

SENATE
Senate Bill No. 1956

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Introduced by **SENATOR LACSON**

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AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9372, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT TO SECURE THE STATE AND PROTECT OUR PEOPLE FROM TERRORISM"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 9372, otherwise known as the Human Security Act of 2007 which is the primary law of the Philippines in its fight against terrorism may be said to have been prompted by the simultaneous terrorist attacks that happened in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos on February 14, 2005.¹ On that fateful day, three (3) blasts took the life of at least nine (9) innocent and unsuspecting people and injured at least a hundred more. The Abu Sayyaf Group claimed responsibility for such explosions and referred to them as the group's "Valentine's gift" to the government. It had since been infamously tagged as the "Valentine's Day Bombing".²

Ten years after the passage of the Human Security Act in 2007, the law has become a dead letter law as it has not been properly and efficiently implemented. In the previous year alone, at least four (4) terror attacks transpired in the country, such as the pirate attack of a Vietnamese vessel MV Giang Hai near Baguan Island in Tawi-Tawi that killed one (1) and abducted (7) seven individuals; the explosion of a grenade outside a Catholic church in Mindanao that wounded sixteen (16) persons on Christmas Eve; the explosion in a crowded market in Davao City that killed fourteen (14) people and wounded seven (7) more; and the killing of fifteen (15) Filipino soldiers by the Abu Sayyaf Group.³ Despite all these attacks, no conviction has yet been made under the existing law.

In fact, what may be called as the first application of the Human Security Act of 2007 happened only on September 7, 2015, when the Regional Trial Court (RTC) of Isabela City in Basilan proscribed the Abu Sayyaf Group as a terrorist organization.

The Global Terror Index has already ranked the Philippines as 12th most affected country in 2017. More recently, the occupation of Marawi City by the Maute Group, which revealed the many loopholes of the current anti-terrorism law, has given us more reasons to take such ranking seriously.

Thus, this bill is being proposed to correct the gaps in the existing law that prevents the law itself from being properly implemented by the law enforcers.

¹ Sponsorship speech of Sen. Manny Villar, 10/12/2005

² <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4264227.stm>

³ <https://frontera.net/news/asia/the-five-biggest-philippine-terrorist-attacks-under-duterte/>