

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



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SENATE  
P.S.R No. 507

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE COUNTRY'S WORSENING REPUTATION FOR BEING ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD FOR JOURNALISTS, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS FREEDOM INDEX FOR 2013 BY THE REPORTERS SANS FRONTIÈRES

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 3, Section 4 provides: "No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances";

WHEREAS, Agence France-Presse reported on 12 February 2014 that the Philippines remain among the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, according to the annual report released by the media watchdog Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) or Reporters Without Borders;

WHEREAS, according to the news article, eight reporters in the Philippines were killed in the line of duty in 2013;

WHEREAS, it was also reported that the Philippines ranked 149<sup>th</sup> out of 179 in the Press Freedom Index formulated by RSF; the country ranked 147<sup>th</sup> in 2013, 140<sup>th</sup> in 2011 and 2012;

WHEREAS, the country ranked 156<sup>th</sup> in the PFI for 2009 when the Maguindanao Massacre—reportedly the world's worst atrocity against journalists in history—took place on November 23 of that year, where 58 people were killed, 32 of whom were journalists;

WHEREAS, according to the RSF, the World Press Freedom Index is a reference tool based on the level of abuses, the extent of pluralism, media independence, the environment and self-censorship, the legislative framework, transparency and infrastructure;

WHEREAS, the RSF said the World Press Freedom Index makes governments face their responsibilities by providing civil society with an objective measure, and provides international bodies with a good governance indicator to guide their decisions;

WHEREAS, the RSF reportedly said that their 2014 index emphasizes the negative correlation between armed conflicts and freedom of information, because the media, in an unstable environment, become strategic goals or targets for groups or individuals trying to control news and information in violation of the guarantees enshrined in international conventions;

WHEREAS, the RSF also reportedly said that security arguments are misused as grounds for restricting freedom of information in countries where the rule of law prevails;

WHEREAS, Congress should respond to this development by making sure the laws it passed—ones that protect human rights and guarantee press freedom—are strengthened and implemented;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PHILIPPINE SENATE to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the country's worsening reputation for being one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, according to the Press Freedom Index for 2013 by the Reporters Sans Frontières.

Adopted,

*Miriam Defensor Santiago*  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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