

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

PA 23



SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 534

Introduced by Senator Francis N. Pangilinan

A RESOLUTION URGING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE REPORTED KILLINGS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

WHEREAS, the Constitution guarantees full respect for human rights (Article II, Section 12) and expressly recognizes the value of the life of every person. As such, the Bill of Rights starts with a clear prohibition that “No person shall be deprived of life... without due process of law...” (Article III, Section 1);

WHEREAS, the Constitution likewise recognizes the right of the people to free speech and expression, and to peaceably assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances (Article III, Section IV);

WHEREAS, the Constitution further values the “role of independent people’s organizations to enable the people to pursue and protect, within the democratic framework, their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means” (Article XIII, Section 15);

WHEREAS, despite these explicit constitutional guarantees, summary executions of militant leaders and even mere members of people’s organizations have reportedly been rampant;

WHEREAS, human rights groups have reported that at least 700 people, including more than 200 activists, have been extra-judicially killed since 2001;

WHEREAS, the series of dreadful killings did not spare even student activists such as Karen Empeño and Sherlyn Cadapan, University of the Philippines students, who were reportedly abducted from their rented home in Hagonoy, Bulacan, early morning of June 26 of this year;

WHEREAS, even church groups such as the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) have been alarmed by and have accordingly denounced the reported spate of extra-judicial killings;

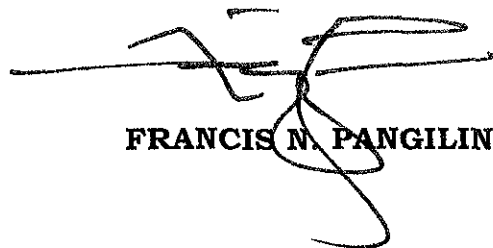
WHEREAS, the CBCP, in its 10 July 2006 pastoral letter “Shepherding and Propheying in Hope”, openly “join(ed) the outcry of groups that have denounced the increasing numbers of extra-judicial killings of journalists and social activists suspected as sympathizers of insurgents allegedly by some ultra-rightist elements in the military” and emphasized that “(t)he defense of human rights and of human dignity must itself be just. It has to be impartial, irrespective of belief and ideology”;

WHEREAS, the UCCP, on the other hand, has reportedly supported the call of its Canadian Church counterpart for the investigation by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of the alleged arbitrary executions in the Philippines;

WHEREAS, the reported summary executions of civilians, they be activists or not, constitute a blatant disregard for human rights and due process, and signals mounting lawlessness and a growing indifference to the legitimate advocacies of and pressing issues raised both by concerned civilians and people’s organizations – all of which have to be properly addressed in a democracy;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved, that the appropriate committee of the Senate of the Philippines conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on the reported extrajudicial executions since 2001, with the end-in-view of proposing legislation for the protection of officers and members of legitimate organizations, consistent with the guarantees of the Constitution.

ADOPTED,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis N. Pangilinan', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN