

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 425

RECEIVED BY: *ji*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON REPORTS THAT RELIEF GOODS ARE EITHER LOCKED UP OR SOLD FOR PROFIT BY LOCAL OFFICIALS RATHER THAN RIGHTFULLY DISTRIBUTED TO VICTIMS OF TYPHOON YOLANDA

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 28 states that "Subject to reasonable conditions prescribed by law, the State adopts and implements a policy of full public disclosure of all its transactions involving public interest";

WHEREAS, the website of United Kingdom-based news agency *Daily Mail* posted last 7 December 2013 an article reporting that food aid flown from Britain to help the victims of Typhoon Yolanda are being siphoned off and sold for profit by corrupt local officials;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the emergency supplies delivered by military helicopters from the UK have turned up on the shelves of shops in Metro Manila shopping districts;

WHEREAS, the British news agency also reported that shelter equipment purchased using British donations has been locked up in government warehouses and stockpiled alongside rice and other food intended for Typhoon Yolanda victims;

WHEREAS, the news article mentioned that British expatriate Keb Darge has photographic evidence and first-hand accounts of supplies being locked up

rather than distributed in Eastern Samar, and that he faces death threats for stopping local officials from stealing aid in typhoon-hit areas in the region;

WHEREAS, Darge was quoted saying the aid isn't getting through to where it's needed, and that he has seen the deliveries arrive and disappear;

WHEREAS, Darge was also quoted saying only a tiny percentage of the aid is getting through, and that the situation isn't going to improve unless there's an investigation;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), an umbrella group representing 14 UK charities, expressed concern about evidence suggesting not all the £60 million of aid given by the UK is reaching those most in need, and that its officials are interested in finding out what items were being sold and where;

WHEREAS, although the Department of Social Welfare and Development has denied receiving food aid from the UK, there is a need for the DSWD to coordinate with other government agencies in ensuring that donations are released to the victims of calamities;

WHEREAS, stealing aid from disaster victims and the poor should be considered a heinous crime because unscrupulous individuals and corrupt government officials should be severely punished for turning the time for charity and national unity into one of opportunism and profiteering;

WHEREAS, the Philippine government, upholding the ideals of transparency and accountability, should investigate and answer these reports as it not only involves the welfare of our distressed countrymen but also our relations with countries that came to our aid in time of need;

WHEREAS, Congress should formulate policy and legislation to prevent the abuse of political power in distributing aid in times of disaster, especially when it involves international aid;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on reports that

relief goods are either locked up or sold for profit by local officials rather than rightfully distributed to victims of Typhoon Yolanda.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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