



Press Statement
13 March 2015

**NUPL Officer Amparo Case
Military and Police Chided by Court for Threats on Human Rights Lawyer**

The Court of Appeals yesterday, March 12, 2015, granted the application for Writ of Amparo and Writ of Habeas Date of human rights lawyer, Atty. Maria Catherine Dannug – Salucon. In its 21 page Decision, the Court gave credence to the allegations of Atty. Salucon as regards the threats to her, including the surveillance and her inclusion in a so called list of "red lawyers".

The Court also chided respondents PCSupt. Miguel De Mayo Laurel, the Acting Regional Director of Police Regional Office 2, Gen. Hernando Irriberri, the Commanding General of the Philippine Army, Gen. Eduardo Ano, Commanding Officer of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Gen. Emmanuel Bautista, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces in the Philippines for their complicity in, and for their failure to exercise extraordinary diligence in looking into the threats on Atty. Salucon.

The Court of Appeals directed the said respondents to conduct a thorough investigation into the case, submit a periodic report, and to produce, any and all facts, derogatory and prejudicial information, statements, records, photographs, dossiers, and all other evidence, documentary and otherwise pertaining to Atty. Salucon "for possible destruction upon order of this Court." Failure to comply with these directives shall constitute contempt of court, the CA warned.

Atty. Salucon is a founding member of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyer (NUPL) and is its incumbent National Auditor. She was a former public defender, having been a lawyer of the Public Attorney's Office from 2005 to 2011. Since then, she was engaged in private practice having established her own law office, and continued to take on cases involving violations of human rights and cases involving political prisoners. Atty. Salucon's name is reportedly included in the military's Watch List of so-called Communist Terrorist supporters rendering legal services.

Atty. Salucon filed the Petition for Writ of Amparo and Writ of Habeas Date in April 2014 after she experienced intensified surveillance, and after she was warned to take care of herself because she was supposed to have been included in the list of "red lawyers". She was alarmed when one of those who warned her, human rights volunteer and activist William Bugatti was himself gunned down after they attended a hearing in Lagawe, Ifugao.

The decision came as a relief to Atty. Salucon who still faces serious threats. On the other hand, even if the petition was dismissed, among others, with respect to President BS Aquino on a technicality, the NUPL welcomed the decision, especially that it was issued several weeks after the observance of the "Day of the Endangered Lawyers", where her case was one of those included in the campaign, and considers it as another confirmation of the continuing attacks, not only against lawyers, but also against human rights defenders and activists, and of the prevailing impunity in the country.

The NUPL cautioned though that while it is elated by the issuance of the decision, the same will only become meaningful if it will result in the resolute prosecution and due punishment of those involved in the threats against a human rights defender. We will not just take these threats idly and remain sitting ducks. #r

References:

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