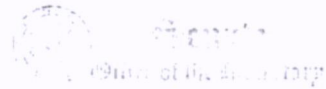


SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF THE PHILIPPINES  
Second Regular Session



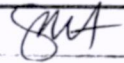
SENATE  
P.S. Res 532

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Introduced by Senator Poe

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ROSHERL LUMPAPAC 

**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND DANGEROUS DRUGS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE ANOMALOUS DEATH OF EDUARDO SERINA SR., A FARMER WHO REPORTEDLY DIED IN POLICE CUSTODY WHILE ALLEGEDLY HARMING HIMSELF, WITH THE END VIEW OF ENDING PRACTICES OF POLICE BRUTALITY AND ENSURING THAT POLICE PROCEDURE IN HANDLING PERSONS UNDER DETENTION IS STRICTLY FOLLOWED**

**WHEREAS**, the first sentence of Section 4, Article 2 of the Constitution states that: "THE PRIME DUTY OF THE GOVERNMENT IS TO SERVE AND PROTECT THE PEOPLE..." (emphasis supplied);

**WHEREAS**, Section 5, Article 3 of the Constitution is clear that the protection of life and liberty is no less important than the maintenance of peace and order;

**WHEREAS**, recently, photos of a bloodied man in his forties surrounded by police officers went viral on social media;

**WHEREAS**, various media later reported that the photo was of a certain Eduardo Serina Sr., a farmer from Sibuco, Zamboanga del Norte, who was accosted and beaten by the police after he refused to open his backpack;

**WHEREAS**, the photo, which was posted online by Rosherl Lumpapac, Eduardo's wife's employer, was the last image of Eduardo where he was seen alive;

**WHEREAS**, Rosherl claimed that Eduardo was allegedly in the city to pay for his 11-year-old son's hospital bill; however, he probably got lost looking for the bus terminal and ended up in RT Lim Boulevard where policemen checked him and demanded that he open his backpack;

1/1/17

**WHEREAS**, in an official statement by the Zamboanga police, Serina died of self-inflicted injuries;

**WHEREAS**, police claimed that he was seen slapping his face, hitting his chest and banging his head on the cemented wall before trying to escape by jumping over a fence;

**WHEREAS**, the police also claimed that Serina pushed an iron flower vase towards them but fell on him instead, resulting in his fatal injuries; however, when Zamboanga City police chief, Senior Insp. Edwin Duco, was requested by reporters for a copy of the police blotter report and the medical report, Duco refused to release both documents, citing “guidelines from Camp Crame” and the alleged refusal of hospital authorities to release the former;

**WHEREAS**, Frederick Capin, regional director of the Commission on Human Rights reportedly expressed disbelief, saying that it is not likely for anyone already arrested to hurt himself as he is already in fear;

**WHEREAS**, in response to the anomalous nature of Serina’s death, Director Chief Superintendent Billy Beltran, chief of police of Police Regional Office 9, created a fact-finding team led by Russel Ebillo, acting regional director of the Police Regional Internal Affairs Service 9 (IAS-9) to investigate the matter;

**WHEREAS**, the manner by which the police handled and treated Serina is in stark contrast to how those who have more in life are treated – for example, Ralph Trangia, murder suspect of Horacio “Atio” Castillo III, was reportedly provided security upon arrival from the airport and was treated as an “ordinary citizen” because there was no warrant yet for Trangia’s arrest;

**WHEREAS**, those who have less in life should have more in law; and yet, in a recent survey, more Filipinos believe that only the poor are killed in the war of drugs;<sup>1</sup> it therefore appears ironic that people feel safer at home or on the streets than at the custody of cops;

**WHEREAS**, there is no place for hubris in public service; policemen, as public servants, should ensure that even they obey and follow the very law that they enforce;

**WHEREAS**, Serina’s death hopefully will embolden citizens to speak out against irregularities during police investigations and will hopefully ensure that the police will stick to their motto “to serve and protect” in the execution of their duties;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-philippines-drugs/most-filipinos-believe-drug-war-kills-poor-people-only-survey-shows-idUSKCN1C71HH>

**WHEREAS**, it is imperative that policymakers remind rogue cops that no one is above the law and flimsy excuses will not exculpate them from legal charges;

**WHEREAS**, policymakers should also consider requiring and, corollary, consider allocating a budget for CCTV cameras in all precincts and impose administrative sanctions on the heads of precincts who, through fault or gross negligence, are unable to ensure that these are functional and operational;

**BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, by the Senate of the Philippines, to urge the Senate committee on public order and dangerous drugs to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the anomalous death of Eduardo Serina Sr., a farmer who reportedly died in police custody while allegedly harming himself, with the end view of ending practices of police brutality and ensuring that police procedure in handling persons under detention is strictly followed.

*Adopted,*

  
**GRACE POE**