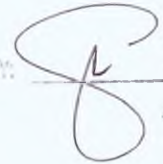


23 MAY 24 P2:42

SENATE

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P.S. RES. NO. 637

Introduced by Senator Francis "Tol" N. Tolentino

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND DANGEROUS DRUGS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE CONFLAGRATION OF THE MANILA CENTRAL POST OFFICE, A DECLARED IMPORTANT CULTURAL PROPERTY.

WHEREAS, the Manila Central Post Office is an important part of Philippine history which was first built in 1926 and designed by Filipino architects Juan M. Arellano and Tomas Mapua;

WHEREAS, the National Museum declared the Manila Central Post Office as an Important Cultural Property (ICPs) in 2018;

WHEREAS, establishments declared as ICPs possess "exceptional cultural, artistic and historical significance";

WHEREAS, the building currently houses the Philippine Postal Corporation, the government-run postal service that handles regular mail, parcels, and special stamp collections;

WHEREAS, before midnight of May 21, 2023¹, a massive fire broke out and consumed the over 100-year-old historic Manila Central Post Office;

¹ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/fire-manila-central-post-office-may-2023/>

WHEREAS, the fire which started at 11:41 PM of 21 May 2023 lasted until the morning of Tuesday when the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) declared it fire out at around 6:33 AM of 23 May 2023, more than thirty (30) hours after the blaze began²;

WHEREAS, response to the situation necessitated the coming together of more than 80 firetrucks as the lack of sprinklers in the iconic building and the light materials inside the building contributed to the intensity of the fire³;

WHEREAS, according to the Bureau of Fire Protection Chief Superintendent Nahum B. Tarroza, the fire caused an initial estimate damage of P300 million, which includes a collection of commemorative and antique stamps, court letters, and national IDs that were yet to be distributed⁴;

WHEREAS, BFP Chief Superintendent Tarroza likewise told reporters that the internal wooden structure of the building was burned all the way from the basement to the third floor;

WHEREAS, considering the important historical significance of the building and the valuable things and materials that were housed therein, it is imperative upon the Senate to look into the incident to determine not only the cause of the said fire incident but also to assess the extent of the damage it caused as well as the amount of critical or sensitive documents that were affected during the disastrous fire;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate direct the proper Committee to inquire, in aid of legislation, into the circumstances attendant to the Manila Central Post Office fire for the purpose of recommending legislative measure to improve the building standards to protect our important cultural properties classified as such under Republic Act No. 10066, otherwise known as the "The National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009" and the possible enactment of a law making the burning of historical sites as a special aggravating circumstance to increase the penalties therefore in case of commission of the criminal act of arson to the same.

Adopted,



FRANCIS "TOL" N. TOLENTINO
Senator

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³ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/fire-manila-central-post-office-may-2023/>

⁴ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/fire-manila-central-post-office-may-2023/>