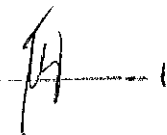


FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
 REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
 Second Regular Session)

8 SEP -1 2012

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: Senate Bill No. **2578**

 Introduced by Senator Manny B. Villar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides that everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.

This declaration does not apply only in other parts of the world. It also applies here in the Philippines where the security of person is often violated by the entity assigned to protect it, the State. Especially as the Philippines is a signatory to the UN Charter, which encompasses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The 1987 Constitution recognizes this when it provides that the right to liberty may not be deprived without due process of law.

Sadly, the Executive Department has been embroiled in controversy regarding the disappearance of persons, most notably, people who have been vocal in expressing their displeasure over the way the executive department runs its affairs.

In an attempt to curb the said acts of the State, the Supreme Court has passed several rules of note, starting with the writ of amparo, and most recently, the writ of habeas data.

But the disappearances of the persons continued,

This bill is earnestly sought to be passed so that the elements of the State, and even their representatives may be fully apprised that their acts are criminal and may eventually result in their sentence behind the cold bars of prison.



MANNY VILLAR

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

8 SEP -1 P 4:42

SENATE

RECEIVED BY:

Senate Bill No. **2578**

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

**AN ACT
DEFINING AND PENALIZING ENFORCED OR INVOLUNTARY
DISAPPEARANCE**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. Short Title. -This Act shall be known as the "Anti-Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Act of 2008."

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State values the dignity of every human being and guarantees full respect for human rights for which highest priority shall be given to the enactment of measures for the enhancement of the right of the people to human dignity, the prohibition against enforced or involuntary disappearance, the provision for penal and civil sanctions for violations thereof, and compensation and rehabilitation of the victims and their families. Further, no acts of torture, force, violence, threat or intimidation or any act which vitiates the free will shall be employed against the person abducted, arrested, detained, disappeared or otherwise removed from the effective protection of the law.

SEC. 3. Definition of Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance. - For purposes of this Act, enforced or involuntary disappearance shall be deemed committed when a person is deprived of his/her liberty, in whatsoever form for political reason(s) by agents of the State or by private persons or group of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by an absence of information, or refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty and information, or concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person thus placing such person outside the protection of the law.

In the event the prosecution fails to prove political motive, the deprivation of liberty of the victim who surfaces alive shall be punishable as kidnapping under the Revised Penal Code. If the victim is subsequently found dead or his/her disappearance persists for over three (3) years, he/she is presumed killed by those responsible for his/her arrest or abduction, and the act of enforced or Involuntary disappearance in either case shall be punishable as murder.

SEC. 4. *Permanent Prohibition of Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance.* – The prohibition of enforced or involuntary disappearance and the fundamental safeguards for its prevention shall not be suspended under any circumstances including political instability, threat of war, state of war or other public emergencies.

SEC. 5. *"Order of Battle" Not Legal Ground for Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance.* - An "Order of Battle", official or otherwise, issued by the military, police or any law enforcement agency of the Government, shall not justify an enforced or involuntary disappearance and shall subject the perpetrators to the same corresponding penalties provided in this Act.

SEC. 6. *Right of Victim of Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance.* - It shall be the absolute right of a victim of enforced or Involuntary disappearance to immediately inform his/her family, relative, lawyer(s) or a human rights organization by all means that are available and expeditious, by cellular phone, landline, courier, electronic mail, telegram, radio or other means, on his or her whereabouts and condition.

SEC. 7. *Duty of Person(s) Keeping, Arresting, or Detaining Victim(s) of Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance.* - Any person(s) keeping, arresting or detaining a victim of enforced or involuntary disappearance or who shall learn or have information of such fact shall have the duty to immediately report in writing on the circumstances and whereabouts of such victim to the nearest office of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of National Defense (DND), the City or Provincial Public Prosecutor, the

Commission on Human Rights (CHR) as well as the victim's family, relatives, lawyer(s) or to a human rights organization by the most expedient means.

SEC. 8. *Duty of Person(s) to Certify in Writing on the Results of Inquiry into a Possible Victim's Whereabouts.* - In case a family member, relative, lawyer(s), human rights organization or member of the media inquires with a member or official of any police or military detention center, the PNP or any of Its agencies, the AFP or any of Its agencies, the NBI, or any other agency or instrumentality of the Government, as well as any hospital or morgue, public or private, on the presence or whereabouts of a reported victim of enforced or involuntary disappearance, such member or official shall immediately issue a certification in writing to the inquiring person or entity on the presence or absence and/or information on the whereabouts of such possible victim.

SEC. 9. *Duty of Inquest/Investigating Public Prosecutor or any Judicial or Quasi-judicial Employee or Official.* - Any Inquest or Investigating Public Prosecutor or any judicial or quasi-judicial employee or official who learns of such disappearance and upon whom the victim of enforced or involuntary disappearance is delivered for inquest or preliminary investigation or for any other judicial process, shall have the duty to immediately disclose such circumstances and the victim's whereabouts to his/her immediate family, relatives, or lawyers or to a human rights organization by the most expedient means.

SEC. 10. *Official Up-to-Date Register of all Persons Detained or Confined.* – All persons deprived of liberty shall be held solely in officially recognized and controlled places of detention or confinement where an official up-to-date register of such persons shall be maintained. All information contained in the register shall be made available to the relatives, lawyers, judges, official bodies and to all persons who have legitimate interest in the information.

SEC. 11. *Visits of Inspection to All Places of Detention.* – Competent representatives of the Commission on Human Rights shall conduct regular, independent, unannounced and unrestricted visits of Inspection to all places of detention and confinement.

