

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)



SENATE
P.S. Resolution No. **516**

Introduced by **SENATOR IMEE R. MARCOS**

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ESCALATING ATTACKS ON
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

WHEREAS, *Article II, Section 22* of the *1987 Constitution* provides that the State recognizes and promotes the rights of indigenous cultural communities within the framework of national unity and development;

WHEREAS, *Article XII, Section 5* thereof provides that the State shall protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social, and cultural well-being;

WHEREAS, *Section 2* of *Republic Act No. 8371*, otherwise known as *The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997*, mandates that the State shall institute and establish the necessary mechanisms to enforce and guarantee the realization of these rights, taking into consideration their customs, traditions, values, beliefs, interests and institutions, and to adopt and implement measures to protect their rights to their ancestral domains;

WHEREAS, on September 2, 2020, the Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI) issued a statement condemning the escalating extrajudicial killings and violence against Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines amidst the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS, according to IPRI, the series of attacks affected 659 Aeta families, killed a Manobo tribe leader, and destroyed a Lumad school in a span of one week;

WHEREAS, IPRI's statement narrated that on August 21, 2020, members of the 7th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army supposedly dropped bombs on Aeta communities at the mountainous part of Barangay Buhawen, San Marcelino, Zambales, in addition to the harassment, physical assault, and forcible eviction of the Aetas to leave the community after the bombing incident. It was also alleged that the purpose of the forcible eviction was to give way to the mining explorations of Dizon Copper-Silver Mines. However, the military denied the accusations against them;

WHEREAS, IPRI likewise raised that on August 23, 2020, Manobo tribe leader Bea Milda Ansado was gunned down and disfigured by four unknown assailants in Magpet Town, North Cotabato. She was a staunch advocate for the protection of ancestral domain in the face of continued illegal logging and destructive infrastructure projects;

WHEREAS, IPRI further stated that on August 26, 2020, the Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc. (MISFI) Academy in Sitio Laburon, Barangay Matupe, San Fernando, Bukidnon, was destroyed by 50 armed men, who are alleged to be members of the Bagani paramilitary group under the command of the 89th Infantry Battalion Bravo Company;

WHEREAS, another international watchdog, Global Witness, reported that the Philippines is the deadliest country in Asia for environmental and land activists, with at least 43 recorded deaths, which include Indigenous leaders. The Philippines also had the highest number of recorded deaths in 2018 at 30. Global Witness likewise reported that Talaingod-Manobo communities in Mindanao are being threatened by mining projects and a hydropower dam;

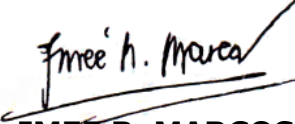
WHEREAS, a special written report from the Philippine National Police (PNP) of South Upi Municipal Station dated June 1, 2020 reported that on March 28, 2020, alleged harassment incidents transpired at Sitio Pumuguyon, Brgy. Pandan, South Upi, Maguindanao, wherein residents of Teduray communities have been harassed by armed groups;

WHEREAS, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) likewise reported that on June 20, 2020, families from an indigenous community in South Upi were forcibly displaced due to an armed encounter, which was at that time the latest in a string of attacks on the community and nearby villages. The Ministry of Social Services and Development Maguindanao recorded that around 677 families (3,385 individuals) were displaced. To make matters worse, photos of the temporary shelter where the displaced families stayed show that the guidelines for the COVID-19 pandemic were not followed;

WHEREAS, numerous civil society groups have demanded for an investigation into attacks on indigenous communities and it is high time to heed these demands;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, directing the appropriate Senate committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the escalating attacks on Indigenous Peoples.

Adopted,


IMEE R. MARCOS