presence of armed rebels and criminals, if not bandits.

In Sorsogon, the NPAs have continuously engaged in liquidations of alleged government informers, robbery and harassments, according to a report by the Civil Relations Group of the AFP. The CRG report for 1994 also stated the capture or surrender of some top NPA leaders. During the same year, the third top ranking NPA leader in the CPG – ALSOG Committee was captured in Sorsogon resulting in the reorganization of the local communist hierarchy. According further to the report, the succeeding months after the capture saw a



notable decline in NPA strength in the province due to desertion, and surrender or capture of rebels. Ambuscades and extortion, however, continued as part of their armed struggle.

Year 1995 in the Bicol region was characterized by a period of lull in the intensity of armed conflict, which was believed to be a consequence of heavy military offensives in the area in 1994. Again, the national data matched this development with statistics showing the strength of NPA rebels reaching the lowest point for a short period in 1995. Despite the decline in the incidence of armed encounters, human rights abuses continued including killings for which the military and paramilitary groups were reported to be mainly responsible.

Insurgency has also given rise to human rights violations in the region, according to the same 1995 report. The 1994 records of the CHR regional office showed 92 human rights cases filed with the office with Camarines Sur and Albay having the highest number (40 and 26, respectively). The groups with the highest number of violation cases were reported to be the PNP with 32, the NPAs, 16, Philippine Army, 12, and unidentified armed men, 9.

With the NDF's abandonment of the negotiating table in May 1999 following the ratification of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), the level of armed conflict once again escalated in that year until the first quarter of 2000.

During the meeting of the Regional Development Council (RDC), Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) and the CABINET committee which was held in Naga City on June 3, 2002, the worsening insurgency situation in the region during that year was reported. To prove this, the RPOC representative cited the presence of insurgents in Catanduanes where before no rebels were sighted. The high incidence of poverty in this province, the lack of public utilities such as roads and electricity in many distant barangays, and a geographic profile that is conducive to the proliferation and mobility of insurgents were cited as major contributory factors to the growing strength of insurgents in this province.

In retrospect, the rise and fall in the degree of intensity over time during the 35 years of CPP-NPA armed struggle in Bicol may be said to be heavily influenced by major national and international developments. They include, among others: (1) the peaceful overthrow of Marcos during the 1986 EDSA revolution; (2) the failed peace talks in 1987 and Aquino's endorsement of vigilante groups; (3) the proliferation of peace coalitions and growth of organizations of peace advocates; (4) the withdrawal of the military bases; (5) the localization of the peace process through the National Unification Commission; (6) the collapse of the world communist movement; (7) the pulling out of the *Lambat Bitag* program of the government and the refocusing of AFP offensives in Mindanao; (8) the ratification of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement under Estrada's administration; and (9) the September 11 bombing of the WTO resulting in Macapagal Arroyo's redeployment of the AFP forces against the CPP-NPA rebel groups.

#### **D. Current Developments in the CPP-NPA Armed Conflict**

The depressed conditions in most rural areas in Bicol have grave implications for the further growth and expansion of CPP-NPA membership in this part of the country. The extreme poverty being experienced by families in remote upland and coastal areas, their poor access to social services and low level of education leave them very little choice for survival making them easy targets for conscientization by insurgents.

In most of the NPA base areas in Bicol, particularly the third district of Camarines Sur on the eastern section (Tinambac, Garchitorena, Caramoan, Presentacion), the third district of Albay (Libon, Ligao, Pio Duran, Guinobatan, etc.) and other areas believed to be highly influenced by the rebel groups, military operation is increasingly visible. The training of additional CAFGUs to augment military forces in their offensives has also been observed in some municipalities in Camarines Sur and Albay.

More recent developments showed heightened NPA “tactical offensives” in the Bicol region. One proof of this is the increasingly felt presence of NPA guerilla groups in Catanduanes. The most recent violent incident in this province occurred on February 14 of this year. It involved the killing of two members of Virac PNP and the aide of the Catanduanes Police Provincial Director. The two policemen were setting up a checkpoint in the area leading to the Virac airport when two men riding a motorcycle suddenly passed by and sprayed them with bullets. The responding PNP provincial director and his aide ran into a bomb explosion instantly killing the latter and seriously wounding the provincial director. The NPA guerilla group in Catanduanes claimed responsibility for the killing and the planting of the bomb.

In 2004, the rebel groups had launched frequent surprise attacks during the *pulong-pulong* of military men in the barangays of Camalig, Jovellar, Pio Duran and Ligao. Casualties were all civilians. A similar attack was also reported in Sorsogon.

The military’s hot pursuit operation against the NPAs resulted in armed encounters in the municipalities of Magdalena and Bacon in Sorsogon. At about the same period, another encounter between the military and the rebel group happened in Tinambac, Camarines Sur killing one CAFGU and injuring some NPAs.

Earlier, following the September 11 suicide bombing of the WTC building, the US has placed the CPP-NPA on its list of foreign terrorist organizations. As President Arroyo took advantage of the declaration to give legitimacy to the redeployment of the military towards NPA operations, Jose Maria Sison announced an all-out resistance to this joint US-Philippine effort against terrorism. The continuing augmentation of the AFP in Bicol by trained paramilitary groups provides evidence of GRP’s resolve to continue with the all-out war to settle the CPP-NPA insurgency.

#### **E. Front Committees of CPP/NPA in the Bicol Region**

One evidence of the increasing influence of CPP-NPA forces in the region is contained in an army press release on October 13, 2003. According to the press release,

Rebels are known before to come to Catanduanes’ southern towns of San Miguel and Pandan in the early 90s simply for rest and recreation or to hide from pursuing troops. They were mostly based in Camarines Sur. However, sources from the PA confirmed that the underground movement has established a “baby” front committee in the island initially called, “*Ang Isla Kong Pusa* (My Island Cat).” “*Pusa*” or “*Cat*” stands for Catanduanes.

Brig. Gen. Pedrito Magsino (Brigade Commanding Officer of 901<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the PA) said the rebels had active front committees in the provinces of Masbate (Larangans 83 South and 83 Central); Camarines Sur (Larangans 73-76), and the Albay and Sorsogon (Aslog) Division

(Larangans 77-78 and 79-80 respectively). The Larangan 77 and 78 is said to be headed by Iglecerio Penia alias Ka “Choy”, Larangan 79 and 80 by a certain “Ka Mustasa” and Larangans 83, South and 83 Central by a certain “Ibañez.”<sup>6</sup> A “baby” front committee was also reported being established in the islands of Ticao and Burias in Masbate but, has, remained without a call sign to date. “In Ticao-Burias we found out the operating rebels have not been given an official name by the movement. It started from a squad-size Kilusang Iskward Platoon and was decided for expansion because of the big opportunity for revolutionary tax collection in the area,” Magsino said. (As for Camarines Norte, Larangans 71-72 could be found.) (See Figure 4 for details).

#### **F. CPP/NPA Operation in Bicol (2002)**

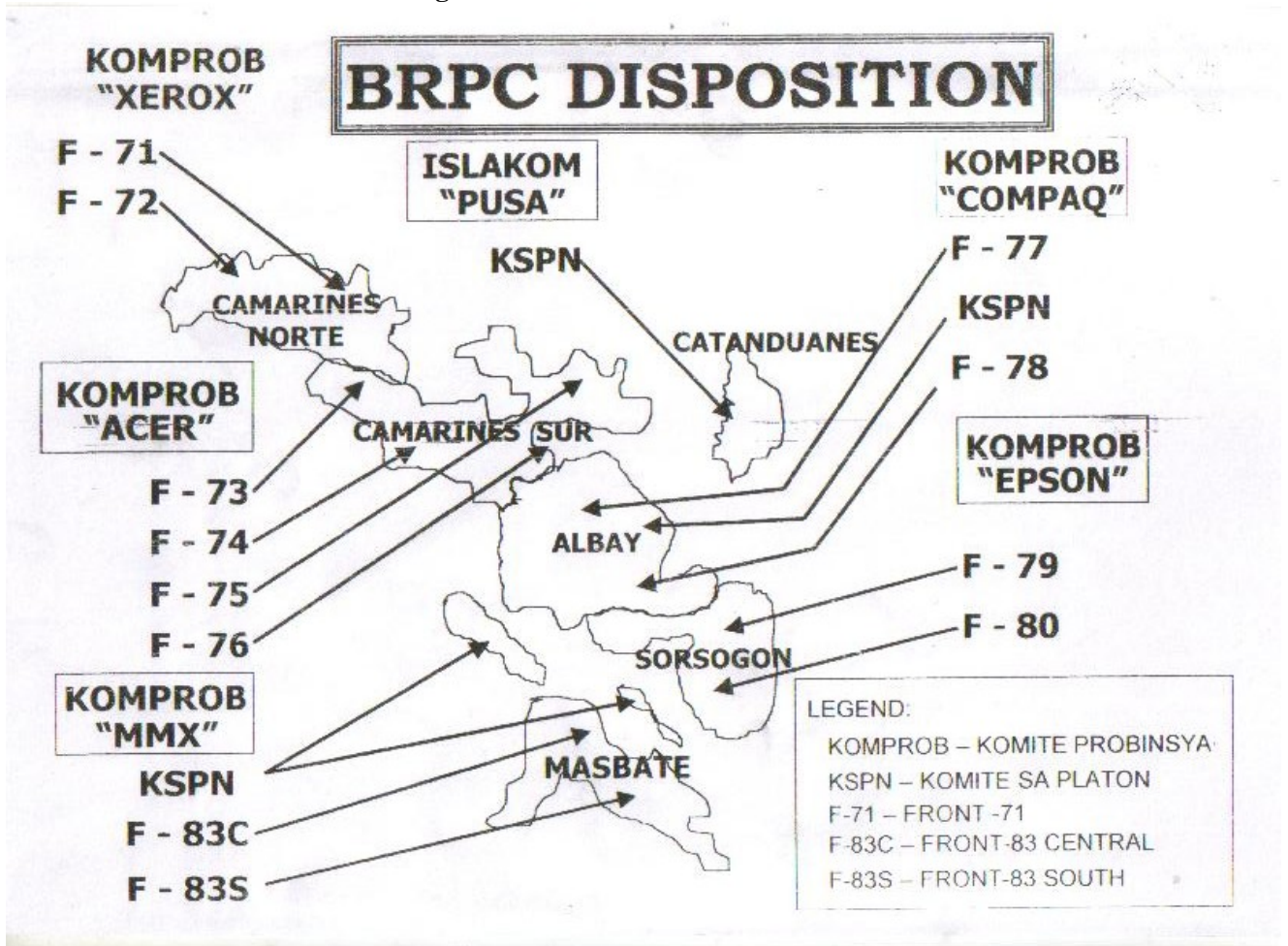
A more detailed report on the insurgency situation in Bicol by the Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) in the first quarter of 2002 disclosed the front committees operating at present under the Bicol Regional Party Committee (BRPC) of the CPP/NPA/NDF. The BRPC is composed of five (5) Provincial Party Committees (PPC) and operates in twelve (12) Guerilla Fronts Committees (GFCs) and three (3) independent Komite Seksyons sa Platoon (KSPN) throughout the region. The disposition of the five PPCs, the 12 GFCs and the 3 KSPNs are shown in Figure 4.

