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SENATE
P.S. Res 533

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Introduced by Senator Poe

RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MASS MEDIA AND ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO LOOK INTO GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS TO RESOLVE MEDIA KILLINGS AND EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE MEDIA IN THE LIGHT OF THE DROP IN PRESS FREEDOM RANKINGS OF THE PHILIPPINES FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW BY THE PARIS-BASED REPORTERS SANS FRONTIERES

Whereas, Reporters Sans Frontières or Reporters Without Borders is a France-based non-profit, non-governmental international organization founded in 1985 that promotes and defends freedom of information and freedom of the press and has consultant status at the United Nations;

Whereas, the Philippines' ranking in the Global Press Freedom Index 2014 by the Reporters Sans Frontières continues to decline to 149th place of the 180 countries surveyed, down two points from the 2013 ranking of 147th;

Whereas, the Philippines' press freedom ranking across the world in 2013 had also plunged seven places from 2012, making journalism a dangerous profession;

Whereas, in a span of just two weeks in in 2013, three journalists were killed: Broadcaster Joas Dignos, 48, was killed in Valencia City, Bukidnon on November 29; 34-year-old Prime Radio FM broadcaster Michael Diaz Milo was killed in Tandag City, Surigao del Sur, last December 6 and 44-year-old Rogelio Butalid was killed last December 11 in Tagum City, Davao del Norte;

Whereas, according to the Human Rights Watch, a global non-government organization that conducts research on human rights, 12 media practitioners were killed in 2013, noting that there has been no significant progress to protect journalists and resolve media killings;

Whereas, in its "Killing the Messenger" report released on February 18, the London-based International News Safety Institute, however, said that 14

journalists were killed in the Philippines in 2013, next to Syria with 20 journalists killed and Iraq with 16;

Whereas, newly appointed United States Ambassador Philip Goldberg said that the U.S. views media killings and attempts to silence journalists in the Philippines as "deeply troubling not acceptable";

Whereas, on November 23, 2009, 32 journalists were among 58 people kidnapped and massacred in Maguindanao, southern Philippines allegedly by members of the powerful political clan;

Whereas, of the 196 people charged in that case, 88 remain at large four years after the massacre;

Whereas, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists ranks the Philippines as the 3rd worst in its "impunity index" of countries that fail to combat violence against the press and said that at least 72 journalists had been killed in the Philippines since 1992, excluding the three latest deaths in late-2013;

Whereas, the country's declining press freedom ranking is alarming, despite moves to probe media killings;

Whereas, media killings have no place in a democratic country like the Philippines;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Senate Committees on Public Information and Mass Media and on Justice and Human Rights to look into government interventions to resolve media killings and efforts to protect the media in the light of the drop in press freedom rankings of the Philippines for the second year in a row by the Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontières.

Adopted,


GRACE POE