

Political Persecution and other Human Rights Violations **Related Articles**

All Posts: 2006-2008

- **The Governor's No Union, No Strike Policy Kills Gerardo Cristobal** March 12, 2008, *page 2-3*
 - **Who Killed Gerry Cristobal?** March 11, 2008 *page 4-5*
 - **Labor activist' family clueless of gunmen's sketch, investigation** December 18, 2006 *page 6-10*
 - **Cavite labor activists shot: one killed, two wounded** December 13, 2006 *page 11-12*
 - **Statement on Bishop Alberto Ramento's killing** October 5, 2006 *page 13-14*
 - **Eight workers illegally arrested and falsely charged** September 30, 2006 *page 15-16*
 - **Labour leader seriously wounded in ambush** April 28, 2006 *page 17-19*
-

Political Killings:

Gerardo "Gerry" Cristobal: died March 11, 2008

- **The Governor's No Union, No Strike Policy Kills Gerardo Cristobal** March 12, 2008, *page 2-3*
- **Who Killed Gerry Cristobal?** March 11, 2008 *page 4-5*
- **Labour leader seriously wounded in ambush** April 28, 2006 *page 17-19*

Jesus "Buth" Servida: died December 11, 2006

- **Labor activist' family clueless of gunmen's sketch, investigation** December 18, 2006 *page 6-10*
- **Cavite labor activists shot: one killed, two wounded** December 13, 2006 *page 11-12*

Bishop Alberto Ramento: died October 3, 2006

- **Statement on Bishop Alberto Ramento's killing** October 5, 2006 *page 13-14*

Illegal Arrest:

SP Ventures workers

- **Eight workers illegally arrested and falsely charged** September 30, 2006 *page 15-16*

[2008 – 03/12]

March 12, 2008

The Governor's No Union, No Strike Policy Kills Gerardo Cristobal

STATEMENT

Marlene Gonzales
Spokesperson
Solidarity of Cavite Workers

The names of the killers who waylaid labor activist Gerardo Cristobal would probably remain unknown forever to his family and comrades in the labor movement, but not the real culprit.

Governor Ireneo Maliksi's infamous and unwritten no union, no strike (NUNS) policy killed Cristobal. This anti-labor policy is being pursued against the militant and progressive labor unions and leaders in Cavite deemed by the governor as a threat to his so-called industrial peace program.



Lifeless Labor Union Leader Gerry Cristobal

The NUNS policy has put all unions, labor leaders, organizers, and activists labeled “left-leaning” by the government as target of attacks from all armed groups hostile to militant unionism, including the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other government security forces.

Since last year, union organizers have monitored Governor Maliksi and his armed men from the Cavite Industrial Peace Advisory Group (CIPAG), an office directly under his supervision, giving talks to some companies or summoning union leaders in order to frustrate the workers in joining or forming their union. One example is the experience of the workers in Golden Will Fashion Philippines at the First Cavite Industrial Estate (FCIE) in Dasmarinas, Cavite.

During workers' strike or labor-management disputes, Maliksi's men from CIPAG, would join hands with the PNP and Philippine Economic Zone Authority's (PEZA) police force in breaking the strike and harassing the strikers. Those who were not intimidated are being pursued at their houses and threatened to be harmed.

As a labor organizer and activist like his fellow union officer in Yazaki-Eds Manufacturing Inc. (EMI) Jesus Buth Servida, Cristobal was an active critic of Governor Maliksi's NUNS policy. Servida was also killed in an ambush on December 11, 2006 in front of the company. Both of them had lambasted the governor and his NUNS policy in countless rallies they attended.

The premature statements of Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas, Cavite provincial police director, and Imus Police Chief Supt. Ulysses Cruz to Philippine Daily Inquirer that Cristobal was killed due to traffic altercation and it was not an ambush were highly suspicious statements that were likely intended to cover up a crime than to give facts. It was meant to downplay the political color of Cristobal's brutal killing.

The Solidarity of Cavite Workers (SCW) is on utmost belief that men identified with Governor Maliksi, if not he himself was involved, and some elements of Cavite PNP had direct knowledge in the killing of Cristobal. Only the arrest of the killers and the mastermind would dispel that belief.

