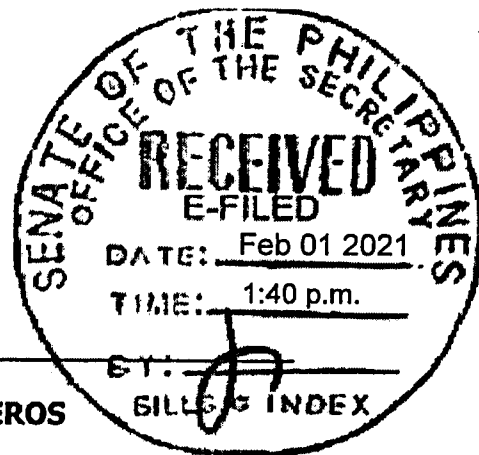


SENATE

P.S.R. No. 631



INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILY RELATIONS AND GENDER EQUALITY TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE ISSUE OF TRAFFICKED FILIPINO WOMEN IN SYRIA AND THE GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

WHEREAS, a Washington Post¹ article published on 25 January 2021 exposed the situation of dozens of Filipina women who were recruited to work in the United Arab Emirates but were subsequently trafficked to Syria to work as domestic helpers, without their consent;

WHEREAS, these women were recruited in the Philippines and told that they would be working in Dubai, but upon arriving, were locked up inside a dark and dirty dormitory and made to sleep on the floor until their 30-day tourist visas expired and they could no longer seek legal employment in UAE;

WHEREAS, when they expressed objection to being taken to Syria, they were physically and sexually abused and threatened;

WHEREAS, upon reaching Damascus, they were made to stand in a line while the employers selected who they wanted, with "selling prices" ranging from \$8000 to \$10,000;

WHEREAS, one of the individuals recruited said she was twelve years old when a recruitment agency arranged for her placement in Syria, and was slapped and denied food by her employer when she suffered emotional stress;

WHEREAS, many of these women chose to escape their employers' homes and flee to the Philippine embassy, but some have not been able to make the flight home because of their inability to obtain Syrian exit visas;

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a crime under Republic Act no. 9208, as amended by Republic Act No. 10364, or the Expanded Anti-Trafficking Act;

WHEREAS, studies conducted on the conduct of human trafficking in the Philippines demonstrate its largely gendered dimensions -- with an overwhelming majority of victims being women and girls, owing to their vulnerability, their economic disadvantage, and the increased global demand for sexual services and domestic servitude²;

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/trafficking-migrant-workers-syria-uae/2021/01/24/1d79e43c-3f0d-11eb-b58b-1623f6267960_story.html

² [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/577950/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)577950_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/577950/EPRS_BRI(2016)577950_EN.pdf)

WHEREAS, although the Philippine government through the Department of Foreign Affairs has already committed to repatriate the remaining trafficked Filipino women in Syria, it is imperative to conduct an investigation in aid of legislation in order to better understand the human trafficking supply chain as well as the processes and syndicates involved, in order to craft more effective legislation to prosecute offenders and protect the vulnerable;

NOW BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Senate of the Philippines to direct the Senate Committee On Women, Children, Family Relations And Gender Equality to conduct an investigation in aid of legislation on the issue of trafficked Filipino women in Syria and the gendered dimensions of human trafficking.

Adopted,


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator