

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 267

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND ILLEGAL DRUGS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE FINDINGS OF THE NETHERLANDS-BASED INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE'S LAWYERS WHICH LABELED THE PHILIPPINES AS THE MOST DANGEROUS PLACE FOR LAWYERS AND JUDGES, WITH THE END VIEW OF RECOMMENDING POLICY MEASURES TO PROTECT THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND TO PREVENT THE SPATE OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION DIRECTED AGAINST THEM

WHEREAS, the 8th United Nations' Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders includes the basic principles of the role of lawyers and mandates the protection of the rights of legal professionals;

WHEREAS, the Netherlands-based International Association of People's Lawyers (IAPL) labeled the Philippines, together with Colombia, as the most dangerous place for lawyers and judges due to the very alarming increase of violence committed against the members of the legal profession;

WHEREAS, since January this year, three lawyers and a law student were killed, namely Felidito Dacut (March 2005), Teresita Vidamo (February 2005), Ambrosio Matias and law student Leonard Matias (May 2005);

WHEREAS, on top of the said killings, a total of 11 cases of harassments and attacks against lawyers were documented this year by the Committee for the Defense of Lawyers. The attacks include the assassination attempt on the life of United Nations judge *ad litem* Romeo Capulong in March 2005, as well as attempts on the lives of human rights lawyers, members of the Public Attorneys Office and the inclusion of human-rights lawyers group Protestant Lawyers' League and Free Legal Assistance Group in the so-called "enemies of the state" document compiled by the military entitled "Knowing the Enemy;"

WHEREAS, the IAPL said that last year, seven members of the legal profession were reported killed including three judges. They were lawyers Juvy Magsino, Arbet Yongco, Victoria Mangapit Sturch, Edgar Calizo, Regional Trial Court judges Paterno Tiamson, Milnar Lammawin and Voltaire Rosales;

WHEREAS, these attacks against lawyers and judges are attacks against the legal profession as they impact on the independence and integrity of the practice of law;

WHEREAS, such attacks violate international principles and threaten the practice of law and the administration of justice;

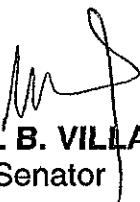
WHEREAS, a society where there is no rule of law and no one skilled in applying the law is a chaotic society where the weakest among us have no chance and the strongest among us have no restraint;

WHEREAS, the rule of law is the backbone of a democratic, peaceful and orderly society, and an efficient and trustworthy judiciary is the true guardian of our freedom and the last line of defense against tyranny;

WHEREAS, considering the foregoing, the government needs to immediately address the escalating violence against members of the legal profession, spearhead an investigation, and bring the perpetrators to justice;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to direct the Senate Committee on Public Order and Illegal Drugs to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, into the findings of the Netherlands-based International Association of People's Lawyers which labeled the Philippines as the most dangerous place for lawyers and judges, with the end view of recommending policy measures to protect the members of the legal profession and to prevent the spate of violence and intimidation directed against them.

Adopted,


MANUEL B. VILLAR, JR.
Senator