Meanwhile, more than 100 workers from the Samahan ng mga Manggagawa sa EMI (SM-EMI-Independent) who held an indignation rally this morning in front of the Provincial Capitol were dispersed by the PNP and firemen. No one was hurt.

The protesting workers were wearing placards written with words such "Gobernador Ayong Maliksi, sino ang pumatay kay Gerry Cristobal?" (Governor Ayong Maliksi, who killed Gerry Cristobal?) They were also demanding justice for Cristobal, Jesus Buth Servida, and Cris Abad from the Governor. The three were all former union officers in Yazaki-EMI, who had suffered the same fate from unknown killers. 

[2008 – 03/11]

March 11, 2008

Who Killed Gerry Cristobal?

STATEMENT

Ramilo Tined
Union President

The Samahan ng mga Manggagawa sa EMI-Independent or SM-EMI-Ind. (Organization of Workers in EMI-Independent) strongly condemns the brutal killing of Gerardo "Gerry" Cristobal on Monday, March 10, while driving along the Aguinaldo Highway in Anabu I, Imus, Cavite.

Gerry Cristobal was the union president at Yazaki-EMI for 10 years. Before the slaying, he is an appointed full-time organizer by our union to assist in organizing other workers in Cavite as part of our workers' program.

We also vehemently condemn the reckless statement of Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas, Cavite Provincial Police Director and Imus, Police Chief Supt. Ulysses Cruz, made to the Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI) that the killing of Gerry is a result of a traffic altercation and not an ambush while no proper investigation had been done yet.



We are also expressing our deep suspicion over the irresponsible and premature statements of the two Philippine National Police (PNP) officials who intends to divert the interest of the public from the real motives of the killing, who were involved or the perpetrators behind the slaying of Gerry.

Further, we are extremely suspicious of the hasty response of the PNP to the slaying of Gerry when in less than an hour after the killing, the crime scene was already cleared. The chief of Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) immediately ordered the Alindog Funeral Homes in Dasmariñas, Cavite a town nearby the crime scene, to remove the corpse out of the area. It is also incredible that the perpetrators on board a green Toyota Innova easily got away from the scene when the area is usually clogged with traffic especially on a Monday morning.

We firmly believed that the killing of our fellow labor leader is another attempt to restrain and suppress our legitimate rights to self-organization and to sow fear and terror among us.

Gerry is the third union officer of Yazaki-EMI shot to death by unidentified armed men and yet until now there is no serious action and investigation being done by the Cavite PNP to resolve these cases. Cris Abad, vice president of the former union Kristong Manggagawa sa EMI (Christ, the Worker at EMI) was killed on January 12, 2005, and Jesus “Buth” Servida was gunned down on December 11, 2006 right in front of the factory.

There were similar pattern on how these union leaders were killed. All of them have conflicts with alleged men of Governor Ireneo “Ayong” Maliksi assigned in the Cavite Industrial Peace Advisory Group (CIPAG), a group under the direct control of the Office of the Provincial Governor. Before the killings of Gerry and Buth, they were both primarily and vocally criticizing the intervention of the Office of the Governor on union affairs in EMI and the implementation of the no union, no stike policy in Cavite.



Cristobal and Servida

Thus, we firmly believed that the killing of Gerry Cristobal is tainted with political motive because he continue to organize workers from different factories in Cavite. Likewise, we cannot remove the possibility that PNP elements are involved in the slaying of Gerry since policemen were involved on the first attempt to his life.

Who killed Gerry? Who killed Buth Servida? Who killed Cris Abad? These are the questions we wanted to ask Governor Maliksi and the PNP-Cavite because its not within our power to resolve these crimes. 🇵🇭



[2006 – 12/18]

December 18, 2006

Labor activist' family clueless of gunmen's sketch, investigation

While the Imus police claimed to have completed investigation and have produced the cartographic sketch of the alleged gunmen of murdered labor activist Jesus Buth Servida, the latter's wife Maricel today was clueless of any result of investigation by the police.

“Wala pong ibinigay sa amin (cartographic sketch). Wala pong kumausap sa amin simula nung napatay ang asawa ko. ‘San po ba kukunin ‘yon? (We were not given anything. Nobody (police investigators) speak to us after my husband was killed. Where are we going to get it?), was Maricel’s remark when asked to on the investigation result today.

