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SENATE

P. S. Res. No. 1407

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INTRODUCED BY SENATOR VILLAR

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE PLIGHT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED CHILDREN IN MINDANAO, PARTICULARLY ON REPORTS THAT MANY OF THEM ARE MISSING SCHOOL DUE TO THE CONTINUING ARMED CONFLICT IN THE REGION**

*Whereas*, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), a Geneva-based leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement, the Philippines ranked first in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide by registering 600,000 evacuees in 2008;

*Whereas*, there are at least 240,000 IDPs inside and outside 127 evacuation centers as of May 2009, spread over 8 provinces of Mindanao and concentrated mainly in Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur and Shariff Kabunsuan;

*Whereas*, Notre Dame University in North Cotabato has estimated that 6 out of 10 IDPs in Mindanao are children;

*Whereas*, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) disclosed that more than ten million children have been traumatized by conflict over the past decade and experts say that those exposed to intense stress aggression and heightened fear will most likely suffer from psychosomatic disorders, anxiety and depression, aggressive and regressive behavior and emotional instability;

*Whereas*, UNICEF specified in its 2008 study, The State of Asia-Pacific's Children, that periodic armed conflict and social unrest in Mindanao as factors that have destroyed "the supportive environment needed for child survival" and added that constant disruption to the lives of children in Mindanao was a violation of their basic rights;

*Whereas*, the Save the Children Foundation released a comprehensive study in 2004 on the effects of the then ongoing war in central Mindanao on children, which pointed out the need to give long-lasting intervention for children torn in conflict;

*Whereas*, former UN Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict Olara Otunnu has said that children who have become exposed to the trauma of war, violence and the flagrant use of weapons have a tendency to become "instruments of war";

*Whereas*, civil society organizations, in an effort to give IDPs a voice, declared in the *State of the Bakwit Address*, “This war has left wounds so deep and wide... We are afraid for our children. Most of the bakwits (internally displaced) are children. Many of them are no longer in school. We fear the children will learn nothing but evacuation, war and hopelessness”;

*Whereas*, according to the Civil Society Network for Education Reforms (E-Net), 4 out of 10 children and youth aged three to 25 in Central Mindanao are missing schools due to armed conflict;

*Whereas*, the armed conflict in Mindanao between government forces and elements of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has forced a total of 18,546 Muslim children to stop studying, most of whom are in Maguindanao, with some 3,000 coming from the town of Datu Piang alone, according to Department of Education (DepEd) officials in the province: Now therefore be it

RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, urging the Senate Committee on Education, Arts and Culture and other appropriate committees, to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the plight of internally displaced children in Mindanao, particularly on reports that many of them are missing school due to the continuing armed conflict in the region.

Adopted,



MANNY VILLAR  
Senator