



SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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Senate Joint Resolution No. 4

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Ana Theresia "Risa" Hontiveros-Baraquel

**JOINT RESOLUTION DECLARING SEPTEMBER OF EVERY YEAR TO
BE THE NATIONAL MONTH FOR TRUTH-TELLING**

WHEREAS, President Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr., promulgated Proclamation No. 1081 on September 21, 1972, placing the Philippines under martial law, and commanding the armed forces to enforce obedience to all decrees, orders, and regulations issued by his Office;

WHEREAS, the declaration of martial law was premised on a purported state of lawlessness and disorder caused by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist insurgents waging an armed rebellion against the government, as well as a Muslim secessionist movement in Mindanao;

WHEREAS, martial law was used by President Marcos as a vehicle to seize unlimited State power, which resulted in gross and wanton violations of fundamental human rights including, among others, the suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, the muzzling of the press, and totalitarian restrictions on the rights of assembly and free speech;

WHEREAS, from the time martial law was declared, to February 25, 1986, when President Marcos was ousted after twenty years of authoritarian rule following the events of the EDSA People Power Revolution, it is estimated that 70,000 Filipinos were imprisoned, 34,000 tortured, and 3,240 killed;

WHEREAS, events that occurred during the martial law period eventually led the Supreme Court, in *Marcos vs. Manglapus*, G.R. No. 88211, October 27, 1989, to characterize President Marcos as a dictator who caused political, economic, and social havoc in the country:

This case is unique. It should not create a precedent, for the case of a dictator forced out of office and into exile after causing twenty years of political, economic and social havoc in the country and who within the short space of three years seeks to return, is in a class by itself.

WHEREAS, after trial, the United States District Court of Hawaii, found President Marcos to be personally responsible for acts of torture, summary execution, disappearance, arbitrary detention, and numerous other atrocities, and held him liable to 10,059 plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit for 1.2 billion US Dollars in exemplary damages, and 766 million US Dollars in compensatory damages;

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 10368 has made it an express policy of the State to recognize the heroism and sacrifice of Filipinos victimized by the summary executions, torture, and enforced or involuntary disappearances that occurred during the Martial law period:

Consistent with the foregoing, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to recognize the heroism and sacrifices of all Filipinos who were victims of summary execution, torture, enforced or involuntary disappearance and other gross human rights violations committed during the regime of former President Ferdinand E. Marcos covering the period from September 21, 1972 to February 25, 1986 and restore the victims' honor and dignity. The State hereby acknowledges its moral and legal obligation to recognize and/or provide reparation to said victims and/or their families for the deaths, injuries, sufferings, deprivations and damages they suffered under the Marcos regime.

WHEREAS, aside from human rights violations committed during the martial law period, it is estimated that President Marcos, his family, and crony capitalists were also able to amass ill-gotten wealth amounting to 10 billion US Dollars – about 3.6 billion US Dollars of which has thus far been recovered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government;

WHEREAS, after the Marcos family absconded to Hawaii, United States Customs agents discovered among their belongings 7.7 million US dollars-worth of “household effects,” consisting primarily of diamonds, emeralds, pearls, gold and silver, assorted jewelry and watches, crates of cash, and deposit slips for banks in the United States, Switzerland, and the Cayman Islands;

WHEREAS, in *Republic vs. Sandiganbayan, et al.*, G.R. No. 152154, July 15, 2003, the Supreme Court ruled that the Swiss deposits of the Marcoses - amounting to some 658 million US Dollars - were considerably out of proportion to their known lawful income, and ordered that the money be forfeited in favor of the Philippine government;

WHEREAS, in *Marcos, Jr. vs. Republic*, G.R. No. 189434, the Court again noted that the assets and properties acquired by President Marcos and his wife Imelda were manifestly and patently disproportionate to their aggregate salaries as public officials;

WHEREAS, given its significance to the country's history, there is a need to not only acknowledge, honor, and commemorate the victims of martial law, but to pause, as well, for reflection upon the social, economic, and political conditions that allowed a dictatorship to take root and flourish in the Philippines, and, lastly, work towards genuine reconciliation as a means of repairing the lingering divisions caused by fourteen years of authoritarian rule on our society, institutions, and people;

WHEREAS, one of the ways this can be achieved is to designate one month out of every year as a time for national truth-telling, reflection, and reconciliation;

WHEREAS, Section 27 of Republic Act No. 10368 states that “the teaching of Martial Law atrocities, the lives and sacrifices of human rights violations victims in our history are included in the basic, secondary, and tertiary education curricula” and the designation of September as truth-telling month is consistent with this mandate; and,

WHEREAS, the truth-telling month seeks to educate the youth on the democratic values and practices the nation adheres to and experiences today, and to contrast it with the oppressive social order installed by Marcos.

NOW THEREFORE,

RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Philippine Senate and the House of Representatives jointly declare September, the month in 1972 martial law was declared, to be a month for national truth-telling, reflection, and reconciliation and jointly urge all schools and other educational institutions to conduct month-long educational activities to commemorate the declaration of Martial Law.

Adopted.

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