According to Maricel none of the police investigators from Imus Municipal Police Station (IMPO) approached them as part of their investigation. The police’s claims that they already completed their investigations and produced sketches of gunmen came to a surprise.

The Solidarity of Cavite Workers (SCW), an alliance of labor groups, therefore challenged the police investigators, in particular Supt. Efren Castro, chief of the IMPO to produce the result of their investigation, cartographic sketches and to coordinate with the victim’s family. The police’s claim did not convince the victim’s relatives and colleagues that the motive of his death was “business rivalry” and not caused by is activism.

During the funeral mass in Bucandala Church on Sunday, Ramil Tined, president of the Samahan ng mga Manggagawa sa EMI (SM-EMI), read in public the union’s manifesto condemning the report by the Imus Municipal Police Office (IMPO) as lies that Servida’s death was business rivalry and not politically motivated, nor part of the unabated killings of activists.

“Mariin naming itong pinabubulaanan. Kinokondina ng opisyal at buong kasapian ng unyon ang brutal na pagpaslang kay kasamang Buth at bigong pagpaslang kay kasamang Jewel” (We strongly deny this (police report). The officers and members of our union condemn the brutal killing of Buth and attempt on the life of Jewel (Sale),” Tined said quoting the manifesto.

Sale was with Servida and two other companions when they were attacked in front of the gate of a Japanese-owned factory, EMI Yazaki on December 11. Sale remains being treated for his serious injuries on the face at a local hospital in Dasmaringas, Cavite.



Servida's colleagues at the SM-EMI are not convinced with the police's finding and believed his murder was a sequel to the attempt on the life of Gerardo Cristobal in April 28 this year by gunmen later identified as intelligence officers and civilian assets attached to the IMPO. They, however, urges the police investigators to continue investigations into Servida's murder.

Prior to Servida's death, his relatives noticed persons asking for him and his whereabouts at their house. Before Servida was killed, he already had threats on his life. There are unknown persons who are looking for him in his place in Barangay (village) Malagasang, Imus. There was also several times where he relayed these concerns to the officers of the SM-EMI union.

According to the union's manifesto, they no longer expect for justice but should there be evidence to warrant to the police' theory that the motive was "business rivalry" it is necessary that this should be pushed through because this will led to the doorsteps of the office of Governor Ireneo "Ayong" Maliksi of Cavite.

The union believed that the persons responsible to the alleged "business rivalry" are the same persons who are behind the Cavite Industrial Peace Advisory Group (CIPAG) and Barangay and Community Alternative Leaders (BACAL) of the office of the Provincial Governor (OPG). These are all implementing the busting of unions in Cavite, harassment of union leaders in the community and factories, and showing off firearms to sow fear to workers willing to form labor unions.

What did Servida do why he was killed?

Servida was one of those critical of the undue interference by the office of Governor Maliksi regarding formation of unions inside the EMI-Yazaki and its implementation of the No union, No strike policy within the province of Cavite.

Servida was also the spokesperson of the EMI in rallies. He bravely exposed in all rallies the corruption by persons who claimed to be "consultants" of Governor Maliksi in CIPAG with the funds of the Kristong Manggagawa sa EMI (KM-EMI) union. These consultants were serving the union's funds as their "milking cows".

He also strongly criticize in previous rallies these corrupt practices the inclusion of some officers of KM-EMI in the payroll of the OPG as organizers for BACAL. These union officers were earning salaries as employees of EMI-Yazaki, earning salary from the union's fund and they also earn salary as organizers for BACAL of OPG. The KM-EMI is part of BACAL, and BACAL is an electoral machinery of Governor Maliksi.

Servida also bravely criticize the carrying of firearms in public by these "consultants" of CIPAG and the officers of the KM-EMI as organizers for BACAL outside and inside the factory of EMI-Yazaki. They were however not confronted by police nor arrested because they were riding on government-owned vehicles of the province.

As labor activist, Servida decided to organize the workers and community in Imus and Bacoor, all in Cavite after he was dismissed from work in EMI-Yazaki. He explained to the workers the value of unionism, the right to livelihood and the unity to fight the No union, No strike policy of Governor Maliksi.

