

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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SENATE P. S. R. No. 1525

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION,
DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ALLEGED LACK OF PROTECTION AND
SAFETY MEASURES FOR FILIPINO SAILORS

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 18 provides: "The State affirms labor as a primary social economic force. It shall protect the rights of workers and promote their welfare";

WHEREAS, in a 2 December 2009 article published in the ABS-CBN News, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Secretary Marianito Roque reportedly urged shipping companies to provide more protection for Filipino sailors after 16 of them were seized by pirates who took over a Greek-flagged supertanker off Somalia recently;

WHEREAS, Roque claimed that following the seizure of the ship Maran Centaurus, where 16 of the 28 crew members were Filipinos, a total of 71 Filipinos were being held by pirates operating on the lawless seas off the Horn of Africa;

WHEREAS, according to data from the DOLE, at least 229,000 Filipinos are aboard merchant shipping vessels around the world, the largest single group by nationality;

WHEREAS, Roque asserted that owners of ships plying the Gulf of Aden should drill their seafarers on safety precautions, in case they will be boarded, as well as evasion strategies;

WHEREAS, the crew of a second Greek tanker, the Sikinos, where another 16 of the crew were Filipinos, almost met a similar fate last December 1st, but evaded the attack using water hoses and flares to repel a dawn attack by pirates off Oman;

WHEREAS, pirates operating off Somalia were now ranging far beyond their original spheres of operations, and that a multinational naval fleet deployed in the area was being spread thin;

WHEREAS, its alarming that the interdictions are no longer happening in the Gulf of Aden, but are happening outside, off Tanzania, or even somewhere in the Indian Ocean;

WHEREAS, it was reported that while the Gulf of Arden is being patrolled, nothing is happening between the gulf and the Red Sea, since pirates are now operating beyond those areas;

WHEREAS, the government is counting on the ship owners to take steps to win the freedom of Filipinos and other crews detained by pirates;

WHEREAS, this report, and the others before it, about Filipino sailors and other nationalities being taken as hostages by pirates has reached an alarming proportion so as to merit a Congressional inquiry to find ways to save and protect our seafarers – considered to be the best in the world today;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to investigate these allegations in order to come up with legislation that would protect the lives, liberty and property of our sailors;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committees to investigate, in aid of legislation, the alleged lack of protection and safety measures for our Filipino sailors.

Adopted,

Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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