SEC. 12. *Liability of Commanding Officer.* - The immediate Commanding Officer or equivalent Senior Official shall be held liable for an enforced or involuntary disappearance. Any failure on his/her part, whether done with deliberate intent or negligence to avert an act of enforced or involuntary disappearance shall be taken as evidence of conspiracy.

SEC. 13. *Penal Provisions.* - (A) The penalty of *reclusion perpetua* shall be imposed upon the following persons:

- (1) Those who directly committed the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance;
- (2) Those who directly forced, instigated, encouraged or induced others to commit the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance;
- (3) Those who cooperated in the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance by committing another act without which the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance would not have been carried out;
- (4) Those officials who allowed the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance when it is within their power to stop the commission of such act;
- (5) Those who cooperated in the execution of the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance by previous or simultaneous acts.

(B) The penalty of *reclusion temporal* shall be imposed upon those who attempt to commit the offense of enforced or involuntary disappearance.

(C) The penalty of *reclusion temporal* shall also be imposed upon the persons who, having knowledge of the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance, and without having participated therein, either as participants or accomplices, took part subsequent to its commission in any of the following manners:

- (1) By themselves profiting from or assisting the offender to profit from the effects of the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance;
- (2) By concealing the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance, and/or

destroying the effects or instruments thereof, in order to prevent its discovery;

(3) By harboring, concealing, or assisting in the escape of the principal(s) in the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance, provided the accessory acts are done with the abuse of the official's public functions.

(D) The penalty of *prision coreccional* shall be imposed against any person who defies, ignores, or unduly delays compliance with a *habeas corpus* or writ of amparo proceeding filed on behalf of the victim of enforced or involuntary disappearance or to immediately follow or comply with an order of release by virtue of such proceeding or other appropriate judicial order.

(E) The penalty of *arresto mayor* shall be imposed against any person who violates the provisions of Sections 6,7, 8 and 9 of this Act.

SEC. 14. Preventive Suspension. - The perpetrators of and other participants in the commission of enforced or involuntary disappearance shall be preventively suspended and prohibited from performing any official duties upon the filing of the information or complaint in the proper court until the promulgation of judgment.

SEC. 15. Civil Liability. - Enforced or involuntary disappearance shall render its perpetrators and the State authorities which organized, acquiesced in or tolerated such disappearance liable under civil law.

SEC. 16. Unlawful Order. - An order from a superior officer or a public authority causing the commission of enforced or involuntary disappearance is unlawful and cannot be invoked as a justifying circumstance.

SEC. 17. Continuing Offense. - An act constituting enforced or involuntary disappearance shall be considered a continuing offense as long as the perpetrators continue to conceal the fate and the whereabouts of the persons who have disappeared and these facts remain unverified.

SEC. 18. *Exclusion from the Coverage of a Statute of Limitation.* - The prosecution of persons responsible for enforced or involuntary disappearance shall not prescribe unless the victim surfaces alive, in which case, the prescriptive period shall start to run from the date of his/her reappearance.

SEC. 19. *Exclusion from the Coverage of Special Amnesty Law.* - Persons who have committed the act of enforced or involuntary disappearance shall not benefit from any special amnesty law or similar measures that will have the effect of exempting them from any criminal proceedings and sanctions.

SEC. 20. *State's Protection.* - The State through Its appropriate agencies shall ensure the safety of all persons involved in the search, investigation and prosecution of enforced or involuntary disappearance including the victims, their families, complainants, witnesses, representatives of human rights organizations, media and legal counsel. They shall likewise be protected from any act of intimidation or reprisal as a result of the filing of charges. Any person committing such ill-treatment and/or acts of intimidation or reprisal shall be punished under existing laws.

SEC. 21. *Compensation to and/or Rehabilitation of Victims of Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance and/or Their Next-of-Kin.* - The victims of enforced or involuntary disappearance who surfaced alive shall be entitled to monetary compensation, rehabilitation and restitution of honor and reputation. Such restitution of honor and reputation shall include immediate expunging or rectification of any derogatory record, information or public declaration/statement on his/her personal circumstances, status, person, or affiliation by the appropriate government or private agency or agencies concerned.

The next-of-kin of a victim of enforced or involuntary disappearance may also claim for compensation as provided for under Republic Act 7309 and other relief programs of the Government.

The package of indemnification for both the victims and the next-of-kin shall be without prejudice to other legal remedies that may be available to them.

In order that the nearest of kin of victims of enforced or involuntary disappearance and the victims who surfaced alive maybe effectively reintegrated Into the mainstream of society and in the process of development, the State through the Commission on Human Rights shall provide them with appropriate medical care and rehabilitation free of charge.

SEC. 22. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) shall jointly promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act and shall ensure the full dissemination of the same to the public in consultation with other human rights organizations such as the Asian Federation Against Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance, KARAPATAN and other human rights organizations.

SEC. 23. *Monitoring of Compliance with this Act.* - An Oversight Committee is hereby created to periodically oversee the implementation of this Act. The group shall be headed by a Commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights and with the following as members: an Undersecretary of the Department of Justice, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Justice and Human Rights, respective Chairpersons of the House of Representatives Committees on Justice and Civil and Political and Human Rights and the Secretary General of the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND).

SEC. 24. *Suppletory Applications.* -The provisions of the Revised Penal Code shall be suppletory to this Act.

SEC. 25. *Appropriations.* - The funds necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be sourced from the contingent fund of the President for fiscal year in which this Act is passed and subsequently included in the budget of the Commission on Human Rights under the General Appropriations Act of the year following the passage of this Act.

SEC. 26. *Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Fund.* - In addition to the funding sources provided for in the preceding section, two percent (2%) of the filing fees in civil

cases and special proceedings before all courts, including the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court, shall be collected to constitute an enforced or involuntary disappearance fund.

SEC. 27. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid, the remainder thereof not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 28. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 29. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,