

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

7 FEB -8 P6

SENATE
Resolution No. 622

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Richard J. Gordon

**RESOLUTION TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF
LEGISLATION ON THE POLICIES OF THE ARMED FORCES OF
THE PHILIPPINES TO SAFEGUARD THE MEMBERS OF PEACE
MISSIONS TO INSURGENTS**

Whereas, a peace mission team composed of 15 members and led by Marine Major General Benjamin Dolorfino and Defense Undersecretary Ramon Santos was sent by the government to Panamao, Sulu to meet with members of the Muslim National Liberation Front (MNLF) led by Commander Ustadz Khavier Malik on February 2, 2007;

Whereas, the peace mission team was sent to investigate the reported encounter between soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and MNLF rebels, on January 18, 2007, allegedly leading to the death of ten members of Malik's group, as well as to respond to the complaint of the MNLF that the tripartite discussion between the MNLF, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Philippine government pursuant to the 1996 Peace Accord between the Philippine government and the MNLF, which did not push through as promised on January 20, 2007,;

Whereas, upon arriving at the MNLF lair in Panamao, Sulu, the members of the peace mission were prevented from leaving the camp;

Whereas, Major General Dolorfino earlier insisted that they were not taken hostage by the group as they were allowed to move freely within the camp, use their cellphones, give interviews, retain their firearms and even given a farewell party, but later modified his statement saying that their group was "hostaged" in the strictest sense of the word, as they were prevented from leaving the camp;

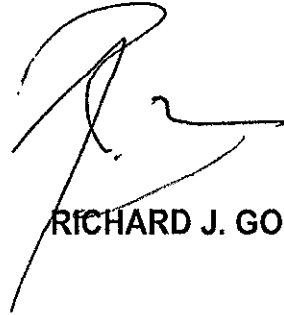
Whereas, a similar incident happened On October 10, 1977, when 35 soldiers, which included the commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division, Brigadier General Teodulfo Bautista and some of his senior staff, who were on a mission to meet MNLF chieftain Usman Sali to discuss the enforcement of the ceasefire or to come over to the folds of the government, were killed at a marketplace in the village of Danag in the Patikul district of Jolo;

Whereas, it is crucial for the safety and welfare of members of peace missions and negotiating panels sent to dialogue with rebel groups to institute safeguards to ensure that they are not exposed to unnecessary peril;

Whereas, it is necessary to investigate these incidents thoroughly, glean the lessons from these encounters to determine the risks and standardize procedures for peace missions that would ensure the safety of our soldiers placed in harm's way;

Now, therefore, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved, to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on the policies of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to safeguard the members of peace missions to insurgents.

Adopted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. J. Gordon', with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

RICHARD J. GORDON