


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

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

7 FEB -3 12 11

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: 

P.S. Res. No. 229

INTRODUCED BY THE HONORABLE SENATORS
MAR ROXAS AND BENIGNO S. AQUINO III

A RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE ARREST AND
“PROCESSING” OF JOURNALISTS AND MEDIA PERSONALITIES AFTER THE
MANILA PENINSULA STANDOFF ON 29 NOVEMBER 2007.

WHEREAS, the press is duly recognized by the Constitution as a counterbalance against the institutional abuse of power, through the transparent coverage of news events, in order to forestall any and all forms of abuse, deception or propaganda;

WHEREAS, Section 4, Article III of the 1987 Philippine Constitution protects press freedom by providing that “no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression or of the press,” which underscores the critical importance of a free and unfettered press;

WHEREAS, Section 2, Article III of the Constitution guarantees the right of the people “against unreasonable searches and seizures of whatever nature, and for any purpose” and against warrant-less and arbitrary arrests;

WHEREAS, Section 7, Article III of the Constitution recognizes “the right of the people to information on matters of public concern;”

WHEREAS, on 29 November 2007, a standoff occurred at the Manila Peninsula Hotel in Makati City between a group led by Senator Antonio Trillanes IV and Brigadier General Danilo Lim, and government troops that ended peacefully;

WHEREAS, after the 7-hour standoff, more than 50 journalists, both local and foreign, who were present to cover and report on the incident, were reportedly taken into custody following the arrest of Senator Trillanes and Brigadier General Lim;

WHEREAS, television news feeds showed handcuffed journalists and various members of known media organizations being loaded onto a bus that would take them to Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan so that they can be “processed,” without any due process and opportunities to seek legal remedies;

WHEREAS, in addition to the arrest of journalists, video footages and other equipment were also reported to have been seized and confiscated by authorities;

WHEREAS, the National Press Club (NPC), National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP), and various media organizations have denounced and condemned the arrests and seizures as being in violation of their constitutional right to press freedom;

WHEREAS, the arrest of journalists and seizure of media effects unavoidably create and impose a “chilling effect” on the press as regards its participation in highly sensitive and volatile newsworthy situations, political or otherwise;

WHEREAS, the arrest of journalists and the seizure of media effects, therefore, strikes at the very core of Philippine democracy, to which media is a primary component of, exemplified by its role in EDSA 1 and EDSA 2, where the support of the media was actively enlisted and extolled;

WHEREAS, the apparent confusion as to the reasons and circumstances that led to the arrest of local and foreign journalists, if remained unexplained, constitutes as a clear and present danger to the country’s democratic foundations, as well as to the civil liberties of the people, guarded and protected by our Constitution;

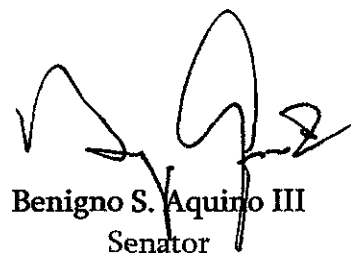
WHEREAS, it is imperative for the Philippine government to clarify the role of media in situations of conflict, such as what happened in the Makati Peninsula standoff, as well as to shed light on the treatment given to arrested journalists;

WHEREAS, an inquiry in aid of legislation is both essential and necessary to ensure clarification and transparency on the rules of engagement between the media and law enforcers in order to avoid confusion should similar incidents happen again in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Senate direct the appropriate Senate Committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the circumstances leading to the arrest and “processing” of journalists and media personalities after the Manila Peninsula standoff on 29 November 2007.

Adopted,


M A R Roxas
Senator


Benigno S. Aquino III
Senator