

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



23 AUG -3 P5 :44

**SENATE**

**P.S. RES. No. 721**

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Introduced by **SENATOR RONALD "BATO" DELA ROSA**

---

**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DISCOVERY OF SEVERED HUMAN BODY PARTS IN A SEPTIC TANK AT THE NEW BILIBID PRISON, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF RECOMMENDING LEGISLATIVE MEASURES THAT WOULD ENSURE THE PROMOTION AND SAFEGUARDING THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF EVERY PERSON DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY**

1           WHEREAS, Section 2 of Republic Act No. 10575 otherwise known as "The  
2 Bureau of Corrections Act of 2013" provides: "It is the policy of the State to promote  
3 the general welfare and safeguard the basic rights of every prisoner incarcerated in  
4 our national penitentiary. It also recognizes the responsibility of the State to  
5 strengthen government capability aimed towards the institutionalization of highly  
6 efficient and competent corrections services";  
7

8           WHEREAS, the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) is mandated to safekeep and  
9 institute reformation programs to national inmates sentenced to more than three (3)  
10 year by virtue of Republic Act No. 10575;  
11

12           WHEREAS, a certain Michael Angelo Cataroja, who is incarcerated at the  
13 National Bilibid Prison (NBP) in Muntinlupa City, was reported missing on July 21,  
14 2023. To search for a missing inmate in the 10.87-hectare NBP compound, the  
15 BuCor sought the assistance of the Philippine Coast Guard through their PCG Search  
16 and Rescue Team;  
17

18           WHEREAS, during the course of operation of the joint search team, BuCor  
19 received a tip that a septic tank inside the NBP had been used as a "mass grave". As  
20 a result, the team concentrated their search efforts in the septic tank;  
21

1 WHEREAS, severed human body parts were found inside a septic tank at the  
2 maximum security compound of the NBP. Later, it was confirmed to belong to the  
3 missing Michael Cataroja;

4 WHEREAS, according to the Bureau of Corrections, the septic tank would  
5 need to be emptied first before the exact number of bodies could be determined;  
6

7 WHEREAS, no less than the United Nations require that no prisoner shall be  
8 subjected to, and all prisoners from, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading  
9 treatment or punishment, for which no circumstances whatsoever may be invoked  
10 as a justification and that the safety and security of prisoners, staff, service  
11 providers and visitors shall be ensured at all times<sup>1</sup>;  
12

13 WHEREAS, the recent discovery of mass grave in our National Bilibid Prison is  
14 alarming and a source of concern about the current state of our correctional system  
15 including the prison's security, and possible violence and negligence inside the  
16 correction facilities;  
17

18 WHEREAS, there is a need to conduct investigation to assess the  
19 administration and management of our prisons to meet the basic needs of persons  
20 deprived of liberty and determine the potential violation of human rights of those  
21 persons deprived of liberty found inside the septic tank;  
22

23 WHEREAS, it is necessary to determine the adequacy of laws, rules and  
24 regulations being implemented in our correctional facilities in ensuring the safety  
25 and security of persons deprived of liberty;  
26

27 NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, as it is hereby resolved, to  
28 direct the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights to conduct an inquiry, in  
29 aid of legislation, on the discovery of human body parts in a septic tank at the New  
30 Bilibid Prison, with the end in view of recommending legislative measures that would  
31 ensure the promotion and safeguarding the basic human rights and dignity of every  
32 person deprived of liberty.

*Adopted,*

  
**RONALD "BATO" DELA ROSA**

---

<sup>1</sup> Rule 1, The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).