

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



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SENATE
P.S.R. No. 493

RECEIVED *[Signature]*

Introduced by Senator Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III

**A RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE
TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
ON THE KILLINGS OF RADIO COMMENTATORS JOASH A.
DIGNOS, MICHAEL D. MILO, TATA BUTALID, AND OTHER
MEDIA-RELATED KILLINGS IN ORDER TO COME UP WITH
SOLUTIONS TO MEDIA-RELATED KILLINGS AND
MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN FREEDOM OF THE PRESS**

WHEREAS, Article III, Section 4 of the 1987 Constitution provides that no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press;

WHEREAS, on November 29, 2013, DXGT radio commentator Joash A. Dignos, who is personally known to this representation, was shot dead in Poblacion, Valencia City, Bukidnon;

WHEREAS, days later, another radio commentator, Michael D. Milo of PRIME Radio FM, was gunned down in Tandag City, Surigao Del Sur last December 7, 2013;

WHEREAS, just four (4) days after Milo's death, radio commentator Tata Butalid of Radyo Natin was shot dead in Tagum City, Davao Del Norte on December 11, 2013;

WHEREAS, according to a case study, the Philippines presents an anomaly in the Southeast Asian region, as it is the only nation in the region with a constitutional guarantee for a free press yet the number of journalists killed annually remains high in relation to other nations in the region.¹ The Committee to Protect Journalists

¹ Lumbang, E 2009, *The Deadliest Free Press in Asia: A Case Study of the Philippines*.

ranks the Philippines as the third worst in its “impunity index” of countries that fail to fight violence against the press;²

WHEREAS, according to the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, as of November 20, 2013, there were twenty-three (23) journalists killed during the forty (40) months of President Benigno S. Aquino III’s term,³ twenty (20) of whom are the following:⁴

JOURNALIST	NEWS OUTLET	DATE OF DEATH
Fernando Solijon	DxLS Love Radio	August 29, 2013
Christopher Guarin	Radyo Mo Nationwide Tatak News	August 29, 2013
Romeo Olea	DWEB	June 13, 2011
Gerardo Ortega	DWAR	January 24, 2011
Joselito Agustin	DZJC	June 16, 2010
Desidario Camangyan	Sunrise FM	June 14, 2010
Jesus “Jessie” Tabanao	dyRC Radyo Calungsod	September 14, 2013
Vergel Bico	Kalahi	September 4, 2013
Mario Sy	Freelance	August 1, 2013
Richard Kho	Aksyon Ngayon	July 30, 2013
Bonifacio Loreto	Aksyon Ngayon	July 30, 2013
Mario Vendiola Baylisis	Radyo Natin DXNC-Radyo Suhnan	April 22, 2013
Julius Cauzo	DWJJ	November 8, 2012
Eddie Jesus Apostol	DXND Radio	September 1, 2012
Nestor Libaton	DXHM Radio	May 8, 2012
Aldion Layao	DXRP Radio	April 8, 2012
Roy Bagtikan Gallego	Freelance	October 14, 2011
Niel Jimena	DYRI-RMN Radio	August 22, 2011
Maria Len Flores Somera	DZME	March 24, 2011
Miguel Belen	DWEB	July 31, 2010

WHEREAS, the deaths of Dignos, Milo, and Butalid increased the number of media-related killings during the Aquino administration to twenty-six (26);

² Committee to Protect Journalists. Retrieved from: <http://www.cpj.org/reports/2013/05/impunity-index-getting-away-with-murder.php>; Retrieved on: December 10, 2013.

³ Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility. Retrieved from: <http://pcij.org/stories/23-journalists-killed-in-40-months-of-pnoy-worst-case-load-since-86/>. Retrieved on: December 4, 2013.


⁴ Committee to Protect Journalists. Retrieved from: www.cpj.org/killed/asia/philippines. Retrieved on: December 3, 2013.

WHEREAS, this representation believes the words of International Federation of Journalists President Christopher Warren, which are, "there is no worse form of censorship than violence;"

WHEREAS, there is a need to inquire upon the high rate of media-related killings and the increase in the frequency of these deaths in order to determine tighter security of media personnel for the protection of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of speech, of expression, and of the press;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE PHILIPPINE SENATE THAT THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE BE DIRECTED TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE KILLINGS OF RADIO COMMENTATORS JOASH A. DIGNOS, MICHAEL D. MILO, TATA BUTALID, AND OTHER MEDIA-RELATED KILLINGS IN ORDER TO COME UP WITH SOLUTIONS TO MEDIA-RELATED KILLINGS AND MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

Adopted,


AQUILINO "KOKO" PIMENTEL III