The Organized Threat Group (OTG), as they are referred to in the Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) report for 2003, operates in Bicol with the strength of 674 regular members as of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2002). Camarines Sur and Albay are identified to be the strongest areas (156 and 138 members, respectively), followed closely by Sorsogon, with 121. While smaller groups are noted in Camarines Norte and Masbate (96 and 80, respectively), Catanduanes is found to be the weakest area with rebels strength of only 16 members (see Table 11). As marked further by the negative variances, the strength of the rebel groups declined in almost all provinces from the last quarter of 2001 level to the first quarter of 2002 level.

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<sup>6</sup> In a recent report from the Philippine Information Agency, the leader of Larangan 80 “Ka Mustasa” whose real name is Rolando Mustasa, together with Nestor Paluyo of larangan 74 were neutralized by the military and the police along with 47 other communist terrorists.

Figure 4. BRPC Distribution



Source: RPOC Report 2003

Table 11. Strength of Organized Threat Groups by province (Bicol region 2002)

PROVINCE	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr 2001			1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr 2002			VARIANCE
	CPP	NPA	TOTAL	CPP	NPA	TOTAL	
ALBAY	82	71	153	50	88	138	-15
CAMARINES NORTE	46	48	94	35	61	96	2
CAMARINES SUR	92	70	162	41	115	156	-6
CATANDUANES	15	3	18	5	11	16	-2
MASBATE	74	32	106	52	28	80	-26
SORSOGON	52	71	123	54	67	121	-2
BRPC	95	71	166	14	53	67	-99
TOTAL	456	366	822	251	423	674	-148

Source: RPOC Report 2003

**1. Number of Firearms in Possession of the OTGs**

As of the first quarter of 2002, the number of firearms in possession of the OTG was estimated to be 770 (of different types and make). Again, the Camarines Sur OTG was reported to have the highest number of firearms (178), followed by Sorsogon (152) and Albay (140). As expected, the lowest number of firearms (24) was recorded in the weakest area which is Catanduanes (see Table 12). The number of firearms held by the OTGs in Albay and Camarines Sur in the first three months of 2004 represented a decrease from the 4<sup>th</sup>

quarter of 2001 estimates. No significant change was reported in Camarines Norte and Catanduanes during these reference periods (ibid.).

**Table 12. Number of Firearms in possession of OTGs by province (Bicol region 2002).**

PROVINCE	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr 2001			1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr 2002			VARIANCE
	HPFA	LPFA	TOTAL	HPFA	LPFA	TOTAL	
ALBAY	94	59	153	94	46	140	<b>-13</b>
CAMARINES NORTE	74	34	108	74	34	108	<b>0</b>
CAMARINES SUR	140	52	191	137	41	178	<b>-13</b>
CATANDUANES	18	6	24	18	6	24	<b>0</b>
MASBATE	45	60	105	78	17	95	<b>-10</b>
SORSOGON	74	83	157	74	78	152	<b>-5</b>
BRPC	57	17	74	57	16	73	<b>-1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>-42</b>

Source: RPOC Report 2003

## 2. Number of Communities Affected by the Rebel Groups

In terms of the number of affected barangays, Table 13 shows Masbate and Sorsogon to have the largest number of influenced and infiltrated communities as of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2002 (110 and 94, respectively). Camarines Sur and Albay which were reported to have the strongest OTG groups emerged with only 49 and 21 affected communities as of the same period. Moreover, with the exception of Catanduanes, influenced and infiltrated communities consistently displayed increasing numbers in all the provinces of Bicol.

As of the first quarter of 2002, Albay and Camarines Sur ranked highest in terms of the number of communities threatened for infiltration by OTGs (217 and 207, respectively), closely followed by Sorsogon with 181. While 101 more communities in Masbate were threatened, Camarines Norte and Catanduanes had significantly fewer areas under similar status (ibid.).

**Table 13: Number of barangays affected by OTGs by province (Bicol Region 2002).**

PROVINCE	4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr 2001			1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr 2002			
	INFLU	INFIL	TOTAL	INFLU	INFIL	TOTAL	THREATENED
ALBAY	2	11	13	2	19	21	<b>217</b>
CAMARINES NORTE	12	30	42	18	55	73	<b>64</b>
CAMARINES SUR	12	25	37	12	37	49	<b>207</b>
CATANDUANES	0	8	8	0	8	8	<b>39</b>
MASBATE	29	52	81	29	81	110	<b>101</b>
SORSOGON	12	73	85	12	82	94	<b>181</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>809</b>

Source: RPOC Report 2003

## 3. Number of Military Operations

The military in Bicol conducted a total of 13,767 operations in year 2003 consisting of 38 brigade-size operations, 64 battalion-size operations, 97 company-size operations, and 13,468 small-unit operations. As shown in Table 14, Albay, Camarines Sur and Sorsogon were the three top ranking targets of military operations conducted (4,289, 3,368 and 3,270, respectively). In Camarines Sur alone, 10 detachments were put in place in the municipality of Tinambac following the abduction of the two Philippine Army soldiers early in 2004.

These data on military operation would seem to attest to the increasing strength of the rebel groups in the Bicol region.

**Table 14. Military Operations conducted in Bicol by province (Bicol region 2003).**

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF OPERATIONS
ALBAY	<b>4289</b>
CAMARINES NORTE	<b>1802</b>
CAMARINES SUR	<b>3368</b>
CATANDUANES	<b>336</b>
MASBATE	<b>702</b>
SORSOGON	<b>3270</b>
TOTAL	13767

Source: RPOC Report 2003

#### **4. High Conflict Areas in Camarines Sur and Albay**

The disposition of Bicol Regional Party Committee in the different areas in Bicol as shown in Figure 4 is directed at strategic locations where the CPP-NPA forces are believed to be strongest. The number of guerilla front committees of the CPP-NPA operating in each province is proportionate to the number of locations in the province where the rebel groups are maintaining zones.

The CPP-NPA forces are believed to be strongest in Camarines Sur and Albay although more recently, armed encounters, atrocities and other types of human rights violations have been reported more frequently in Sorsogon and Masbate, and more recently, in Catanduanes.

The areas in Camarines Sur where the CPP-NPA forces are known to be particularly strong are situated on the eastern part of the Isarog Mountain in the *Partido* area. The Philippine Army's 42<sup>nd</sup> infantry battalion focus its operation around this area, more particularly, Tinambac, Lagonoy, the Caramoan peninsula, and Presentacion. The F-75 guerilla front movement of the CPP-NPA operates in this area. Located close by is the area maintained by F-76 GFC which adjoins the hilly and mountainous terrain on the northwestern part of Albay (see Figure 4). The F-73 GFC is present in the remote communities found on the northern end of the province comprising the municipalities of Sipocot, Libmanan and Pasacao. F-74 operates in the upland communities in the central section of the province and lies also close to the critical areas of the northwestern part of Albay.

In Albay, almost all municipalities in the third district of Albay particularly Pio Duran, Ligao, Guinobatan, Jovellar, and Libon are NPA infested, based on reports. Contiguous to Guinobatan is Camalig in the second district of Albay which is also identified as a highly critical area. Three guerilla front committees operate in the province (ibid).

## **IV. Costs And Spillovers of the CPP-NPA Armed Conflict in Bicol**

This case study focuses on the social, financial and economic costs as well as the negative and positive spillovers of the CPP-NPA armed conflict in Bicol. Project Ploughshares reported the following development resulting from the armed struggle between the Philippine government

(through the military) and the CPP/NPA. The report largely reflects the social cost linked to the present armed conflict.

- Human rights abuses, including killings, committed mostly by military and paramilitary groups. The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) investigated 185 extrajudicial killings during 1999 as compared to 201 in 1998. The CHR included killings by antigovernment insurgents in its totals.
- There were reports of the NPA recruiting children into their ranks.
- As many as 25, 000 combat-related deaths have occurred since 1969. At least 49 persons in the Bicol Region were killed in 2000, and at least three women in Barangay Pawa, Masbate in 1999 were included among the 115 persons killed nationwide.
- At least 100, 000 people are estimated to have died in the conflict in Mindanao.
- Over 50, 000 people have been displaced by the conflict.

Nationwide, other costs of the CPP/NPA and PA include the destruction of almost P66.2 million worth of properties by the rebel groups nationwide, according to Armed Forces Spokesperson Daniel Lucero (*Philippine Star Nation*, September 7, 2004). These include bombings of telecommunications sites, buses and business establishments.

Similarly, the World Bank claims that “the recurring armed conflict between government soldiers and Muslim fighters would cost southwestern Mindanao over P100 billion in the next 10 years in terms of lost or stagnant investments.”<sup>7</sup>

#### **A. Social and Political Costs in Bicol**

- In Bicol, there were reports of the NPA recruiting children into their ranks. The report of the regional peace and order council for year 2003 attributed the increase in the strength and number of firearms of the rebel groups in the Bicol region to the continuous recruitment of children and adolescents. According further to the report, the rebels recruit mostly adventurous high school students from barangay high schools and some progressive college students of some universities and state colleges in the region.
- The government believes that rebels resort to extortion activities to step up their resource and logistical buildup. The activity was in high gear during the recent national elections when they exacted money from politicians in exchange for a permit to campaign (PTC) permission to campaign. Many politicians especially in Albay were reported to have yielded to the coercive act of the rebel groups.
- As many as 25, 000 combat-related deaths have occurred since 1969. At least 49 persons in the Bicol Region were killed in 2000, and at least three women in Barangay Pawa, Masbate in 1999 were included among the 115 persons killed nationwide.

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<sup>7</sup>Social Issues in the Philippines. Available at <http://www.txtmania.com/trivia/social.php>.

- Over 50, 000 people have been displaced by the conflict. In Libmanan, Camarines Sur, some families had to move from their homes where the CPP/NPA groups are maintaining zones leaving their farms untilled after resettling in the *poblacion* (town center). Informants report that the resettlement adversely affected the productivity of the farmers.

Below are other more recent incidents that provide evidence to the increasing intensity of armed conflict in the Bicol region.

- Liquidation of a 70-year old farmer in Pilar Sorsogon
- Abduction of a couple in Luklukan Norte, Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte. According to reports, the couple was met by an armed group that included three “amazons.” The couple was later released in another barangay of the same municipality.
- About 18 armed rebels led by a member of the ISLACOM “PUSA” attacked the house of the municipal mayor of Gigmoto, Catanduanes. The raid resulted in the wounding of the mayor and three other people, the burning of three vehicles and the snatching of 2 firearms.
- Burning down of a 4-classroom school building at Cancahorao elementary School compound in Baleno Masbate. According to reports, the arson was committed by rebel groups for the failure of the teacher-in-charge to pay extortion money.
- During the opening program for a barangay road in Gubat, Sorsogon, a group of rebels divested the drivers and escorts of a congressman of their cell phones and 3 firearms while also wounding the driver and one of the escorts.

## B. Human Rights Violations in Bicol Provinces

The following insurgency-related cases of human rights violations in the Bicol Region were reported, based on the DWBS Radyo Veritas Legazpi Local News Report from January-November 2004 (Table 15). This report seems to show some inconsistencies with that of the Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) that projects Albay and Camarines Sur as having the strongest guerilla fronts. In the DWBS news, 62% of cases of human rights violation were committed in Masbate alone. The rest were spread out across the other five other provinces with Albay and Camarines Sur having relatively higher incidence of HR violations. More deaths and wounded were also reported in Masbate than in any of the five other provinces combined. Cases of displaced families were also reported to have occurred only in Masbate but none in the five other provinces.

**Table 15. Reported Human Rights Rights Violations in Bicol by province (January to December 2004).**

CASES	Albay	Cam Norte	Cam Sur	Catanduanes	Masbate	Sorsogon	Total
Death (Civilian)	2				1		3
Death (AFP)	2				11		13
Death (CPP/NPA)			3	2	2	3	10
Wounded (Civilian)	3			3		1	7
Wounded (AFP)	2				17		19
Wounded (CPP/NPA)							
Encounters/Ambush	5		3	2	4	3	17
Harassment/Fear of NPA (per location)		1	2				3



Harassment/Fear of AFP (per location)	2		6				8
Captured/Kidnapped AFP	1		2				3
Captured NPA		3			6		9
Dislocated Families					50		50
Alleged asking of PTC by the NPA/Political Reasons	1			1		2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>146</b>

## 1. Report on Albay

Some militant groups reported that military troops in Albay have been harassing the residents in Barangays *Bariw* and *Palanog* in the municipality of Oas, although the military, thru Col. Serafin Raymundo, spokesperson for the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had denied the allegations. He actually, challenged the militant groups to present their evidence regarding military harassments (*August 13 and 1,7 2004 Local News Reports*). Earlier, however, *Bayan Bikol* had presented to the media the victims of harassments at the Antonio's Tuna and Grill in Albay District (*April 23, 2004 Local News Report*). In addition, the residents of the said barangays would like the military groups to move out from their locale due to fear, according to Eva Peña, regional coordinator of *Anak Pawis Bicol* (*August 6, 2004 Local News Report*).

Other related cases in Albay are presented below. It will be noted that most of the reported cases of human rights violation and armed encounters occurred in municipalities located in the third district of Albay, the most critical area in the province. The guerilla fronts operating in these areas consist of the F-77, KSPN, and F-78 under the COMPROB "COMPQ).

- kidnapping of 1 CAFGU in Camalig, Albay (*August 27, 2004 Local News Report*);
- death of 2 AFP soldiers in Libon (*Feb. 14, 2004 Local News Report*) and Daraga (*Nov. 12, 2004 Local News Report*);
- 4 ambush/encounters – Libon, Albay (*Feb. 12 and 14, 2004 Local News Reports*), Allang, Ligao City<sup>8</sup> (*Feb. 5, 2004 Local News Report*), Barangay Catuma, Guinobatan, Albay (*Feb. 10, 2004 Local News Report*), Barangay Bonga, Ligao City (*Oct. 1, 2003 Ligao PNP Report*), and Barangay Calabidongan, Camalig (*November 21, 2004 Local News Report*);
- 3 wounded civilians (2 women and 1 girl) and 1 dead (a boy) (*Feb. 5, 7, 9 & 11 Local News Reports*), and 1 dead - man;
- 2 wounded AFP (*Oct. 1, 2003 Ligao PNP Report, and Nov. 12 Local News Report*); and
- 1 allegedly asking for permit to campaign by the NPA (*April 5 Local News Report*).

In addition, based on Camalig PNP blotter reports, two army detachments in Camalig, particularly Barangays Iluluan and Taladong, were harassed by DTS/NPA on November 29, 2002 and April 21, 2003, respectively. No casualties were reported from both sides. In Libon, Albay, the following (10) cases were reported to the PNP Libon Station:

<sup>8</sup> The Allang (Ligao City) ambush, wounded and casualties were validated by the Ligao PNP Reports, as well as by the Commission on Human Rights V report for 2004.

- Cases of Murder/Homicide of 8 men on the following dates and places, April 17, 1998 at Sitio Lolombon, Brgy. Macabugos; January 13, 1998 at Sitio Malobago, Brgy. Buga; September 21, 2002 at Sitio Paclas, Brgy. Zone 4; January 29, 2002 at Brgy. Mabayawas; February 10, 2004 at Brgy. San Pascual; June 12, 2003 at Brgy. Apud; January 12, 2003 at Brgy. Molosbolos; and just recently, December 23, 2004 at Brgy. Buga; and
- Two (2) cases of illegal possession of firearms – October 24, 2001 at Brgy. Caguscoc and June 28, 2003 at Brgy. Alongong.

From 1999 up to the present, the following insurgency related cases were recorded at the Jovellar PNP station:

- 3 cases of murder on January 2, 2000 at Barangay Quitinday (by 2 unidentified men believed to be NPAs); on Jan. 22, 2002 at Brgy. Calzada (by 3 unidentified men believed to be NPAs); and on November 16, 2002 at Brgy. San Roque (by 7 armed men believed to be NPAs).
- 2 threat cases – on February 13, 2000 at Brgy. Quitinday by an NPA; and on February 15, 2003 at Sitio Maturogturog, Brgy. Bautista by an allegedly NPA member.
- 1 robbery/hold-up – on March 5, 1999 at Brgy. Florista by 4 unidentified armed men (NPA). The estimated costs of the properties (appliances – P6,495.00 and jewelries – P1,000.00) taken amounted to P7, 495.00.
- 1 case of abduction of a World War II veteran since August 13, 1983 from Brgy. Iraya, Guinobatan, Albay; and
- 1 apprehension of 2 women possessing subversive documents on August 28, 2004.

It is noteworthy that the recorded number of cases at PNP police stations in Albay does not match the number of cases reported by the DWBS, as well as that of the Commission on Human Rights Region V Report.

## 2. Report on Camarines Sur

Six locations in Camarines Sur were said to be harassed by the AFP troops – Mabaludbalud, Tigaon (*April 19, 2004 Local News Report*), Tinambac, Caramoan, Presentacion, Garchitorena (*April 14, 2004 Local News Report*), and del Carmen, Lagonoy (*March 10, 2004 Local News Report*),<sup>9</sup> while two incidents of NPA harassments of police outpost and army detachment were reported – Barangay Tandaay, Nabua and Barangay Cabanbanan, Balatan (*March 9, 2004 Local News Report*).

In addition, 3 encounters of the CPP/NPA and the AFP were also reported (*Jan. 10 & 19, March 3 & 13, 2004 Local News Reports*) – Barangay Bahaw, Libmanan, Sitio Bakilid, Libmanan, and Tinambac respectively, which resulted in 3 deaths on the part of the NPAs, and capturing of 2 AFP members.<sup>10</sup> For details of similar cases in other provinces, please refer to appendix A.

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<sup>9</sup>The six locations identified above were the site of the alleged harassment and abductions that the military instigated in connection with the capture of two soldiers of the Philippine army in March 2004. No specific details were reported.

<sup>10</sup>This is an earlier report regarding the capture of the two members of the Philippine army in Tinambac.

### 3. On other Bicol provinces

**Camarines Norte.** Three members of NPA were captured at Barangay Plaridel, Panganiban, Camarines Norte, while they were allegedly having extortion activities at a certain Teodicia Jerusalem (March 9, 2004 Local News Report).

**Catanduanes.** Based on reports, almost 100 armed men allegedly members of the NPA, ambushed Mayor Armando Guerero of Gigmoto, Catanduanes possibly due to political reasons. The mayor and his two bodyguards were reportedly wounded on the said ambush (Jan. 22, 2004 Local News Report). In addition, another encounter between the members of the NPA and the PA happened in San Andres, Catanduanes, which resulted to the death of 2 members of the NPA (Feb. 28, 2004 Local News Report).

**Masbate.** Four encounters were reported in Masbate particularly in Barangay Quiromingo, San Pascual; Mandaon, 358<sup>th</sup> engineering brigade of the PAF, and Milagros, Masbate. Out of these encounters, 1 civilian, 11 members of the AFP (8 PNP, 1 PAF, 2 PA), and 2 NPA were reportedly killed; seventeen members (13 PAF, 4 PNP) of the AFP, and 4 four members of the NPA were wounded; 6 members of the NPA were captured, and 50 families were dislocated (Feb. 2, 5, 17, 18, 20, and April 14, 2004 Local News Reports).