Servida has no known enemies in the community at even inside the EMI-Yazaki. What his enemy was the No union, No strike policy of Governor Maliksi, his "consultants" for the CIPAG, and former officers of the KM-EMI who organized the BACAL for the incoming elections.

At the time of his death, Servida's stance to form a genuine union that would defend his fellow workers rights was strong. Servida's campaign got the ire of the management and their rival union KM-EMI. Servida had exposed the rival union's corruption and malpractices. Servida's labor activism was too costly for him and his own family that in December 2005 he was dismissed from his work.

In an effort to continue helping his fellow workers, when the SM-EMI union won the certificate election (CE) in a landslide vote and later finally signed the CBA in November 2006, Servida agreed to become the union's full-time organizer. Servida's main function as an organizer was to help other unorganized workers in Imus to organize themselves into union to defend their rights.

No credible, efficient police investigations

The involvement by some of intelligence officers of the IMPO's in an ambush of Gerardo Cristobal puts their credibility to conduct a fair and impartial investigation into a serious question.

After Cristobal was ambushed, the police quickly pronounced it was Cristobal who ambushed their intelligence officers and not their men. They likewise immediately filed fabricated charges multiple

frustrated murder against Cristobal in court and had him securely guarded at the hospital by armed policemen after the shooting. The charges, however, was later dismissed.

Despite demands by Cristobal's colleagues and the regional human rights groups Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) for a separate fresh police investigations, it was not done so. The IMPO were likewise not held accountable for the false charges they filed against Cristobal in court. Nor they were met with sanctions despite serious allegations that their men were involved in the ambush.

When Servida was murdered on December 11, it was the same police unit who conducted the investigations into the case. As expected, they quickly declared his death as a "business rivalry".

Harassment at the funeral march, protest

Katarungan para kay Jesus Buth Servida, Katarungan! (Justice for Jesus Buth Servida)

Is what the chant by hundreds of mourners of Servida mostly wearing black shirts, red and black armbands and streamers condemning his death. The mourners brave the noontime scorching heat of the sun and three-hour funeral march from Servida's house to the Bucandala Church and to the Imus Cemetery where he was laid to rest on December 17.

And when the funeral march was held for Servida, elements of the Imus Traffic Management Office (ITMO) had a shouting match at the mourners joining the funeral march and nearly clash with them soon after the latter came out of the Bucandala church. The ITMO were insisting to insert the vehicles pass through the line to which the latter strongly opposed.

"Mga walang kayong konsensiya, wala kayong respetu sa patay (You have no conscience and respect for the dead)," said one of the protesters telling the traffic enforces.

Had one of the traffic enforcer's colleagues not convinced his colleagues to let the mourners and protesters passed, he would not agreed to do so.

When the march reach a police station beside the Municipal Hall on their way to the cemetery, heavily armed policemen who are members of Special Weapons and Tactics (Swat) of the Imus Police have already positioned themselves outside as if preparing for an assault. A fire truck was also seen parked in front of their office.



Soon after Servida was laid to rest, the mourners and protesters trooped to the police headquarters in Imus, Cavite to once again express condemnation. Few minute later, the policemen inside were seen started taking pictures of the protesters outside. A fire truck later arrived and went inside the police camp. No one came out to speak with the protesters though.

The protesters later peacefully dispersed.

Those joining Servida's funeral march were members of the Samahan ng mga Manggagawa sa EMI-Yazaki (SM-EMI), Solidarity of Cavite Workers (SCW), Workers' Assistance Center, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan-Cavite), Cavite Enumerical Movement for Justice and Peace (CEMJP), Kalipunan ng mga Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay). 

[2006 – 12/13]

December 13, 2006

Cavite labor activists shot: one killed, two wounded

Two labor activists who were members of the Solidarity of Cavite Workers (SCW) were shot by a lone assassin in front of Gate 2 of the Japanese-owned Yazaki-EMI in Anabu, Imus, Cavite at 6:15 on December 11. A caliber .45 pistol was used according to the witnesses.

According to Nora Diloy, union secretary of Samahan ng mga Manggagawa sa EMI (SM-Independent), Jesus Buth Servida, 32 years old of Malagasang, Imus, Cavite, was killed instantly when hit in the face and mouth while his companion, Joel Sale, 32 years old, sustained three gunshot wounds – one in the face that exited to his lip, at the back, and on the right side of his body. They went at the company to deliver vegetables when waylaid.



