



SENATE

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P.S. Res. No. 47

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

**A RESOLUTION URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC ORDER AND DANGEROUS DRUGS AND JUSTICE TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE SPATE OF KILLINGS THAT DEVASTATED THE ISLAND OF NEGROS AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT ALLOWED FOR THE LAWLESS VIOLENCE THAT CLOAKED THE PROVINCE, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ATTAINING JUSTICE FOR THE SLAIN VICTIMS AND CREATING POLICIES THAT WILL ADEQUATELY ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE CONFLICT IN THE PROVINCE**

**WHEREAS**, last July 23, 2019, lawyer Anthony Trinidad was gunned multiple times by unidentified men. The encounter left his wife, Nova Marie Trinidad, and an innocent bystander injured<sup>1</sup>. His death marked the beginning of a bloody week in Negros Oriental, one that will be characterized by daily killings and torn families;

**WHEREAS**, on July 24, only a day after Atty. Trinidad's death, 3 people were executed in 2 separate killings<sup>2</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the killing spree that ravaged Negros Oriental seemed to be unstoppable as it claimed more lives, sparing no one, not even 1-year old Marjon Ocampo, who died with his father last July 25 when their family was attacked by unidentified suspects<sup>3</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, last July 25, 6 more people were killed. Their names are: Arthur Bayawa and Ardale Bayawa<sup>4</sup>, shot dead by men while they were asleep; Romeo Alipan, who was shot dead when his house was invaded by 20 armed men; Reden Eleuterio<sup>5</sup>, who was shot by a riding-in-tandem while travelling; Raklin Astorias<sup>6</sup>, also shot to death; and Marlon Ocampo, the father of Marjon, who was killed when unidentified gunmen barged into their house and killed him and his son while injuring his wife and young daughter<sup>7</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, on July 26, Frederico Sabejon<sup>8</sup> was killed in his own home by still unidentified gunmen;

**WHEREAS**, Last July 27, 4 more people were killed. Nestor Posadas<sup>9</sup>, Roman Jalandoni, Edsel Enardecido, and Leo Enardecido<sup>10</sup>, were all killed in the supposed safety of their own homes;

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/236207-lawyer-anthony-trinidad-killed-negros-oriental-ambush-july-2019>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/236350-shooting-incidents-negros-oriental-july-18-25-2019>

<sup>3</sup> <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1147121/oratio-imperata-ringing-of-bells-mark-urgency-of-church-plea-vs-negros-bloodshed>

<sup>4</sup> <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/25/19/school-principal-2-others-killed-as-spate-of-violence-grips-negros-city>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/236350-shooting-incidents-negros-oriental-july-18-25-2019>

<sup>6</sup> <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/247370/4-shot-dead-in-3-separate-incidents-in-negros-oriental>

<sup>7</sup> <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1147121/oratio-imperata-ringing-of-bells-mark-urgency-of-church-plea-vs-negros-bloodshed>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/236432-councilor-ex-mayor-killed-negros-oriental-shootings-july-2019>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.manilatimes.net/the-killing-machine-in-negros-oriental/591617/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/236432-councilor-ex-mayor-killed-negros-oriental-shootings-july-2019>

**WHEREAS**, last July 18, 4 of our policemen were in the process of meeting with an intel source when they were supposedly ambushed by 40 armed men and executed by a gunshot to the head<sup>11</sup>. According to reports, the bodies of the policemen bore the evidence of torture, which included fractured ribs and hematoma;

**WHEREAS**, since January 20, 2017, the island of Negros has been the last resting place of 83 people who had been the victims of extrajudicial killings, which included 20 people killed in the name of Oplan Sauron, a legitimate police operation. Out of the 83, 34 were killed this year alone. Out of the 34 people executed in 2019, 16 were killed just last week;

**WHEREAS**, majority of the victims were civilians, farmers and union leaders wrongfully tagged as members of the New People's Army. Only 2 of those killed were confirmed as rebels<sup>12</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the gunmen carried out the executions either at broad daylight, within spitting distance of police precincts, or in the homes of their victims. These murderers seem to fear nothing and no one: completely assured of their impunity, unconcerned by the consequences of the lawless violence that they instigated, and indifferent to the anguish they left behind that wreaked havoc on the bereaved families of their victims;

