
Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE SERIES OF
HARASSMENT CASES AND DEATHS OF JOURNALISTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

WHEREAS, freedom of the press is one of the rights enshrined in the Constitution;

WHEREAS, in order for the members of the media to be able to perform their vital role as watchdogs of society against unlawful activities including corruption of politicians and public officers, they must be provided with a safe environment;

WHEREAS, numerous articles have been published reporting cases of harassment and deaths of journalists in the Philippines;

WHEREAS, according to a report by Jeff Lovitt, Director of Communications of Transparency International, the Philippines is one of the most dangerous countries, alongside Columbia and Russia, for journalists investigating corruption;

WHEREAS, in an article by Carlos Conde: "The main reason for the Philippine press's failure to cover human rights issues substantially...is the fact that the Philippine press itself is a victim of various human rights violation";

WHEREAS, the death toll for journalists in 2003 alone has reached seven;

WHEREAS, various articles in print reported that:

- (1) On 12 August 2004 Fernando Consignado, a Radio Veritas Volunteer, was found dead with gunshot wound in his head;
- (2) On 9 August 2004 Jonathan Abayon, a radio reporter for dx-BB RGMA's Super Radio, was reported to be under critical conditions after being shot;
- (3) On 5 August 2004 Manalo was shot in Bauan, Batangas;
- (4) On 2 December 2003, broadcaster Nelson Nadura of radio station DYME in Masbate was shot dead by gunmen;
- (5) Since President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo came into power in 14 January 2001, 14 journalists have been murdered;
- (6) Ruel Endrinal, a blocktimer and political commentator on radio station DZRC in Legaspi City, Albay was killed on 11 February 2004;

- (7) On an annual basis, the murder rate of journalists under the Arroyo administration is 4.6;
- (8) Edgar Damalerio, managing director of The Zamboanga Scribe, was allegedly murdered by a policeman in 2002;

WHEREAS, because of these physical attacks, harassment, and intimidation, most Filipino journalists live in dire conditions aside from being overworked;

WHEREAS, in order for a democratic society to thrive well journalists should be provided a climate free of fear and intimidation;

WHEREAS, it is now time for the government to take serious actions to investigate the violations against Filipino journalists and provide measures to assure their safety and freedom in practicing their profession;

WHEREFORE, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved by the senate, to direct the Senate Committee on Public Information to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation into the numerous instances of harassment and deaths of Filipino journalists.

Approved,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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