

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



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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 464

RECEIVED BY: *ju*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORT THAT THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT LACKS MEANINGFUL ACTION TO END IMPUNITY FOR EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS, TORTURE, AND ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES, BASED ON THE WORLD REPORT 2014 OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 11 provides: "The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights";

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

WHEREAS, the *Philippine Star* reported last 22 January 2014 that the international watchdog Human Rights Watch (HRW), in its World Report 2014, said that the Philippine government lacked meaningful action in 2013 to end impunity for extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances;

WHEREAS, the HRW report said that the Aquino administration has not made significant progress on its pledge to speed up the investigation and prosecution of cases of serious violations of human rights;

WHEREAS, the HRW report noted that only two cases of extrajudicial killings have resulted in convictions in the past three years, and even in those cases, the individuals believed most responsible for the killings have not faced justice;

WHEREAS, the HRW report found that the weak nature of human rights protections in the Philippines is also reflected in the surge of killings of journalists with little accountability;

WHEREAS, the HRW report said that 12 journalists were killed in 2013, bringing the total number of Filipino journalists and media workers killed to 26 since President Benigno S. Aquino III took office in June 2010, and that the police only arrested suspects in six of those cases;

WHEREAS, HRW officials reportedly said that the body count of Filipino journalists speaks volumes for the wide gap between the Aquino government's rhetoric in addressing rights problems and the reality on the ground;

WHEREAS, according to the news report, the HRW said the Philippine government's failure to bring to justice those responsible for the killing of journalists highlighted the climate of impunity for rights abusers in the Philippines;

WHEREAS, HRW officials said that the masterminds of the killings of radio commentator and environmentalist Gerry Ortega on 24 January 2011 and journalist Rowell Endrinal on 11 February 2004 remain at large;

WHEREAS, it was reported that detainees in government custody, including several children, described to HRW being tortured and otherwise ill-treated while being held during the Zamboanga standoff between government forces and the Moro National Liberation Front in September 2013;

WHEREAS, the HRW also noted that the so-called government "superbody" set up in 2012 to expedite the investigation and prosecution of cases of extrajudicial killings remained inactive during much of 2013 even as new cases were reported by domestic human rights groups;

WHEREAS, HRW officials said that the Aquino administration has said all the right things about ending abuses in the Philippines, but what's missing is the political will to translate those promises into action;

WHEREAS, despite numerous resolutions and investigations from both houses of Congress, extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances remain rampant in the country, made more worrisome not by reports from the media but the possible number of cases that remain unreported to this day;

WHEREAS, Congress should prioritize passing legislation ensuring the safety of every Filipino from falling victim to extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances, and facilitate

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 report that the Philippine government lacks meaningful action to end impunity for extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances, according to the World Report 2014 of the Human Rights Watch.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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