

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

SENATE
P. S. No. 170

INTRODUCED BY THE HONORABLE ANTONIO F. TRILLANES IV

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE BRUTAL SLAYING OF ENVIRONMENTALIST COUNCILOR ARMIN MARIN OF SAN FERNANDO, ROMBLON, AS WELL AS THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO INQUIRE INTO THE ISSUANCE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, UNDER FORMER SECRETARY ANGELO REYES, OF ALL LOGGING PERMITS IN THE ISLAND OF SIBUYAN, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF CAUSING THE CANCELLATION OF THESE PERMITS.

Whereas, San Fernando, Romblon Municipal Councilor Armin R. Marin, 42 years old, was brutally murdered at about 10:30 in morning of October 3, 2007 when hundreds of anti-mining advocates picketed in Sitio Olango in Barangay España, Municipality of San Fernando, Sibuyan Island, Province of Romblon, to express their opposition to the logging and mining activities in the area;

Whereas, Councilor Marin is a known and respected staunch crusader against environmental degradation, including mining, in Sibuyan Island, which is a nationally-protected area because of its rich flora and fauna resources;

Whereas, during the course of the protest activity, a heated confrontation ensued between the picketers and one Mario Kingo, 40, an alleged employee of Sibuyan Nickel Properties Development Corp. (SNDPC), one of several Philippine subsidiaries of Australian mining firm Pelican Resources Ltd., which is exploring for nickel in Sibuyan Island;

Whereas, the confrontation arose because Mario Kingo was seen sporting a gun, and Councilor Marin, who led the picket tried, to confiscate the weapon, knowing of the COMELEC gun ban in effect due to the forthcoming barangay elections;

Whereas, reports said that when Councilor Marin approached Mario Kingo, the suspect, without provocation, shot Councilor Marin who was hit through the mouth with the bullet exiting at the back of his head, and who died while being brought to the hospital;

Whereas, this vile and heinous deed was witnessed by the picketers, who reported that the alleged gunman immediately escaped in a motorcycle with the alleged help of two other guards of the mining company, known in the area as "Cleofe Brothers", and the mining company's community relations officer, identified as Leah Ladica;

Whereas, the brutal murder of Councilor Marin, the 23rd such killing of an environmental activist in the administration of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, is a blot in her administration's human rights track record and an assault to the fundamental universal tenet of respect to the sanctity of human life;

Whereas, despite the fact that the suspect Mario Kingo is now in the hands of the authorities, there is a danger that tension brought about by the murder of Councilor Marin will escalate and that the death of an elected local official allegedly in the hands of an employee of a mining company will haunt the people of Sibuyan Island, Romblon Province, and the rest of the country and will only intensify the protest of civic and non-government organizations and environmental groups against mining nationwide, as already indicated by the almost universal condemnation of Marin's murder;

Whereas, justice demands that Mario Kingo and his accomplices in the crime, if there are any, be swiftly brought to the bar of justice and the guilty be punished according to the severity of the crime under the law; and that for this reason, there is a need for the Senate to investigate more exhaustively the circumstances that led to the brutal slaying to enable it to formulate the necessary legislation regarding the conduct of mining companies and their personnel;

Whereas, the death of Councilor Marin brings to the fore the overwhelming opposition of the people to logging and mining in Sibuyan Island, and that this necessitates an inquiry into the alleged anomalous issuance by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources under former secretary Angelo Reyes of logging permits to mining companies, to enable the Senate to enact the appropriate legislation to preserve and conserve the rich natural beauty and resources of Sibuyan Island as a nationally-protected and conservation area;

Resolved, as it is hereby resolved, that the Senate direct the Committee on Justice to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, into the brutal slaying of environmentalist Councilor Armin Marin of San Fernando, Romblon, as well as the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to inquire into the issuance by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, under former Secretary Angelo Reyes, of all logging permits in the island of Sibuyan, with the end in view of causing the cancellation of these permits.

Adopted,


ANTONIO F. TRILLANES IV
Senator