**Sorsogon.** Three encounters were reported in Sorsogon for 2004 – Barangay Pandan, Castilla, Sorsogon; 2<sup>nd</sup> district and Barangay Lamboan, Irosin, Sorsogon – which resulted to the death of 2 NPA, and apparently another one in Juban, Sorsogon, and 1 wounded civilian (Jan. 10, March 2, 18, Sept. 8, Nov. 25, 2004 Local News Reports). Out of the three encounters, two had been link to political reasons, like the asking of the NPA of the permit to campaign, as well as the resistance of two political figures to the said request (Jan. 10, 16, 20, 23, March 17 and 18, 2004 Local News Reports).

#### C. Cases of Human Rights Violations based on CHR Region V Reports

The Commission on Human Rights Region V has recorded insurgency-related human rights violation in five of the six provinces of the Bicol region. This further highlights the tremendous social cost of the CPP/NPA armed struggle in Bicol (see Table 16). As evident from the data, the highest number of HR violations occurred in Albay (39), Camarines Sur (19) and Sorsogon (12).

**Table 16. Summary of human rights violation cases related to armed conflict in the Bicol region by province (Bicol region 2000-2004).**

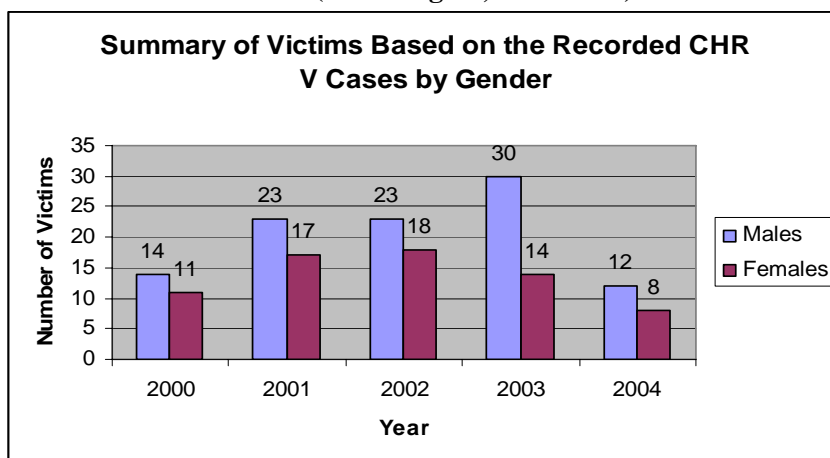
CASES	Albay	Camarines Norte	Camarines Sur	Catanduanes	Masbate	Sorsogon	Total
Killing of Civilian by the NPA	16	2	4	4		8	34
Killing of AFP by the NPA	5	3	1	2		3	14
Killing of CPP/NPA by the PA	4					1	5
Killings of Civilian by the PA	3		1				4
Killings of Civilian by the NPA/PA (Crossfire Victims)	1		2				3

Encounters/Ambush	2						2
Harassment/Fear of PA/Grave Threats (per location)	4		4				8
Less Ser. Physical Injuries by the NPA	1						1
Less Ser. Physical Injuries by the PA	1						1
Serious Physical Injuries by the PA	1						1
Damage to Property by the PA			1				1
Theft/Robbery by the PA			3				3
Torture/Mauling by the PA			2				2
Acts of Lasciviousness by the PA/PNP	1						1
Unlawful arrest by the PA			1				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>81</b>

### 1. Number of HR violation victims

Referring to Table 16, above, out of the 81 cases of human rights violation, a total of 170 are recorded (see Figure 5). There are significantly more male victims (102 or 60%) than female ones (68 or 40%). The pattern of differences is repeated each year except in 2003 when the largest number of male victims was recorded (30), which is 68% of the total of male and female victims. Correspondingly, this also represents the year when fewer women relative to men fell victims to human rights violation (32%).

**Figure 5. Number of human rights violation victims by gender and year (Bicol Region, 2000-2004)**



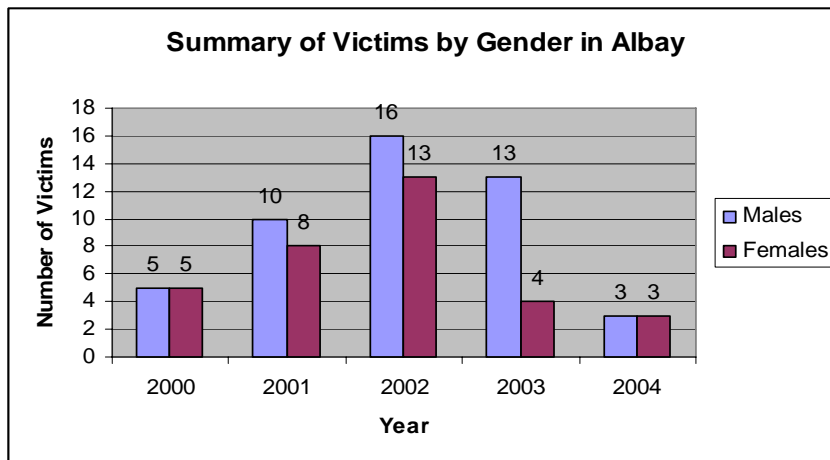
## 2. Number of HR violation victims by gender and province

### *Albay and Camarines Sur*

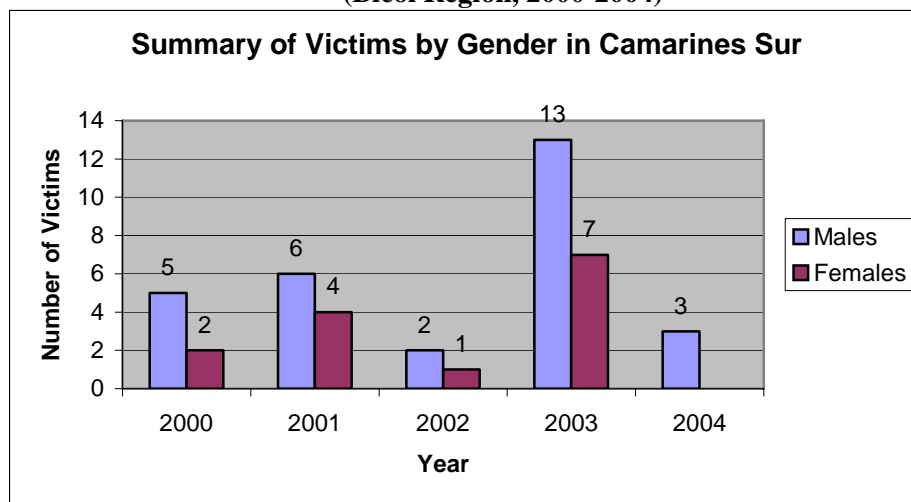
The distribution of HRV victims by gender in Albay and Camarines Sur from year 2000 to 2004 is shown in Figures 6 and 7. Comparatively, the data show Albay as having significantly more human rights violation victims than Camarines Sur during the 5-year period (80 and 43, respectively).

As noted, the largest number of HRV victims in Albay was recorded in 2002 (29), of whom 45% were women. While the number of women victims closely approximated the number of male victims in 2002, substantially more male victims were reported in 2003 relative to female victims (13 and 4, respectively). There are not many victims of human rights violations recorded in 2004. In Camarines Sur, the highest number of HRV victims was recorded in 2003 with the male victims accounting for 65% of the total.

**Figure 6. Number of human rights violation victims in Albay by gender and year (Bicol Region, 2000-2004)**



**Figure 7. Number of human rights violation victims in Camarines Sur by gender and year (Bicol Region, 2000-2004)**

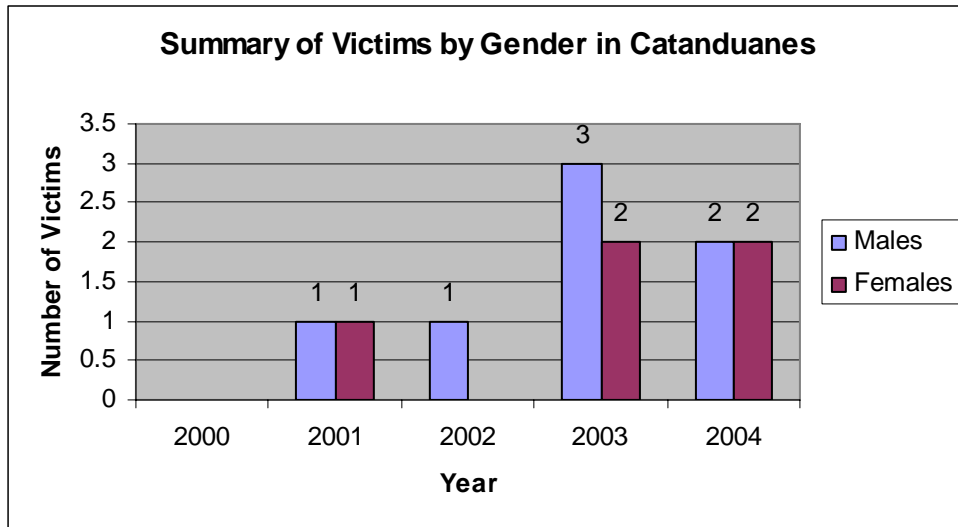


*Catanduanes and Masbate*

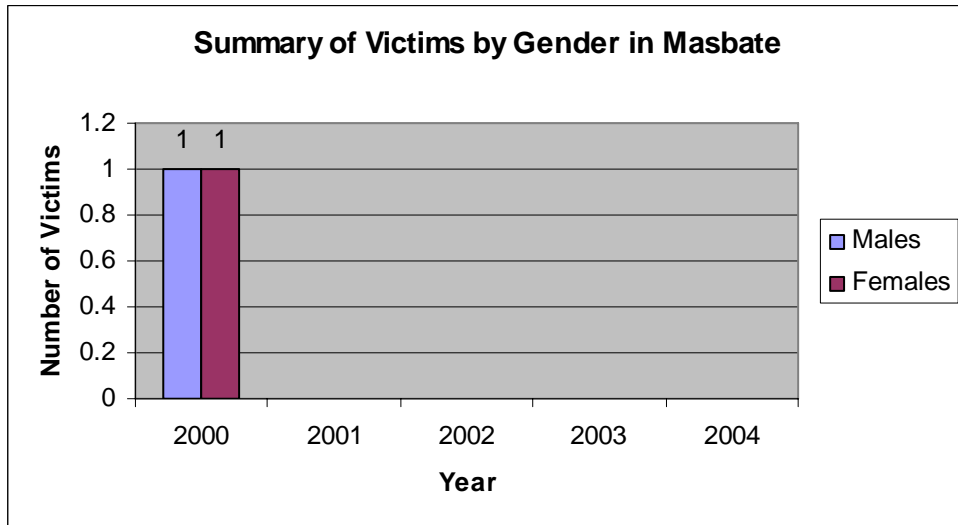
The relatively late exposure of the island province of Catanduanes to armed conflict due to insurgency is reflected in Figure 8, which show a negligible number of HR violation victims in 2001 and 2002. A rise in the number of male and female victims is noted in 2003 victims.

