

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED DEPLORABLE CONDITION OF
EVACUATION CAMPS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs),
PARTICULARLY THOSE LOCATED IN THE MAGUINDANAO PROVINCE
WHERE MOST OF THE IDPs WERE EVACUATED

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 5 states: “The maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty and property, and the promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessings of democracy”;

WHEREAS, Article 2, Section 11 of the same states: “The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights”;

WHEREAS, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (PDI) published a special report on 17 August 2009, entitled “Life of Evacuees Deplorable at the Camps,” which underscored the plight of IDPs in coping with “less than humane living conditions” at the evacuation camps;

WHEREAS, the PDI reported that the prevailing problems in the evacuation camps are food shortage and dire health and sanitation conditions;

WHEREAS, regional health officials reportedly noted the prevalence of infectious diseases in the evacuation sites;

WHEREAS, as of June 2009, 94 deaths have been reported in the evacuation centers; of this figure, 46 were children and 36 were elderly people;

WHEREAS, from 11 August 2008 to 30 June 2009, the Department of Health-Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) recorded 320 deaths in the ARMM, 223 of which were caused by illnesses probably caused by poor sanitation, lack of access to potable water, and lack of food;

WHEREAS, figures on internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) showed 200,913 people staying in the evacuation centers;

WHEREAS, it was reported that at least three-fourths of those staying in evacuation centers are in Maguindanao province, where much of the armed clashes occurred;

WHEREAS, the extreme vulnerability of IDPs to human rights violations, their dire economic conditions, and the health hazards within areas of armed conflict, necessitate the temporary placement of affected persons in evacuation camps;

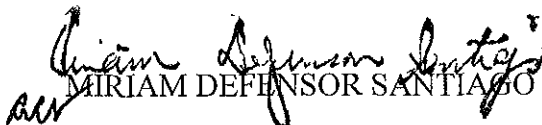
WHEREAS, the evacuation camps should give the IDPs such refuge that would eventually prepare them to be re-integrated to the community for the resumption of their economic and social life;

WHEREAS, the reported "less than humane conditions" and the alarming death toll due to illnesses purportedly caused by sanitation problems and food shortage fall way below the minimum acceptable care and treatment that should be accorded to IDPs, who have already lost much of their property and source of livelihood, and who have been displaced from their accustomed way of life;

WHEREAS, the proper government agencies must evaluate the living conditions in the evacuation camps and come up with measures to address the reported food shortage and sanitation problems;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation, on the reported deplorable conditions of evacuation camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) particularly those located in Maguindanao Province where most of the IDPs were evacuated.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

/ctr