

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



Senate  
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 129

RECEIVED BY: *js*

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE PROPER SENATE COMMITTEE, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE REPORTED CORRUPT PRACTICE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ALLOWING FOREIGNERS TO AVAIL OF PHILIPPINE PASSPORTS FOR THE HAJJ PILGRIMAGE IN SAUDI ARABIA

WHEREAS, *The Manila Bulletin* reported in its 24 July 2013 issue that foreigners, allegedly aided by unscrupulous persons, have been illegally entering the country to acquire Philippine passports for the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca;

WHEREAS, according to the report, these foreigners are usually Malaysian and Indonesians sneaking through the southern part of the country;

WHEREAS, the news article said that the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) issued instructions to conduct an investigation surrounding reports from officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) that 32 Indonesians were intercepted by Border Crossing Officers in Tawi- Tawi;

WHEREAS, the article said the DFA, citing an investigation by the Bureau of Immigration (BI), informed the NCMF that the foreigners' purpose of travel to the Philippines is to avail themselves of Philippine passports for Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia;

WHEREAS, it was reported that the BI and the DFA sought the help of the NCMF in verifying the passport application of the foreigners because the procedure for acquiring Philippine passports for the Hajj Pilgrimage require NCMF certification;

WHEREAS, NCMF officers stated that is the Commission's standing policy that no foreigner shall be allowed to perform Hajj using the quota allotted for the Philippines, and only Filipino citizens shall receive assistance for their passport applications;

WHEREAS, the writer of the news article cited anecdotal narratives from Muslim communities in Quiapo, Manila of encountering "pilgrims" who speak only languages from Malaysia and Indonesia, and do not speak nor understand Filipino;

WHEREAS, Congress should investigate this corrupt practice, where elements from the DFA, BI, or NCMF could be involved, for undermining both Philippine sovereignty and the religious freedom of Filipino Muslims to participate in the annual Hajj pilgrimage;

WHEREAS, Congress, responding to President Benigno S. Aquino's call for the BI to o improve their watch over our ports and airports during his latest State of the Nation Address, should augment and strengthen the country's immigration laws to also improve our watch over our territorial waters where illegal aliens from neighboring countries enter;

WHEREFORE, be it hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the proper Senate committee, to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation, on the reported corrupt practice of government agencies allowing foreigners to avail of Philippine passports for the Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

Adopted,

*ass. Miriam Defensor Santiago*  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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