

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. 607

RECEIVED BY: 

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 PHILIPPINES IS THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS IN ASIA

WHEREAS the Constitution, Article 2, Section 4 provides: "The prime duty of the Government is to serve and protect the people";

WHEREAS Section 16 of the same states: "The State shall protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature";

WHEREAS, the *Philippine Star* on 15 April 2014 reported that the Philippines has been ranked the most dangerous place for environmental activists in Asia, and third worldwide according to the international group, Global Witness;

WHEREAS, Based on Global Witness' latest report, environment and land protection led to the death of 67 in the Philippines, with two missing and presumed dead, between 2002 and 2013; the report added that the number is the highest in Asia Pacific, with Thailand trailing with 16 deaths related to environmental activism;

WHEREAS, Global Witness reportedly said that those who were killed in the Philippines opposed illegal logging, waste dumping, expansion of biofuel plantation, and construction of hydroelectric hydrofuel dams;

WHEREAS, the group also reportedly said that the country's weak justice system and law enforcement have jailed two perpetrators so far with the rest enjoying impunity for their crimes;

WHEREAS, according to the 28-page report, a number of environment protection-related deaths were masterminded by state officials and military, contracting gun-for-hire tandem to execute the extrajudicial killings;

WHEREAS, the report claimed that 14 killings can be attributed to the Armed Forces, three to local government officials and two to the police;

WHEREAS, the report cited the case of Gerry Ortega, an environmental journalist who was shot dead in January 2011 by hired gunmen in Puerto Prinsesa, Palawan; it was alleged that police findings pointed to former Palawan Governor Joel Reyes and his brother former Coron Mayor Mario Reyes as the mastermind behind the killing;

WHEREAS, according to the report, another environmental activist, Rolen Langala, was killed on 6 December 2013 for opposing an oil palm plantation in Opol, Misamis Oriental;

WHEREAS, the report likewise claimed that over the last 11 years, Brazil has the most number of environment related killings with 448, Honduras with 109 and Peru with 58;

WHEAREAS, it was reported that overall, at least 908 people were killed in 35 countries while protecting rights to land and the environment, with only over one percent of conviction rate;

WHEARAS, according to a member of Global Witness, protecting the environment has never been more important and has never been more deadly;

WHEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PHILIPPINE SENATE to direct the proper Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the report that the Philippines is the most dangerous place for environmental activists in Asia.

Adopted,

act

MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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