Jesus "Buth" Servida

One Kenny Mari Severo, 21 years old, and worker of the said company was also hit in the left temple of the head by a stray bullet. The wounded were rushed to the University Medical Center (UMC) in Dasmarias, Cavite and were pronounced out of danger.

Diloy said that Servida and Sale were with two other companions, Michael Omedes and Geminiano Retutar, waiting for the company guard to open the gate. The four were still seating inside the vehicle when the gunman suddenly approached them on the right side where Servida and Sale were seating and fired several shots. Servida was seating beside the driver's seat and Sale was at his back. The gunman walked casually away from the scene of the crime in full view of the public.

Marlene Gonzales, chair of the Solidarity of Cavite Workers, condemned to the strongest terms the killing of Servida and the wounding of Sale and Severo.

“This is not a simple intra-union dispute. This is a politically-motivated murder being carried out against the militant and progressive labor activists in Cavite. The no union, no strike policy of Governor Ireneo Maliksi is taking the lives of the labor activists one by one now,” said Gonzales.



Joel Sale with his wife in the hospital

“Because of this evil policy, union formations and strikes has been labelled communist-inspired undertakings in Cavite by the Office of the Provincial Governor, which eventually become a big threat to the lives of labor activists and organizers,” Gonzales further stated.

It would be recalled that Gerardo Cristobal, former union president at Yazaki-EMI was also waylaid by masked men in April 28, 2006 near the Yazaki-EMI plant. The gunmen were later identified by Cristobal as members of Imus PNP and Cavite

Civil Security Unit. The shooting of Cristobal was one of the violent incidents that the US retail giants recently asked President Arroyo in their letter to look into.

Gonzales also said, in January 2005, Cris Abad, vice president of Kristong Manggagawa was also killed by unknown assassin in front of the company after he squealed on the rampant corruption on the union funds of his co-union officers in Kristong Manggagawa to their rival group which is that of Cristobal.

According to Gonzales, Servida and Sale were both full-time organizers of the SM-EMI as part of the union’s program to help other workers in Imus and Bacoor to get organize.

As of press time, Sale is still undergoing operation while Severo has to undergo a CT scan.

Servida, Sale, Omedes, and Retutar were former employees and officers of the union Kristong Manggagawa sa EMI (KM-EMI) of the Yazaki-EMI who were dismissed by the management on December 20, 2005 together with the former union president Gerardo Cristobal at the height of the intra-union dispute that started in midyear of 2002.

The four were also part of the new concessionaires operating the Workers’ Delight, one of the two canteens inside the Yazaki-EMI contracted by the officers of the new union SM-EMI. The operation of the canteen was part of the provision of the first collective bargaining agreement (CBA) signed this November between SM-EMI and the Yazaki-EMI management.

Despite being terminated, all of them help formed the new SM-EMI union to challenge the KM-EMI in a certification election to determine who would represent the 4,000 workers in a new CBA. The former won a landslide victory over the latter. The officers of the KM-EMI were being supported by Governor Ireneo Maliksi while the SM-EMI by the Workers Assistance Center (WAC). 🇵🇭

[2006 – 10/05]

October 5, 2006

Statement on Bishop Alberto Ramento's killing

The Workers' Assistance Center, Inc. (WAC) condemns to the strongest possible term the brutal killing of our beloved Chairperson, Bishop Alberto Ramento. He was with the workers of Cavite in the struggle for the protection and defense of their rights and welfare from 1998 until his death.

Bishop Ramento was stabbed to death and was found lying in his church in Tarlac City in the morning of October 3. He was with the military's Order of Battle or hit list before he was brutally murdered.

Ramento, 69 years old, chairperson of the Supreme Council of Bishops of the PIC, the highest church leader of IFI. He was a staunch human rights advocate and supporter of the causes of the poor since the time of Marcos dictatorship.

Before his death, Bishop Ramento has been an active supporter of the Hacienda Luisita workers in Tarlac who had their strike in 2004, where seven strikers were killed by military's bullets and several others followed. The latest is Bishop Ramento himself.

