

Written by Art Garcia

Tuesday, 26 April 2011 13:05 -

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Los Angeles—The Philippine Peasant Support Network (Pesante-USA), human rights group based in the United States vehemently condemned the Commission of Human Rights (CHR) report that cleared the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on the abduction and torture of a US-based activist.

The report, signed by CHR Chairperson Loretta Rosales in February but released over the Easter weekend, concluded Melissa Roxas was indeed abducted and apparently subjected to cruel treatment. But the Commission said it did not have enough evidence to put the blame on the military. The CHR also refused to use the word “torture” for the abuse Roxas suffered because “state actors” could not be pinpointed.

Pesante is disappointed that Rosales a former political detainee and a victim of torture herself will clear the AFP of torture and wrongdoing. Pesante stated that: “Rosales will join all traitors like Tayag, Tiglao, Barican, Morales and Olivar – all former activist – who have sold the Filipinos down the river.”

At the same time, the CHR said it had received “credible” reports that “strongly indicated” that the NPA (New People’s Army) itself may have been behind Roxas’ ordeal. It referred the case to the National Bureau of Investigation for further probes.

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Roxas, an American citizen, complained that she and two of her contacts were abducted by masked men in La Paz, Tarlac, on May 19, 2009. She said she was beaten and psychologically tortured for several days in what seemed like a military cell in

Central Luzon

. She was released after being forced to denounce the NPA.

### **Many Still Missing**

The two men who were reportedly abducted with her did not join her suit. Juanito Carabeo, 51, was found to have eight arrest warrants including one for murder. Her other companion John Edward Jandoc, 16, did not surface at all.

Pesante –USA slammed the CHR for “practically clearing the AFP of any liability”. Pesante stated that they were disappointed by the agency’s findings that the NPA was possibly responsible for Roxas’ abduction, saying this followed the military’s “alibi” that enforced disappearances and murders of leftist activists was done by the NPA.

Pesante said the CHR finding is “illogical” as the NPA had nothing to gain by taking Roxas. The CHR, dismissed Roxas’ detailed testimonies, which showed that her torture was similar to the military’s method of interrogating activists suspected of being NPA

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members.

## **CHR Clears “Death Squads”**

Pesante stated that the CHR also absolved the AFP “death squads by clearing the AFP on Roxas case. Pesante pointed out that while case was being heard in the CHR

, a videotape was produced by former general and then party-list representative Jovito Palparan showing someone that looked like Roxas in an NPA camp.

Palparan, now retired, had been accused by Philippine human rights activists of supporting shadowy “death squads” and secret detention centers in Central Luzon.

Two University of the Philippines coeds—Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño—among others, were abducted in Central Luzon in 2006 for suspected links to communist rebels and have not been heard of since. Two young peasants, Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo, who reportedly escaped a similar fate, told human-rights groups tales of horrific torture as they were moved around various military camps from Bulacan to Bataan.

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Pesante puked at the military's denial that they don't have any knowledge of enforced disappearances and its reported clandestine torture chambers. # # #

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