9. The CHR in region V has no complete data for the 5-year period as shown in Figure

**Figure 8. Number of human rights violation victims in Catanduanes by gender and year (Bicol Region, 2000-2004)**



**Figure 9. Number of human rights violation victims in Masbate by gender and year (Bicol Region, 2000-2004)**



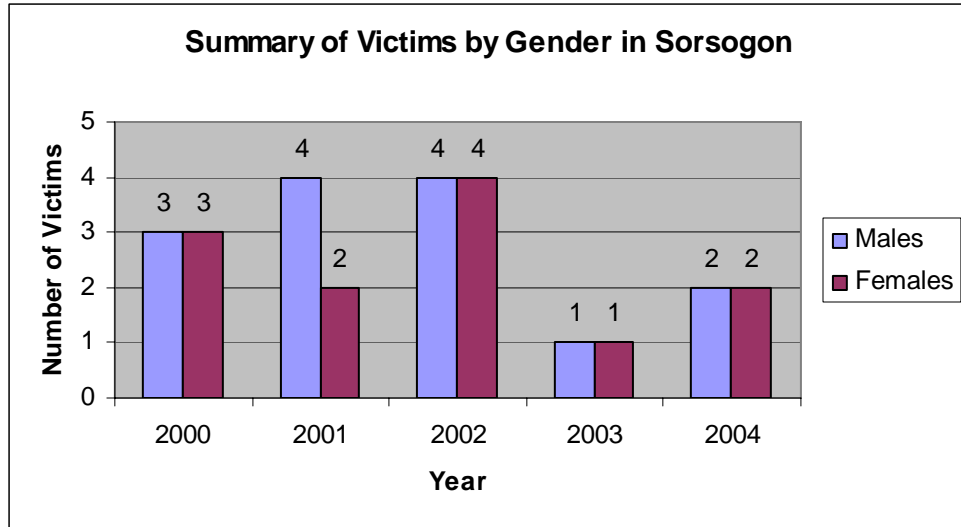
*Sorsogon and Camarines Norte*

The more intense human rights violations in Sorsogon as recorded by the CHR are clearly reflected in Figure 10. While the data show a rise in the number of victims from 2000 to 2001

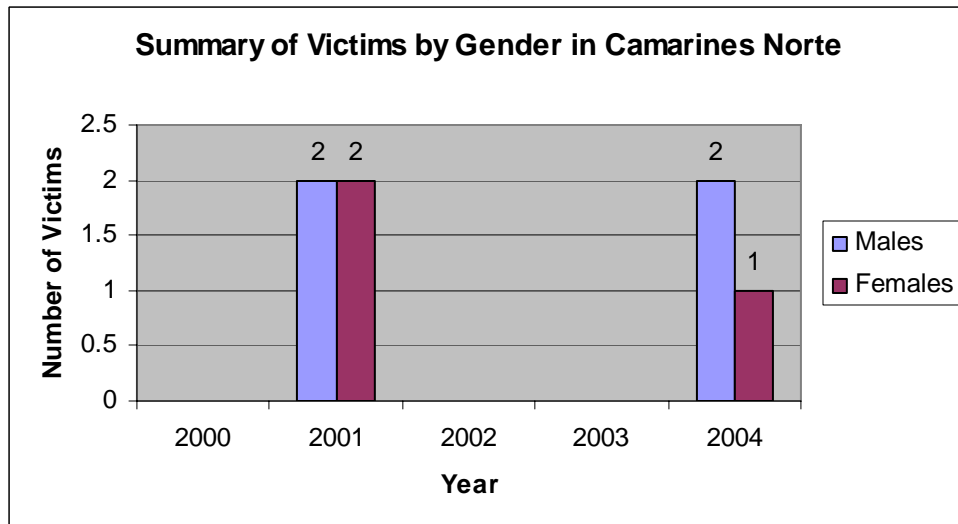
and 2002 and a decline to a much lower number than the 2000 level, only in year 2001 was a discrepancy in the number of male relative to the females was recorded. In 2000, 2003 and 2004, there were as many male and female victims of human rights violations in Sorsogon.

The CHR has similarly provided incomplete figures on the number of HR victims in Camarines Norte as indicated in Figure 11. In 2000, there were as many male and female victims. A discrepancy is noted in 2004.

**Figure 10. Number of human rights violation victims in Sorsogon by gender and year (Bicol Region, 2000-2004)**



**Figure 11. Number of human rights violation victims in Camarines Norte by gender and year (Bicol Region, 2000-2004)**



### *Cases of Human Rights Violations in Camarines Sur (March- August 2004)*

On March 1, 2004, two soldiers of the Philippine Army were captured during a gunfight at Sitio Caramboan, Barangay Bataan, Tinambac, Camarines Sur. The two, Army 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Ronaldo Fidelino, commanding officer of the Army's 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion, and Private First Class Ronel Nemeno, were held captive for a period of five months and 18 days by "Ka Rasel" of the Romulo Jallores Command. It was reported in the local news that Fidelino's group was on their way to the mountain barangays of Tinambac to provide security to the villagers complaining of extortion activities of the rebels when they were ambushed at Barangay Bataan.<sup>11</sup> The two soldiers were released from the hands of the rebels on August 18, 2004 of in Presentacion, Camarines Sur.

There is a long list of abductions and killings connected with the rescue operation for the captured two army soldiers. In a period of 5 months, more than 31 human rights violations were committed allegedly by the Philippine Army. This is in addition to 240 individuals of Barangay Salvacion, Tinambac Camarines Sur who were forced to evacuate to escape harassment. The fact finding missions of Karapatan, Bayan and other cause-oriented groups yielded the following reports on human rights violations. The cases have been documented based on the testimonies of the victims themselves who escaped death and other witnesses. The detailed listing and specific human rights violation committed are presented in Appendix A. The listed HR violations also included cases perpetrated in southern NPA-based areas in Bato and Bula.

In almost all of the HR violation cases, the persons allegedly responsible were identified with the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army. Many were also identified as members of the CAFGU. The incidents recorded occurred between March 1 and April 1, 2004 and most of the violations involved killing and abduction, arbitrary arrest and detention, illegal search, physical assault and torture, grave threats and coercion, and illegal trespassing to dwellings. The fear engendered by the harassment led to the mass evacuation of some 240 individuals. The areas where most of these HR violations were committed are located in barangays of Tinambac – the municipality where the abduction of the two army soldiers took place. Specifically, these barangays included Bataan, Antipolo, Salvacion, San Roque, Banga, and Cawaynan, all in the municipality of Tinambac. HR violations linked to the kidnapping of the two soldiers reached as far as some remote barangays of the municipality of Lagonoy.

The woman named Virgie Velmen in the list was found to be raped and chopped into several pieces.

In Garchitorena, a suspected NPA was picked up by the military. For three days he had been missing. He was later discovered buried 3 kilometers away from the place where he was picked up, with three gunshot wounds on the chest and with his head busted by a large rock.

About 500 families in Barangay Bulalakao Presentacion were displaced when men posing as NPAs started harassing them. Because of a previous incident when military soldiers also posed as NPAs, the families immediately vacated the area. People were terrorized when the men started hopping from house to house to flush out suspected rebels.

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<sup>11</sup>KIs reported that the presence of the two soldiers was part of the military operation of the Cabanbanan, Calabanga-based detachment. Residents around the area are mute in the tax collection activities of the rebels for fear of being harassed.



### ***Other HR Violations in Camarines Sur***

Documents of fact-finding missions of Karapatan have disclosed harassment activities of the military in San Rafael Cararayan in Naga City involving a 500 hectare land which has been surveyed by DAR and declared as ARC by the city government. The tenants were issued eviction order 3 times with the support of the local PNP. Two trucks of demolition teams have also reached the area to execute the eviction order. The victims believe that the military are being used by the landlords

In Pacol, Naga City, 30 families occupying 98 hectares of land were ordered to stop their farming activities by hired goons of the alleged owner. The area, which had been planted with 200 coconut trees, was opened to cows to serve as pasture land. The intention was to destroy the coconut trees, which gradually died when the ground got saturated with cow urine. This area is the focus of massive urban development in Naga City. The expected rise in land value as a result of development was enough to motivate unscrupulous individuals to claim ownership of land in the area cited.

In Lagonoy and Caramoan, Camarines Sur, human rights violations are also rampant. A barangay captain was killed in the area while a leader of Bayan is facing libel suit when the case was projected to the media. In the same area, there were also reports that some people were tagged as NPAs and were forced to sign surrender papers.

A parallel case was reported in Sorsogon a few months ago where a mass surrender of members of the CPP-NPA was reported. This was later denied by the identified surrenderees reporting that they went to the town to attend an activity when their names were suddenly called declaring them as a voluntary surrenderee.

## **D. Financial and/or Economic costs**

### **1. Destruction to properties**

The extent of financial losses resulting from the armed conflict may be gauged from the following recent bombing incidents and destruction to properties perpetrated by rebel groups in the Bicol region. The cases of destruction to properties are believed to be the rebels' act of retaliation to the owner's failure to meet their demand for revolutionary tax.

- Globe Cell Site, Bubulusan, Guinobatan, Albay on September 4, 2003
- Globe Cell Site, San Roque, Masbate on March 6, 2003
- Smart Cell Site, Travesia, Guinobatan, Albay on October 26, 2002
- Globe Cell Site, Sorsogon on October 17, 2002
- RCPI/Byantel, Quinarabasahan, Bula, Camarines Sur on October 5, 2002
- Burning of Philtranco, and Raymond Buses in Ligao, and Ragay, Camarines Sur respectively.
- Burning of St. Jude Bus (or Buban Bus) on July 23, 2002 in Brgy. Libod, Camalig, Albay (Camalig PNP Records)

- Burning of Philtranco Bus on January 5, 1998 at Sitio Malobago, Barangay Buga, Libon, Albay (Libon PNP Records); and
- Burning of a heavy equipment (grader) while parked at the project site of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) at Barangay Busac, Oas, Albay by four unidentified men believed to be CTs (Oas PNP report)

The estimated cost of damage to the above properties was not disclosed by the concerned companies or agencies. According to informants, the management simply wanted to forget the unpleasant incidents; and that they do not keep a record of them. Some of the cost estimates gathered are presented in Table 17, below.

