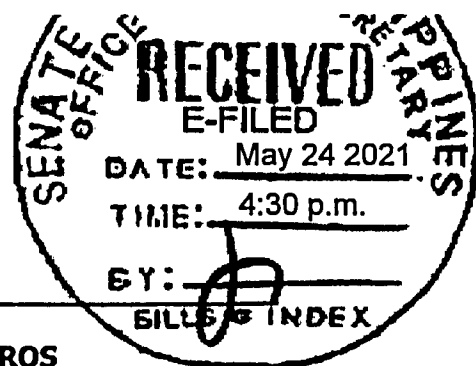


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

SENATE
P.S.R. No. 731



INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

RESOLUTION
URGING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE/S TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE VARIOUS INCIDENTS OF ABUSE
AND MALTREATMENT OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS IN THE HANDS OF
PHILIPPINE OFFICIALS OVERSEAS AND THE FAILURE OF FILIPINO LABOR
AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS OFFICERS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS AND
INTERESTS OF FILIPINO MIGRANT WORKERS

WHEREAS, based on the results of the 2019 Survey on Overseas Filipinos, it was estimated that there are over 2.2 million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) working abroad and about 10 million Filipinos or roughly a tenth of the country's population, living overseas as a way of escaping unemployment, low wages, and limited opportunities at home¹;

WHEREAS, while about 327,511 OFWs had been repatriated last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic², the sacrifices and contributions of OFWs, with remittances reaching USD27.01 billion during the first eleven months of 2020³, remain a constant and stable source of revenues that helps keep the Philippine economy afloat;

WHEREAS, there have been numerous reports that indicate that our fellow Filipinos have become victims of abuse and maltreatment, with some experiencing it from the very people that are duty bound to protect and defend them;

WHEREAS, during hearings conducted by the Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality on the trafficking of women in Syria, it was revealed that the trafficked women – some of whom were minors – experienced various forms of abuse, including sexual harassment, from embassy employees in the Philippine Embassy in Damascus, Syria headed by then- Charge d' Affaires Alex V. Lamadrid;

WHEREAS, multiple trafficked victims who were in the Damascus shelter spoke about the deplorable treatment by officials of the Philippine embassy in Damascus, and alleged that some employees forced a minor to recant her accusation of sexual harassment against an embassy employee;

WHEREAS, in October last year, the Philippine Ambassador to Brazil, Marichu

¹ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2018/12/filipino-workers-return-from-overseas-philippines-celebrates/>

² <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/dfa-releasesupdate/28480-dfa-repatriates-327-511-overseas-filipinos-in-2020>

³ <https://www.bsp.gov.ph/statistics/external/Table%2011.pdf>

Mauro, made headlines when she was caught in a security footage assaulting her 51-year old Filipina household staff, leading to her recall and the filing of formal charges against her by the Department of Foreign of Affairs;

WHEREAS, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin, Jr. posted a series of messages on social media ordering Ambassador Mohd. Noordin Pendosina Lomondot to stop the payment of blood money over the death of Jeanelyn Padernal Villavende, an overseas Filipino worker in Kuwait. In his twitter account, Secretary Locsin tweeted: "*Lomondot to report in writing the shenanigans going on there and what he's done about it... what he's done to stop it. We had this; he lost it; he's gotta get it back. All trips to Middle East for photo ops and palabas stopped. Travel money needed to match blood money*", suggesting another failure on the part of a Filipino diplomat who has taken an oath to promote and protect the rights and interests of Filipinos in the global community;

WHEREAS, while we have laws mandating the State to uphold the dignity of its citizens here or overseas, there have been clear lapses on the part of some of our Labor and Diplomatic Corps officers that result in the unfortunate and continued abuse and maltreatment of our OFWs;

WHEREAS, our embassies and consulates should be places of succor and comfort for our OFWs abroad who are already distressed -- not places where they experience maltreatment and abuse similar to what they experience in the hands of their employers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED to urge the appropriate Senate Committee/s to conduct an Inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the various incidents of continued abuse and maltreatment of OFWs in the hands of Philippine officials overseas and the failure of Filipino labor and diplomatic corps officers to protect the rights and interests of Filipino migrant workers.

Adopted,


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator

* <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1128534>