In addition to what has already been presented to the Council, may I introduce two other recent developments.

Of the 222 cases of extra-judicial killings (EJK), the Task Force against Political Violence (Task Force 211) had positive developments on 34 cases or a significant 15.3% disposition rate in only six (6) months of existence. Leading the cases is the arrest of an army soldier, who is a suspect in the killing of a trade union leader. The Armed Forces of the Philippines turned over the soldier to the Department of Justice, through the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

As we meet, we expect another arrest of another soldier who is a suspect in an EJK case. Furthermore, contrary to the report of the Special Rapporteur, a soldier had been convicted in the killing of a media personality, Sgt. Estanislao Bismaon in Oct 2006. If his basis of no conviction in the report starts Nov 27, 2007, the last six months is too short to expect a conviction. The country’s strict adherence to the rule of law cannot be over emphasized. This is in consonance with ICCPR Art. 14 on due process, equal protection of the law and other inherent rights of an accused.

Two cases originally classified as “cold cases” were refiled after Task Force 211 did further investigations. Two (2) cases at the police investigation level were filed at the prosecutor’s level. A 15.3% positive development rate in addressing EJK concerns in a span of six (6) months is indeed encouraging. The Council has been advised that the said task force had initiated positive developments of these 34 cases and is continuously monitoring all 222 alleged EJK cases.

**NGOs Invited by Task Force 211**

From its inception, Task Force 211 invited various organizations, civil society groups and NGOs. Two (2) media groups accepted the offer and two (2) law schools also joined Task Force 211. These groups monitor individual cases that are pending in court for the purpose of ensuring full transparency and likewise to provide pro-active recommendations to the Task Force on the conduct of the trial. The website of the Task Force 211 is [www.taskforce211.com.ph](http://www.taskforce211.com.ph). KARAPATAN has been invited by the task force to be part of the process, but has unfortunately declined the invitation. Surely, the cooperation of civil society groups can assist us to pursue reported cases based on factual evidence and not on hearsay.