**Table 17. Estimated Costs of Damaged/Burned Properties by Allegedly NPAs (1998-present)**

<b>Company/Agency/Destroyed Properties</b>	<b>Estimated Costs of the Damaged Properties</b>	<b>Total (in pesos)</b>
Philtranco Buses (1 aircon and 1 ordinary)	P11.5 + 7 million	P18.5 million
Raymond Bus (ordinary)	P5 million	P5 million
St. Jude Bus (first class)	P1.2 million	P1.2 million
<b>Total</b>		<b>P24.7 million</b>

As to the approximate cost of damages to cell sites attacked by NPA guerilla groups in Bicol an informant puts it from 1 to 2 million per cell site if only the base is destroyed. A totally destroyed cell site may cost anywhere between 10 to 20 million to rebuild according to another knowledgeable informant.

***Burning down of a Cement Factory in Brgy. Palanog, Camalig, Albay.***

According to the Camalig PNP Reports, on November 29, 2002, at around 10:00 in the evening, a group of about 100 heavily armed NPA/DTS attacked and, with the use of gasoline, set fire on the Palanog Good Found Cement Factory. Damages included the cement mill, panel board, warehouse, computers, and the machine house but no casualties were reported. The armed men also confiscated six (6) 12 gauge shotguns and five (5) caliber 38 revolvers from the security guards.<sup>12</sup>

The burning incident involving the Palanog Cement Factory was confirmed by four (4) key informants, who are all residents of the said place. However, they claimed that there was no actual combat or armed conflict that happened in their barangay. They also added that, because of the presence of both the military and NPA forces in the area, residents of the barangay are discouraged from putting up small-scale businesses (e.g., sari-sari stores) due to rampant collection of revolutionary tax by the NPAs. Related to this, some informants also think that other people might be discouraged to put up a business in their barangay if the illegal collection persists.

**2. Revolutionary Tax Collection**

Huge amounts of money are funneled into the hands of Bicol NPA guerilla groups in the form of revolutionary tax which, from their perspective, is a legitimate way of generating

<sup>12</sup> The Goodfound Cement Factory did not give actual estimated costs of the said properties. Just like the other companies, their management also wanted to forget the said burning incident.

funds for the revolutionary government. Although most people perceive the system as plain and simple extortion, many business owners give in to the demands of the NPAs for fear of harassment.

Taxes are collected from farmers every harvest time, from fisherfolk, from small businesses in the community like Videoke bars and sari-sari stores to government projects and private contractors for infrastructural projects (roads and bridges, electrification, irrigation, and other civil works). The range of revolutionary tax imposed is anywhere between 5 to 10 percent of the project cost regardless of the project. A civil engineer key informant puts the estimated cost of revolutionary tax at Php100,000 assuming a project cost of 1 million for the building of a one-kilometer road.

The costliest projects in terms of NPA revolutionary tax are the cell sites of the two major telecommunication networks (Smart and Globe) in the country. The rebel group demands from 50 to 200 thousand pesos as yearly tax per site from the two companies. Per interview with a reliable informant who has access to inside information, the NPA group charges as much as 500,000 for a newly set up cell site. The frequent attacks on cell sites seem to indicate the company's inability to meet the tax demand of the rebel group.

The rebels were reported to have an organized system of tax collection. The group has its own finance officer. Some barangay officials were also reported to be working with the NPAs as tax collectors.

#### *The case of Pioduran, Albay*

Based on the study of Rosco (2004), the following cases of revolutionary tax collections were noted in Pio Duran, in the third district of Albay, as revealed by some key informants:

Barangay officials are paying one thousand pesos (P1,000.00) as revolutionary tax to the allegedly members of the NPA every quarter. This is broken down as follows: six hundred pesos (P600.00) from the council, and four hundred pesos (P400.00) from the internal revenue allotment (IRA) of the barangay.

In the case of "Madam Nelly", a businesswoman, alleged members of the NPA are said to be asking eight thousand pesos (P8,000.00) a year as revolutionary tax. However, since Madam Nelly cannot afford the said amount, "it was reduced to one thousand pesos (P1,000.00) yearly, in addition to the other needs that the members of the NPA are asking. These can be a sack of rice, cigarettes, bags, etc.

Landowners like "Sir Nestor and Sir Inngo" usually pay revolutionary tax everytime they harvest coconut (i.e. after every 45 days), or upon receiving demand letters from alleged members of the NPA group in the area.

When asked about their views regarding revolutionary tax collections by the NPAs, they said that they give in to the requests of the alleged NPA members for their own protection against "bad elements" or robbery, since their business is open until late at night;<sup>13</sup> or for their own security – since they could not say "no" to their request. Others, on the other hand, would consider it as a form of help or assistance, or "donation" to the revolutionary movement.

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<sup>13</sup> Business was not mentioned by the KIs for security reasons

As for politicians, paying revolutionary taxes is favorable to them, because it allows them to campaign in upland areas without the interference of the members of the NPA. However, according to some reliable informants, the paying of revolutionary taxes reduces economic power – by losing to the NPAs resources “that would otherwise be possessed by (the) individuals particularly the taxpayers.” And although they are in fact against it (because they consider it as a form of extortion), they cannot complain to the police authorities because they know it could put them in trouble.

### ***Permit to campaign***

The PTC during election time is another source of funds for the rebel groups. In some cases the candidates in the congressional seat make some compromise with the rebels to give them a certain percentage of their countryside development fund allocated for the congressional district. For local candidates who can ill-afford to pay large sums, the rebels ask for material needs such as cell phones or two-way radios, or even laptops for their use.

### **3. Foregone Investments and Lost Opportunities**

One glaring evidence of negative spillover of the CPP-NPA armed conflict is its adverse effect on the growth and development of the area where the insurgents maintain a stronghold. Some clear cases of foregone investments and opportunities to improve the social and economic condition of the poor are presented here.

It has been reported that the \$50-Million worth of World Bank project in Bicol, i.e. the Community Based Resource Management Project (CBRMP), may have been prevented from taking off, after some members of the NPA reportedly sent letters to the LGU project coordinators asking them to discontinue their activities. These cases were reported in the municipalities of Castilla and Magallanes in Sorsogon, San Miguel in Catanduanes, and Presentacion and Bato in Camarines Sur (Calara 2002). A follow-up inquiry revealed that the CBRMP in Presentacion was indeed discontinued. The municipalities mentioned are all NPA strongholds in Sorsogon and Camarines Sur.

In the same town of Presentacion, Camarines Sur, a marble-cutting industry was started using local resources in the area. According to reports, the industry was discontinued due to the very high cost of revolutionary tax that the NPA insurgents were demanding from the owners.

Barcia (2003) has also reported that the CPP-NPA groups are writing banks and/or traders in Bicol asking them to pay revolutionary taxes; some of them already “started paying such taxes to the NPA for fear of reprisal.” As for its implication, “one of the businessmen said that insurgency, as well as the unstable peace and order situation have been discouraging investors from setting up business in Bicol.” A serious repercussion of this practice might be the loss of opportunity for local producers to market their products with lower transportation costs.

Parallel cases were reported concerning entrepreneurs who prefer to put up their establishments (agricultural supplies/equipment, rice mills or metal craft) in the town centers and not anywhere outside in order to evade tax collection by NPA rebels.

Similarly, plans for putting up additional cell sites and expansion of telecommunication lines in Bicol were reported to be frequently deferred for an extended period of time pending search for a suitable place in order to avoid the high tax requirement

of the NPA groups or the destruction of cell sites by the same group in case of non-payment. As earlier presented in this report, as of 2002, only 14.4 percent of the families in Bicol have access to cellular phones or telephones while countrywide, more than twice this proportion (28.5 percent) enjoy the convenience of such facilities. Addressing the shortage of these facilities by expanding the telecommunication network is hampered by this system of taxation of the NPAs group. It was also reported that, in some areas, telecommunication networks solicit the services of military men to guard the relay tower.

In Albay, a key informant tells about a 72-hectare farmland in Guinobatan owned by the Catholic Church which became due for land reform. Two years ago, the Church was served notice by the DAR to accomplish the necessary documents for the transfer of ownership. The whole tract of land had already been assigned to the rightful tenants. However, when the geodetic engineer from DAR started to conduct the land survey, he was harassed and manhandled by a group of NPAs who also confiscated the surveying instruments. The church attempted to request for a dialogue with the rebels regarding the problem but failed. As a result, the tenants lost their legitimate claim to ownership of the farmland as provided under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

## **E. Positive and Negative Spillovers**

### **1. Geographic Impact**

As described in the earlier part of the report, the hilly and mountainous terrain of the region makes it very conducive for the growth and movement of rebel groups. Catanduanes has been reported to have been infiltrated by the rebels where before no NPAs were sited. The Caramoan peninsula, which is one of the critical areas in Camarines Sur is very close to Catanduanes although the usual route taken to reach the province is by boat via the Tabaco port in Albay. The recent fearless attack on the house of the mayor of Gigmoto in this province apparently signaled the escalation of armed conflict in this province.

Libon in Albay is a municipality most frequently visited by NPAs. The PNP identified at least 15 of these barangays: Alongong, Baris, Buga, Nogpo, Molosbolos, Macabugos, Tambo, Sampongan, Malabiga, Mabayawas, Caagoscoc, Talin-talin, San Jose, Harigue, and Libtong. These are mostly upland barangays and can be reached across mountains from Bato and Balatan in Camarines Sur.

Similarly, the long meandering road from Daraga, Albay to Sorsogon is bordered by rolling hills some of them steep and highly elevated especially in interior municipalities like Castilla and Gubat, the two identified critical areas in Sorsogon. These two municipalities and its surrounding areas are the targets of military operation in the province.