His brutal killing coincided with the time when unions and striking workers that is being supported by the WAC is severely under attack also by the shameful connivance of foreign-investors and government's Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA).



WAC firmly believed that Bishop Ramento was murdered because of his vocal and unyielding political conviction for the poor and oppressed people. His vocal opposition to the repressive character of the Arroyo government and his strong criticism to the on-going extra-judicial killings of activists were the reasons behind his murder. Ironically, he met his death also in the same way.



Only murderers known to the Arroyo government will have the strong motive and interest in silencing a true bishop of the people. Because they can roam the streets freely without any fear of arrests and criminal responsibility.

Let us all offer our prayers and sympathy to the family, relatives, and friends he left behind. Let us remember his good deeds to the people and hope that his death may not be in vain!

REV. FR. JOSE P. DIZON (sgd.)
Executive Director
Workers Assistance Center, Inc. 



[2006 – 09/30]

September 30, 2006

Eight workers illegally arrested and falsely charged

As crack down on strikers and workers supportive of them continues, eight workers were illegally arrested and charged on September 28 in Rosario, Cavite.

Armed without any arrest or search warrants, elements of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) police and Jantro security guards started arresting workers who were staying at a warehouse inside the Cavite Export Processing Zone (CEPZ).

They arrested and subsequently turned over workers Gemma Lape, Lorna Reli, Ivy Villasan, Analou Estrimos, Glaysa Layesi, Josephine Bahar, Pablito Sapata and Rodelito Amo to the Rosario Municipal Police Station (RMPS) where they are presently detained. The Peza police and Jantro guards arrested them over allegations they are facilitating storage of supply of food to workers on strike nearby.

It can be recalled that workers of two of the Korean-owned factories, Phils Jeon Garments, Inc. and Chong Won Fashion, Inc. inside the CEPZ went on strike since September 25.

The Peza police and Jantro security has since imposed food blockade at the picket line of Chong Won strikers. The workers on strike insist that the violent dispersal and actions against them had orders from Peza director general Lilia De Lima.

Although the arrested workers, seven of them are former employees of another Korean-owned garment factory SP Ventures Inc., has since been allowed to stay at the warehouse, the Peza police insisted they are trespassing. On September 29, charges of trespassing and inciting to sedition were filed against the eight workers.

While on their way to the police station, one of the arrested workers, Gemma Lape overheard one of the female Peza police threatening that she should be killed. The Peza police at the time were questioning her involvement in the on going strike. The Peza police forced her to admit her involvement but Lape insisted her innocence.

“Sabi n’ya sanay ‘yan. I-salvage nalang natin (She said I am smart. So why don’t they just kill me),”according to Lape. In Philippine context, the term salvage is equivalent to extra-judicial killing. It was used during the Martial law days.

Once they arrived at the Rosario police station, the police investigators started illegally searching the workers’ personal belongings and seized Lape’s mobile phone. They subjected each one of them for questioning in absence of their legal counsel and against their will. The police investigators later refused to free them claiming they have found materials of “subversive” contents. They were padlocked inside the police detention center.

While in detention, the police custodian either refused to or made alibis not to provide food and medicines to the eight arrested workers. Those assisting the workers have had to get food and medicines for them.

As this developed, on September 29, workers on strike at Chong Won have already been prevented by Peza police and Jantro security from entering the CEPZ. Not only they cancelled the workers’ zones passes and company IDs, they also confiscated them effectively preventing workers on strike from entry. The food blockade is also still in effect.

It can be recalled that on September 27, the workers on strike at Chong Won, Peza officials and the management held a dialogue. Among those agreed upon is that workers must not be prevented entry and out of CEPZ and that their access to food must not be blocked. All this agreement, however, has not been implemented and ignored.

The names of strikers at Chong Won that should have been allowed free access of entry and going out was instead being used as list of black listed and banned workers by the Peza police and Jantro guards. This, after the Chong Won Fashion, Inc. management issued a memorandum preventing their workers on strike from entry. 🇵🇭

[2006 – 04/28]

April 28, 2006

Labour leader seriously wounded in ambush

Labour leader Gerardo Cristobal was seriously wounded when ambushed at 6AM today by armed men who were later identified as operatives of police intelligence in Imus, Cavite.

