

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

SENATE  
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE  
P. S. R. No. 1144

RECEIVED BY. *J*

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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 REPORT THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT (DSWD) ROUNDED UP HOMELESS CHILDREN AND DETAINED THEM ALONGSIDE SUSPECTED CRIMINALS FOR THE VISIT OF POPE FRANCIS

WHEREAS, the Constitution, Article 2, Section 9 provides: “The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all”;

WHEREAS, the Constitution also provides, in Article 2, Section 11: “The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights”;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 7610, otherwise known as the “Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act” states:

...The best interests of children shall be the paramount consideration in all actions concerning them, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities, and legislative bodies, consistent with the principle of First Call for Children as enunciated in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. Every effort shall be exerted to promote the welfare of children and enhance their opportunities for a useful and happy life.

WHEREAS, British tabloid *The Daily Mail* on 17 January 2015 reported that the homeless children in Manila have been caged to keep them away from the streets during the visit of Pope Francis;

WHEREAS, hundreds of street children have allegedly been rounded up and locked up, some of them bound by chains, in cells alongside suspected criminals;

WHEREAS, the report quoted Rosalinda Orobia, head of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Pasay City, as confirming that officials had for weeks been detaining children as young as five years old in the areas visited by Pope Francis;

WHEREAS, in a separate report by *GMA News Online*, Social Welfare Secretary Corazon “Dinky” Soliman, Interior Secretary Manuel “Mar” Roxas II and presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda have denied the *Daily Mail*'s accusations;

WHEREAS, Soliman claimed that the photographs used by the British tabloid have been taken in the past, and not during the papal visit from January 15 to 19;

WHEREAS, regardless of when the photographs were taken, the media report provides the public reason to question the manner by which the DSWD implements programs aimed at rehabilitating street children;

WHEREAS, Congress, through relevant legislation, must ensure that the rights of children are protected and that children's welfare remains a government priority;

WHEREAS, the DSWD should implement long-term projects for the benefit of street children;

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 report that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) rounded up homeless children and detained them alongside suspected criminals for the visit of Pope Francis.

Adopted,

/kmp

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
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