Camarines Norte is also quite accessible from Camarines Sur through the Bicol National Park. On the northwestern end of the province lies the critical areas of Labo, Paracale and Panganiban which adjoin Quezon province through Santa Elena. Quezon is also accessible from the railroad towns of Lupi, Ragay and Del Gallego in Camarines Sur. These three towns are traversed by Quirino highway. Tracing the direction of the railway, the highway provides a direct route to Bicol from Quezon. The Quirino highway was a welcome relief to most Bicolanos as it has shortened the travel distance from Bicol to Naga by at least two hours. Before the completion of the highway, the usual route taken was via Camarines Norte. It was reported that the construction of the highway took several years to complete due to NPA harassment activities in the area. There are no documents to determine how long the road project was derailed before the Bicolanos finally benefited from it.

## **2. Intergenerational Impact**

The effect of deaths in the family in the hands government elements for a cause that is believed to be worth fighting for may not exactly be a deterrent for the living members to grasp the ideology of the dead ones for fear of meeting the same fate.

The story of the Jallores brothers of Tigaon may be viewed as a microcosm of the path that families of rebels have taken. Their sister Gavina, who used to go after Rommel while attending rallies and demonstrations to persuade him to go home, had a complete change of ideology after the death of his brothers. The Jallores brothers became a source of pride for Gavina and her mother and they drew strength from the many people who supported them. They had embraced the new ideology and instilled this among the younger members of the families. The nephews eventually joined the movement and two more younger cousins, the Pilapil brothers Ramon and Jesus who used to be seminarians in their high school days also died in bloody encounters with the military. Ramon was 21 while Jesus was 22 when they met their death.

Families of rebels are certainly living in poverty and deprived of the benefits of education in the absence of a provider, a cycle that is repeated in the succeeding generation. Similarly, orphaned children of rebels including those of the military stand to suffer most from the loss in terms of better education and opportunities for a better future.

## **3. Land Reform**

In remote upland areas with absentee landowners, the rebels take over the cultivation of agricultural lands or the maintenance of coconut farms. The local farmers are hired to till the land under a sharing system. In return the assigned farmers serve as the “eyes and ears” of the NPA group in the area or *poste* as they are locally called or sometimes “asset.” In other cases, the rebels take control of lands foreclosed by the bank after the original owner fails to redeem it by repaying a loan for which the land served as collateral. As in the first case, the rebels allow the local farmers to cultivate the lands. This kind of illegal land acquisition serve to fulfill their mission of instituting revolutionary land reform and may be viewed as a positive or negative spillover. Positive, since the benefits of tilling the land also accrue to the poor farmers. In the first case, the negative side of the take-over affects the legitimate landowners who lose their right to sell the land through the voluntary-offer-to-sell (VOS) program of DAR. In the second case, the bank loses its legitimate prerogative to recover even part of the amount it has expended as loan to the original landowner.

## **4. Social Service**

Animosity between the military and certain cause-oriented groups like the Bayan Muna, Gabriela, Anak Pawis has sometimes led to the failure of some communities in remote areas of Bicol to avail of much needed health services and medicines. In November 2004, the UNICEF Psychosocial Therapy for Children conducted a joint medical mission with a cause-oriented group in the municipality of Presentacion, Camarines Sur. The group was approached by an army officer to ask if there are members of cause-oriented organizations in the team. It took some time for the UNICEF team to persuade the military to allow the group to pursue their mission since it is the people who will benefit from it.

## **5. Environmental concerns**

There were reported cases of illegal fishing in connivance with the NPAs in the third district of Albay along the west coast facing the China Sea. The key informant thinks that both the military and the NPAs are taxing the fishermen. At the same time the destruction of the environment remains unabated as LGUs find difficulty implementing environmental laws in such remote areas

There are also reports about NPAs in remote upland areas who are involved in illegal logging or people engaged in illegal logging and paying revolutionary tax to the NPAs. Such practices effectively lead to the proliferation of illegal activities destructive to the environment. It is difficult to see how such activities may be abated when guerilla groups could freely impose their authority in their own base areas. This is especially so when some local officials are rumored to be condoning the activities of the NPAs in exchange for some concessions. The problem is both an environmental and a governance concern.

## **6. Effect on Governance**

During the last elections, some electoral candidates living in the upland areas where CPP-NPA forces operate failed to pay for a permit to campaign or seek a compromise for the purpose. The failure of some candidates to reach these remote areas during the campaign period is depriving the residents of valuable information for meaningful participation in the political exercise. Such situation undermines the people's right to free participation in the electoral process when they are denied of the means to know the candidate and decide whom to vote for. Conversely, politicians who submit to the authority of the rebels by seeking permit to campaign are virtually condoning the practice and creating conditions for the perpetuation of such activities while tacitly acknowledging the revolutionary government. It also raises questions as to how a free and honest the election could be guaranteed in the area. On the other hand, the rejectionist group is openly campaigning against the NPAs' practice of requiring PTCs from electoral candidates to gain access to their base-areas during campaign periods.

Given transparency as one of the critical concerns of good governance, it is also put in question when some areas are declared free from the collection of revolutionary tax because of certain agreement or compromise between the local officials and the rebels.

## **7. Security of buildings and properties**

The increase in non-life insurance premiums to protect commercial and industrial establishments and other properties was cited by a key informant as a negative consequence of the NPA's indiscriminate practice of destroying infrastructures for failure of the owners to meet their revolutionary tax requirement. The result is a negative spillover effect when the added cost to the price of commodities the establishments are dealing with is passed on to the consumers. Similarly, insurance premiums for ordinary and first class buses may increase which may result in corresponding increases in bus fares.

## **8. Cost of Infrastructural Projects**

Allocating additional budget in anticipation of NPA revolutionary tax effectively increases the cost of government infrastructural projects. By virtually channeling its already meager resources to sustain the needs of the rebels, the government ends up short of funds to finance more beneficial projects. In the same vein, the reported payment to NPAs for PTC which is

taken from government official's CDF or the giving of a certain portion of the barangay IRA to settle revolutionary tax payment is tantamount to depriving communities of much needed capital to pursue even small development projects that would essentially lead to the improvement of the socioeconomic condition of the constituents. The likelihood that the institutionalization of tax payment to the rebels would lead to corruption is also not very remote.

### **9. Perceptions and Attitudes about the Armed conflict**

Very few people much less the parties directly at war with each other (CPP/NPA vs. AFP) seem to realize the tremendously high cost of the armed conflict in terms of lost lives, displaced families, destruction of properties, and derailed development processes. The public for one seems to have become inured to news of armed encounters while being less sensitive to the issues and root causes of rebellion.

Knowledgeable and concerned residents believe that most of what are being projected in the media are mere propagandas of the warring parties and do not accurately reflect the ground level situation. For example, the spate of killings, abductions and other forms of harassment that the military carried out for two months in connection with the abduction of the two Philippine army soldiers in March 2004, were not accurately reported in the media. It took some real fact-finding work by cause-oriented groups to dig out the facts from victims and witnesses.

Discrepancies are largely noted also in media reports and press releases from the CPP/NPA side. Both parties are actually keeping to themselves each other's weaknesses to avoid embarrassment before the eyes of the public. Obviously, the rebel groups have also their share in sowing fear and terror, which is continuously being played up by the state. In reality, however, people living in NPA-based areas are more fearful of the military than the rebels.

Concerned groups question also the efficiency and seriousness with which the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) performs its roles in monitoring and documenting human rights violations with the glaring discrepancies between its reports and those of fact-finding missions of other concerned groups. The more persevering and committed attitude of these cause-oriented groups may spell the difference.

Key informants from concerned groups are somehow optimistic that, with a renewed effort to push for the implementation and observance of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Laws (CARHRIHL) through the joint monitoring team. They find it lamentable and ironic that the state, which is mandated to protect the people from oppression, is helpless in pushing for actual reforms while the military has not shed its image as HR violators since the martial law years.

Some informants also believe that with some NGOs and peace advocates acting as "middlemen," the peace process may be made to accelerate. At the same time they suggest that genuine agrarian reform be seriously pursued while proposing that LGUs undertake local consultation for sectoral agenda.

Informants involved in peace-building work have also expressed their disillusionment over the way the rebel groups are responding to the peace-building efforts of the government. The case presented earlier about a land reform action of DAR, which was to benefit a number of tenants in Guinobatan, Albay, and was rejected by the rebels, was perceived as grossly



inconsistent with the cause that the group has declared to be fighting for. In this regard, the informants expressed grave doubts as to whether the present activities and practices of the insurgent groups are still ideologically driven. The local peace efforts are greatly hampered by the lack of knowledge of the current dynamics and leadership, as well as changes in ideology inside the organization.

Similarly, key informants also believe that the peace process is constrained by inconsistent government policies, shifts in priorities and changes in the ideological beliefs of primary stakeholders and authorities. The military for one are more inclined to a renewed use of force at the ground level even as they are mandated to pursue new government programs and strategies such as the pulong-pulong, Kalahi, and medical missions.

As stated earlier, people also have varying attitudes toward the practice of revolutionary taxation by the NPA rebels. Some KIs have expressed that they have yielded to the payment of tax out of fear of being harassed while business owners see some advantage in paying in terms of the protection that they would get against robbery and theft and the effect of other bad elements.

### ***Views and perceptions of KIs in areas of armed conflict***

Concrete experience of living within NPA-based areas and witnessing of outcomes of armed encounters, to a large extent, shape and influence the perceptions and attitude of residents in areas where both the dissident and military forces are present. Some of the key informants' elaboration on armed conflict in their own communities are discussed.

In Palanog, Camalig, Albay, mere presence of both forces, i.e. the CPP/NPA and the military, and not necessarily an actual combat or armed conflict between them, creates fear and insecurity in the community. This was validated with some residents or key informants of Barangay Palanog, Camalig, Albay. In fact, according to the KIs, a number of residents (around 20 families) already transferred to other places due to the fear of being harassed and being made to admit by the military that they are members of the NPA. Such situation has resulted also in trauma among some residents, especially when they see uniformed men.

A key informant also believes that the presence of both forces creates "divisiveness" among the residents because some people were known to be sympathetic to the rebel groups while some were with the military. The latter would argue that the presence of the military has somehow yielded *positive effects*, citing the situation as a mitigating factor in the NPA's collection of revolutionary taxes and the occurrence of crimes against properties within the community like theft and robbery. The informants also acknowledged that the military has provided assistance to the local community in terms of realizing social activities like having basketball tournaments, socials/disco, and so on. Although, the divided views of the people had somehow weakened social cohesion in the community, some residents have also become vigilant, united and assertive of their rights as a result of their negative experience with the military in their area. On the whole, however, residents have learned to adjust and live with the situation.