Cristobal and his companion Juliet Tayoto were riding on a car passing a crowded street in Barangay Anabu, Coastal in Imus when another car where three armed men wearing bonnets are riding blocked their way. One, who was later identified as Senior Police Officer 1 (SPO1) Romeo Lara, immediately came out approaching Cristobal and his companion and started shooting at him at close range inside the car.



Cristobal exchanged fire with SPO1 Lara and his companion, Larry Reyes, a member of the Civilian Security Unit (CSU) in Imus, Cavite. SPO1 Lara was also wounded during the incident. SPO1 Lara was hit on the head and shoulder while Cristobal was wounded to his stomach, hip and hand.

Cristobal has since been carrying his license firearm due to persistent threats to his life from the police and private armies of Governor Ireneo “Ayong” Maliksi of Cavite, when the shooting took place.

Cristobal, who was at the time wounded, was first taken back to his house by a tricycle driver after the shooting before he was taken to the hospital for treatment. Cristobal was admitted for treatment due to serious injuries to his stomach, hip and hand. His companion, Tayoto, was not harmed.

It is reported that Cristobal and his relatives came to know that his attackers were SPO1 Lara and Reyes, in an interview over radio dzRH with Colonel Rodel Seremonia, head of the intelligence operatives in Imus, Cavite, claiming that his men, SPO1 Lara and his companions, were ambushed by Cristobal. SPO1 Lara was also admitted to the hospital where Cristobal is also confined.

The Solidarity of Cavite Workers (SCW) strongly condemns the claims of Colonel Seremonia as false and deceiving. Cristobal is one of the leaders of the SCW. Colonel Seremonia intentionally twisted the account of the incident by claiming that Cristobal ambushed his men, SPO1 Lara and his companions, instead.

Colonel Seremonia's twisted claims over radio DZRH that Cristobal is the perpetrator instead of being the real victim, even without benefit of initial investigation, is a deliberate attempt to cover up the attempted killing of Cristobal by his men.

At the time of incident, Cristobal had just left from his house and was on his way to the factory of EMI Yasaki in Imus. The workers are set to hold a huge protest action at the Provincial Capitol at 9am to denounce continued intervention by Governor Maliksi in the Intra-Union dispute in EMI-Yazaki. The plan, however, was called off following the shooting of Cristobal.

The SCW believed Governor Maliksi could have been involved to the attempts made on Cristobal's life. Governor Maliksi, who is critical of labour unions in Cavite, is imposing within his province a "No Union No Strike Policy (NUNS). Additionally, Cristobal also receive previous threats made by Reyes, a personal bodyguard of Governor's Maliksi son, Vive Mayor Manny Maliksi of Imus.



Gerry Cristobal in May 1 mob

"The attempted killing is the final effort of Governor Maliksi's administration after years of demonizing the labour activists to silence the militant labour movement. Cristobal is one of the most ardent critics of Governor Maliksi's counter-insurgency No Union No Strike Policy (NUNS) in Cavite," according to Emmanuel Asuncion, spokesperson of the SCW.

The SCW is demanding for an impartial investigation into Cristobal's case. Colonel Seremonia and the Cavite police are in any circumstances incapable of producing any "impartial investigations" in this matter. Colonel Seremonia's premature announcement and twisted claims to the account of the incident in absence of further investigations had serious implications in this case.

“This frustrated attempt on the life of Cristobal only unmasked the government forces as the real culprits behind the series of killings of militant activists in the country. This incident confirms consistent allegations that the bonnet-wearing gunmen responsible in activists killings are mercenaries of the Arroyo government,” Asuncion added.

The SCW further added that the attempt made on the life of Cristobal is not an isolated case but rather part of a systematic and large-scale attempt to silence the legitimate grievances and dissent of the people against President Arroyo’s repressive regime.

Labour activists in Cavite have now raised serious concerns that violence and attempts to kill activists by using bonnet-wearing policemen is now in motion in the province. The SCW added the incident is obviously part of sowing fears amongst the labour movement from joining the huge Labour Day rally on Monday, May 1.

This is yet another attempt made on Cristobal’s life. In January 2005, he escaped an attempt after the Police in Imus, Cavite, falsely accused him into the killing of Cris Abad, a former union secretary. 