

# FACT SHEET

## Marilou Ranario

### Sentenced to death in Kuwait



Migrant worker:	Marilou Ranario
Age:	35 years old (born 17 August 1972 in Cariga, Leyte)
Hometown:	Surigao del Norte
Manila address:	Brgy. Holy Spirit, Quezon City
Civil status:	Married; husband is Lolito Dalubatan; they have two children, Raffy John & Roselle
Country:	Kuwait (arrived in 10 December 2003 for a 2-year contract)
Occupation:	Domestic worker
Salary:	45 Kuwait Dinar monthly (approx. P7,425)
Last employer:	Najat Mahmoud Faraj Mobarak
Case status:	Death sentence by hanging under final appeal with Kuwait's Supreme Court; a final verdict is expected in January or February 2008

#### OVERVIEW

Marilou, 35 years old, was arrested and imprisoned for the alleged murder of her female employer Najat Mahmoud Faraj Mobarak in 11 January 2005. She was sentenced to death by hanging by Kuwait's Court of First Instance on 28 September 2005. Kuwait's Court of Appeals upheld this sentence in February 2007.

Her case is now under final appeal with the highest court, the Court of Cassation. Oral arguments are set to start this November 13th with a final verdict to be released in the first quarter of 2008.

A closer look at her case reveals that Marilou is in fact more a victim than a criminal.

She is a victim of a systemic poverty so intense that it forces more than 3,000 Filipinos daily to work overseas just to survive. As such, despite Marilou's noble profession as a public school teacher, her meager salary was never enough to meet even her family's most basic of needs. So in her bid to earn a decent living, she grasped onto the knife's edge and went to work in Kuwait as a domestic helper in 2003. Clearly, Marilou went overseas because of her dream to give her children a better life – and not to commit a crime in a foreign land.

Marilou is a victim of abuse and human rights violations. She suffered maltreatment, verbal and physical abuse from her employer. She was also not given her salary, which was much needed by her family in the Philippines, for three months.

Marilou is also a victim of the Arroyo administration's criminal neglect. From January to September 2005, when she was sentenced to death by hanging, Marilou received very little assistance from the Arroyo administration.

In fact, from January to April, she was left completely on her own because it was only in April 2005 that she was even provided a lawyer to help with her defense.

In 2005, a Migrant International campaign to expose her plight and the government's criminal neglect of her case compelled Vice-President Noli de Castro to bring Marilou's parents to Kuwait for a visit with Marilou in prison in October 2006.

But instead of helping her case, VP de Castro may have even worsened it by boastfully assuring the family and the public that Marilou's life would be spared – especially considering how despite the letter of forgiveness or *tanazul* given by the family of Marilou's victims, the Court of Appeals affirmed in February 2007, the initial verdict of death by hanging.

Under Shariah Law, the personal aspect of the Marilou's case is already resolved with the provision of the letter of forgiveness. However, this aspect is outweighed by the public aspect which is now being heard by the Court of Cassation or Kuwait's highest court.

A major factor that may influence the court's final decision is the presence of a massive outpouring of national and international support in favor of Marilou.

The weeks remaining until the release of the final verdict in the first quarter of 2008 is the only window of hope left for Marilou and her family. Let us maximize this time to mount a strong campaign that will generate an overwhelming public opinion for Marilou Ranario – an abused domestic worker, a teacher by profession and a young mother whose sole and simple dream was to build a better tomorrow for her young children and her family.

## **CHRONOLOGY**

- December 10, 2003: Marilou leaves for a 2 year contract in Kuwait as a domestic worker
- July 4, 2004: Her recruitment agency transfers her to a new employer, Kuwaiti Najat Mahmoud Faraj Mubarak, 45 years old; her visa was never transferred to her new employer
- January 11, 2005: Marilou allegedly kills her employer; surrenders to authorities
- May 11, 2005: First Court hearing is held
- June 1, 2005: Court refers Marilou to have her mental status assessed; she is admitted to the Psychological Hospital; findings show Marilou was sane during the incident
- September 28, 2005: Marilou is sentenced to death by hanging by Judge Saleh Al-Houty and two other associates of the Court of First Instance of the Criminal Circuit Court
- December 2005: Marilou's family first find out about the death sentence after her father calls the Department of Foreign Affairs to inquire about the case; the family is denied a copy of the appeal the DFA states it submitted to the Court of Appeals for Marilou
- February 17, 2007: Court of Appeals upholds the death sentence
- September 15, 2007: Campaign countdown towards justice for Marilou is launched.