In Tinambac, Camarines Sur, dissident terroristic activities were confirmed to be creating fear and forcing cooperative attitude of barangay officials and populace. Most, however, adopt a deaf and mute stance in the presence of dissidents and the military in their area to avoid being perceived as taking sides.

Barangay Laboy in Matnog Sorsogon is identified as a critical area because of the presence of NPA groups and the military. Frequent encounters are believed to occur in the area as residents in the nearby barangays hear the sound of gunshots during encounters. Due to fear, people just play deaf and mute to what they observed. The NPAs are said to be very visible in the area and the residents are more sympathetic to them than to the military. They have sometimes expressed doubts on to the veracity of the reports of the military.

Teach-ins by military in areas believed to be infiltrated by the NPAs have little influence on some communities even as the residents were constantly informed of the legal front representing their voice in congress. When asked why they also cooperate with the activities of the rebels, they simply reasoned out that the military will not always be there to protect them. But they believe the place is their home and their source of livelihood is there and that no one would protect them from the retaliation of the rebels once the military pulls out of the areas.

## **V. Some Approaches /Strategies Adopted to Mitigate The Effects Of The Armed Conflict**

In so far as the government is concerned, a joint AFP, PNP, and LGU Peace Forum is being conducted to lessen, if not prevent, the armed conflict in the Bicol Region. Their activities include (a) information dissemination (b) grand pulong-pulong (c) launching of Kalahi Info Caravan (d) medical and dental outreach program and (e) socials or sports and entertainment activities. There are also the barangay empowerment works that established 40 low-cost, high impact projects ranging from the construction of waiting sheds to the rehabilitation of barangay chapels.

The above strategies are pursued in line with the 5<sup>th</sup> path to peace as defined by the NUC. It seeks to protect civilians and to cushion the impact of the armed conflict in their midst. While the delivery of basic services in conflict areas is easily a part of the strategy that the government takes to ensure the welfare of the people, less effort is directed to the other provisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> path such as the “implementation of laws and policy guidelines for the protection of human rights, limited suspension of military operation where possible .... and recognition of Peace Zones as agreed upon by concerned sectors of the community.” The protection of human rights is somehow beginning to be addressed by the joint monitoring team of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Laws or CARHRIHL. However, there is very little real effort in terms of limiting the ongoing militarization as a confidence-building measure.

The 6<sup>th</sup> path to peace “seeks to build, nurture and enhance a positive climate for peace, including confidence-building measures between the government and the rebel groups, and peace advocacy and education within the rest of society.” This provision underscores the significance of peace building particularly in communities where armed conflict is intensifying. In addition, the continuing militarization in the rural areas has cast doubt on the sincerity of the government in pursuing real peace despite the joint monitoring team of the government and the NDF. As a matter of fact, there are more reported cases of human rights violation by the military than are those attributed to the CPP-NPA. Building, therefore, a climate of peace by putting in more effort in educating and sensitizing people with respect to human rights while expanding the constituency has a great potential for a peaceful solution to the present armed conflict.

Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo “stressed the government’s two-pronged approach in solving the country’s insurgency problem,” that means having a left and a right hand. "The right hand is through the arm of the law, and the left hand is the hand of peace and development," the President

said.<sup>14</sup> As a national strategy, this two-pronged approach has been translated to “the Strategy of Holistic Approach,” with components addressing the political, legal and diplomatic situation, the socio-economic-psychosocial realm, the peace and order and security, and information.

The human security model is now increasingly recognized as a viable approach to a peaceful solution to armed struggle. The National Strategy points to insurgency as not only a result of poverty but also ignorance (lack of good education), disease (poor health and malnutrition), and injustice (human rights violations, graft and corruption, and land conflicts).

Given the high cost of the social, economic and political impact of armed conflict, there is a sense of urgency in the concerted effort of peace organizations toward active peace building. The imperative to professionalize peace building is more than ever emphasized

At the local level, the Libon PNP Municipal Station, some strategies are being enforced to mitigate the effects of armed conflict: The provisions are as follows:

“Libon Municipal Police Station shall continue to maintain peace and order through the active participation and support of Barangay Peace and Order Council, NGOs, LGU and the Religious Leader. (They shall also) encourage the citizenry to do its share in crime prevention and control for a healthier economic, political, social and cultural environment (December 1998 Report).”

In addition, they shall “negate the CPP/NPA/NDF terrorists activities in both urban and rural centers by overt action, police visibility, deployment of mobile checkpoint to deter would be violators of laws and other syndicated armed groups operating within the municipality (September 1992 Report).”

The PNP recognizes the support of the Barangay Peace and Order Council, NGOs, LGU and the church in maintaining peace in this particularly NPA infested areas. These are the institutions that need to be sensitized and trained on peace-building strategies.

#### **A. Suggested Strategies and Solutions to Pursue Peace**

Key informants offered the following strategies or solutions to mitigate and prevent further conflicts from arising, particularly those between the CPP-NPA and the military. Many of the suggestions may appear too simplistic and reflect some KIs’ lack of awareness of the real issues involved and what the government and civil society organizations are actually doing to achieve peace.

- For peace to be achieved, the government has to address first the economic problems like lack of livelihood and unemployment, as well as the issue on discrimination of the NPA. KIs would argue that if people have decent jobs, even small businesses, they will have no time for joining any group causing a state of “unpeace”, and for committing crimes like kidnapping and stealing. And just like a “prodigal son,” the government should give particular attention to those who go astray, like the NPAs, rather than discriminate them.

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<sup>14</sup> GMA stresses two-pronged approach in solving insurgency problem (2003). Available at <http://www.gov.ph/news/?newsid=3272>.

- They also suggested that the NPA should have an open communication with the government; they should express what they really need starting first from the local government to the national; and they should work instead of being idle and asking for revolutionary taxes, and help the government, rather than raising arms. The local government for its part must open avenues for consulting people on these issues.
- They (NPA and the military) should also have a strong faith in God so that they shall be free from any temptations, or from committing any harm or further conflict. Likewise, both groups should be humble enough to accept their differences, and should discuss them, instead of fighting each other.
- A KI, however, stressed that the state of “unpeace” or conflict shall not cease, if corruption in the government shall not cease as well. According to her, if only the government is free of corruption, conflict shall not exist. “*Baguhon an gobierno*” (change our government), that is what she concluded. The KI is actually expressing the need for genuine reforms.
- NGOs and other cause-oriented groups should push for the peace talk since the government does not appear to be sincere in pursuing the goals of peace.
- Government implementation of genuine land reform and simultaneously pursue peace talk.

## Appendix A

### Reported Human Rights Violations in connection with the Abduction of two Philippine Army Soldiers in Tinambac, Camarines Sur March to April 2004

NAME	SUSPECTED RESPONSIBLE GRP/PERSON	HR VIOLATION	LOCATION	DATE
Jaime Rodriguez (Released after 4 months)	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, Abduction	Bataan, Tinambac	March 1
Isiderio de los Santos	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Abduction	Del Carmen, Lagonoy	March 2
Gilbert and Randy Quilingan	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Physical assault, Robbery, Coercion	Antipolo, Tinambac	March 3
Bgy Kgd. Rodolfo Caganda	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Illegal Search, Robbery	Del Carmen, Lagonoy	March 4
Samuel Magracia	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Physical assault	Del Carmen , Lagonoy	March 4
Emilio and Sonny Boy de los Santos (released after 4 months)	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Abduction, Physical assault, Coercion, Robbery	Del Carmen, Lagonoy	March 5
Ariel Candelaria (Released after 4 months)				
Bernadeth Barcinilla and Levy Caganda	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Sexual harassment, Illegal search, Coercion	Malabod, Brgy Del Carmen, Lagonoy	March 5
Nolito Besiño	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Illegal Search, Threat	San Roque Heights.,Bula	March 13
Bgy Kgd. Pablo Lumapag and Eddie Regaspi	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA at Bgy Tandaay, Nabua	Illegal arrest	San Roque Heights, Bula	March 13
Wilfredo Velarde and Joseph Carlote (both missing)	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Abduction, Arbitrary arrest/detention	Salvacion, Tinambac	March 16
Joel Guilan	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Arbitrary arrest, torture	Salvacion, Tinambac	March 17
<b>240 individuals</b>	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Mass evacuation, Economic dislocation	Salvacion Tinambac	March 17
Alberto Abrera, Germinio Competente, and Dante Pisira	42 <sup>nd</sup> PA, 16 <sup>th</sup> IBPA and scout ranger	Robbery	San Roque Tinambac	March 17
Resty Amata (missing)	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA, Scout Ranger and 16 <sup>th</sup> IB	Abduction	San Roque Tinambac	March 23
Virgie Velmen (killed)	42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Abduction, killing	Pagsimbugan, Mapid, Lagonoy	March 23
Bgy Capt. Nestor Navares Broquesa (missing)	Capt. Espera at 42 <sup>nd</sup> IBPA	Abduction	Banga, Tinambac	March 27
Diosdado Portillo (missing)	Suspected PA	Abduction	Cawaynan, Tinambac	April 1
Bgy Capt. Felix Roxas and Danilo Morada	42 <sup>nd</sup> PA and CAFGU	Abduction and illegal arrest	Mangga, Bato	April 1
Jesus Renolayan	42 <sup>nd</sup> PA & CAFGU	Abduction, torture and illegal arrest	Lobong, Bato	April 1
Bgy Capt. Arnulfo Tuldanes	42 <sup>nd</sup> PA & CAFGU	Abduction and Illegal arrest	Lobong Bato	April 1

Bgy Kgd. Gilberto Awa	42 <sup>nd</sup> PA & CAFGU	Abduction and illegal arrest	Sooc, Bato	April 1
Edwin Reyes	42 <sup>nd</sup> PA & CAFGU	Abduction and illegal arrest	San Isidro, Bato	April 1
Ireneo Roxas	42 <sup>nd</sup> PA & CAFGU	Abduction and illegal arrest	Pagatpatan, Bato	April 1
Bgy Kgd. Jesus Bongalon (killed)	42 <sup>nd</sup> PA & CAFGU	Abduction, illegal arrest and killing,	Sooc, Bato	April 1

*Source: KARAPATAN AND BAYAN, as published in Bicol Mail, August 26, 2004*

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