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SENATE
P.S.R. No. 134

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by: Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE STATE OF THE CHILDREN AFFECTED BY THE RECENT MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ABU SAYYAF GROUP IN BASILAN, SULU AND OTHER CONFLICT-AREAS TOWARDS THE END VIEW OF ENSURING THEIR PROTECTION, SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

WHEREAS, in accordance with Republic Act No. 10821, or the "Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act," it is the policy of the State "to protect the fundamental rights of children before, during, and after disasters and other emergency situations when children are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances that affect their survival and normal development;"

WHEREAS, the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act provides for the establishment of a Comprehensive Emergency Program to protect children and support their immediate recovery in times of disaster and emergency. This Program includes the identification of safe locations as evacuation centers for children and families, and establishment of child-friendly spaces. It also provides for the immediate delivery of basic necessities, and health and educational services tailored to the needs of the affected children;

WHEREAS, the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act mandates DSWD to engage all relevant government agencies and stakeholders for the implementation of the Comprehensive Emergency Program. Local government units (LGUs) shall integrate the same in their development and Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (LDRRM) plans and budget;

WHEREAS, the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act further mandates the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) to conduct child-responsive training for all responders including community and barangay leaders, school personnel and rescuers;

WHEREAS, according to recent news reports, close to 4,000 families have been displaced from their homes because of the recent intensified offensive on the bandit Abu Sayyaf Group by the Philippine military in the province of Sulu. Based on the reports from the ARMM-Humanitarian Emergency Action Response Team (ARMM-HEART), 1,321 families are from the municipality of Maimbung, while 1,122 families are from Patikul, 1,113 from Parang, 400 from Indanan, and 29 families from Panamao.

ARMM-HEART assured that it is providing relief and humanitarian assistance to the displaced families;¹

WHEREAS, earlier in July, at least 3,400 families, or more than 17,000 persons, were reported by the International Committee of the Red Cross to have been displaced in the province of Basilan by major clashes between government troops and the Abu Sayyaf. ICRC reported that families displaced were from municipalities of Tipo-tipo, Al-Barka and Ungkaya Pukan. The ICRC also reported that shelling and air strikes occurred "on an almost daily basis over the past three weeks." The ICRC and the ARMM-HEART said that they were distributing relief assistance to the displaced families;²

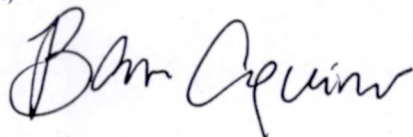
WHEREAS, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reported that as of September 5, some 1,729 family heads with 6,218 dependents from the Basilan municipalities of Sumisip, Tuburan, Moh Ajul and Akbar, were evacuated to safer areas. DSWD said it is assisting the affected LGUs in providing food and non-food to the families. The LGU of Basilan has distributed a total of 2,311 family food packs to the internally displaced persons, while the DSWD-Field Office-IX has delivered 6,000 family food packs to the province, according to news reports;³

WHEREAS, President Duterte signed Proclamation No. 55 last September 5, 2016, placing Mindanao under a state of emergency on account of lawless violence, following the bombing of a night market that killed 14 people in Davao City. The Proclamation directs the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) to undertake measures within the bounds of the Constitution and existing laws to suppress all forms of lawless violence in Mindanao and prevent lawless violence from spreading elsewhere across the country;

WHEREAS, with thousands of families already displaced by recent military operations, the deployment of more soldiers to the Abu Sayyaf's strongholds, and government's commitment to pursue its campaign to quell the Abu Sayyaf Group, there is a need to ensure that all children in conflict-affected areas are protected from the crossfire, and that the comprehensive policies and programs envisioned in Republic Act No. 10821 are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of children during this state of emergency;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate of the Philippines to direct the appropriate Senate Committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the state of the children affected by the recent military operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan, Sulu and other conflict-areas towards the end view of ensuring their protection, safety and well-being.

Adopted,



¹ <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/zamboanga/local-news/2016/09/09/armm-gives-aid-displaced-families-496695>

² <http://www.philstar.com/nation/2016/07/29/1607979/basilan-fighting-displaces-17000-people-says-red-cross>

³ <http://www.bworldonline.com/content.php?section=Nation&title=military-engages-abu-sayyaf-in-another-firefight&id=133060>