
Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO
CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE PRESENT CONDITIONS
OF CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE COUNTRY

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article III, Section 1, states that "No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws";

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article XIII, Section 1, states that "The Congress shall give highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic, and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequalities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good";

WHEREAS, in *Simon vs. Commission on Human Rights* (G.R. 100150, January 5, 1994), the Supreme Court said that human rights are the inherent and inalienable rights of an individual closely identified with his universally accepted traits and attributes and encompassing all aspects of his life;

WHEREAS, the purpose of our correctional institutions is to provide a venue where convicted criminals can be given the opportunity for reform in preparation for their gradual reentry into society;

WHEREAS, numerous reports have given information about the almost subhuman condition existing in the various city jails in the country, and if these reports are true our purpose to reform our convicts will be far from being realizable;

WHEREAS, the Quezon City Jail is an example of a correctional institution wherein the conditions under which the inmates live are simply below human standards;

WHEREAS, according to Chief Inspector Esquinas of the Quezon City Jail, their facilities can accommodate 800 to at most 1,000 inmates but at present there are 3,273 inmates in the said jail, equivalent to at least a 300% rate of overcrowding;

WHEREAS, on the average, 300 to 400 inmates are admitted monthly while only 200 inmates are released;

WHEREAS, the daily meal allowance of each inmate is a meager P10.00;

WHEREAS, in a *People's Tonight* article by Cory Martinez published 11 August 2000, it was stated that the councilors of Quezon City observed that overcrowding in the city jail brought about subhuman and deplorable conditions inside the jail, leading to inmates' untimely deaths from various diseases and to extreme psychological distress and trauma;

WHEREAS, even these individuals who are accused or convicted of committing crimes are still entitled to basic human rights such as adequate food and shelter;

WHEREAS, in a *Philippine Star* article by Jose Sison published 27 August 2004, it was stated that there is no doubt that under these conditions the human rights of Filipinos are violated, and they continue to be treated below their dignity as human beings leading them to easily develop the culture of hate and violence while inside the jails;

WHEREAS, the same article by Sison said that the conditions in the Quezon City Jail is almost typical, if worse, compared to the other jails throughout the country;

WHEREAS, it is only just that the government find ways to improve the conditions in these jails for the benefit of the inmates and society as a whole;

WHEREAS, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate to direct the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on the conditions of correctional institutions throughout the country and provide measures for their improvement.

Approved,



MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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