**WHEREAS**, the growing list of people killed by unidentified men in the region have prompted Malacañang to issue Memorandum Order No. 32<sup>13</sup>. The said memorandum allowed for the immediate deployment of additional forces of the AFP and the PNP to suppress lawless violence and acts of terror in the provinces of Samar, Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental, and the Bicol region;

**WHEREAS**, the Memorandum was also given additional weight when PNP Chief Oscar Albayalde ordered the deployment of 300 Special Action Force (SAF) troops to the region to augment existing efforts to bring justice to the slain victims<sup>14</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, two legitimate police operations have been conducted since the signing and issuance of Memorandum Order No. 32. The operation, dubbed as Oplan Sauron, is the fortified campaign of the PNP and the AFP against suspected NPA guerillas<sup>15</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the first Oplan Sauron was scheduled from the 27<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2018. This operation was carried out by policemen, members of the Philippine Air Force, and elements from the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion; the operation also spelled the end of the lives of 6 farmers, which included Jesus Isugan<sup>16</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, on March 30, 2019, the second legitimate police operation called Oplan Sauron 2.0 was launched, this time resulting in the deaths of 14 people. The military operation, carried out by the 94<sup>th</sup> Infantry battalion of the Philippine Army, the PNP and SAF, conducted 37 search warrants against suspected NPA supporters<sup>17</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, a statement from the Leonardo Panaligan Command of the NPA condemned the killings of Oplan Suaron 2.0, stating that 8 of out of the 14 who were killed are farmers and are innocent civilians<sup>18</sup>. A chilling echo of the oft repeated phrase 'nanlaban', the 14 deaths were allegedly the result of the farmers 'fighting it out' with authorities;

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/235806-negros-oriental-policemen-were-set-up-for-ambush>

<sup>12</sup> <https://news.mb.com.ph/2019/06/22/2-rebels-killed-in-negros-oriental-attack/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2018/11nov/20181122-MO-32-RRD.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1076290>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1075740>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.bulatlat.com/2019/07/27/negros-killings-a-war-against-unarmed-civilians-groups/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1799375>

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

**WHEREAS**, it appears that our police and some members of our uniformed personnel are killing innocent people based on questionable information. Farmers, peasant and union leaders, and heads of families are executed for reasons that could collapse the moment we examine them. Even in death, the innocent victims were given no semblance of dignity. This was evident in the way the police placed Jesus Isugan's body in a sack that was later on tossed by the road<sup>19</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, it is through this lens that the PNP should examine the effectiveness of their Oplan Sauron and whether they have successfully neutralized individuals or groups that were suspected of lawless violence and acts of terror. One could only hope that the police operations do not create the opposite effect where the very existence of increased police presence prove itself to be a threat and a challenge to the individuals and groups they aim to moderate and neutralize in the first place;

**WHEREAS**, the killings in the Negros region is an easy and chilling example of the violence against civilians that has flourished under the culture of impunity and lawless violence in the country. It is this that has made the Philippines the 4<sup>th</sup> most dangerous country in the world for civilians<sup>20</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, the killing spree that affected the Negros region and Negros Oriental in particular is a microcosm of the culture of lawless violence in the country, one that has worsened in recent years. Deaths delivered by riding in tandems are not new but their increasing daring and brazenness is;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, to urge the Senate Committees on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs and Justice to conduct an investigation in aid of legislation on the spate of killings that devastated the island of Negros and the circumstances that allowed for the lawless violence that cloaked the province, with the end in view of attaining justice for the slain victims and creating policies that will adequately address the root cause of the conflict in the province.

**Adopted,**

  
**RISA HONTIVEROS**

**Senator**

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.bulatlat.com/2019/07/27/negros-killings-a-war-against-unarmed-civilians-groups/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/177866/us-based-data-group-ranks-ph-fourth-most-dangerous-place-in-the-world-for-civilians>