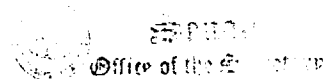


**NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Second Regular Session )**



23 AUG 29 A11 :47

**SENATE**

RECEIVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

**P.S. RES. NO. 762**

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**Introduced by Senator JOEL VILLANUEVA**

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S OF THE SENATE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN ITS ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY FOR INTERNATIONAL-BOUND FILIPINO PASSENGERS**

**WHEREAS**, Republic Act No. 9208, as amended, or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2022 tasks the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) to, among others, "formulate a comprehensive and integrated program to prevent and suppress trafficking in persons, utilizing a multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach in the service delivery to and case management of trafficking victims and survivors and their families, including livelihood opportunities, and the development of school-based and community-based human trafficking preventive education programs, and psychosocial interventions by a multi-disciplinary team for the victims and their families;"<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the IACAT is composed of the Secretary of Justice as Chairperson, the Secretary of Social Welfare and Development as Co-Chairperson, and the secretaries of Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), Department of Tourism (DOT), and Department of Transportation (DOTr), as members. Other members of the IACAT include the Commissioner of Bureau of Immigration (BI), Commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Chairperson of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP,) Chairperson of the Commission on Filipino Overseas (CFO), Director of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Executive Director of the Council for the

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<sup>1</sup> Republic Act No. 9208, Sec. 21(a).

Welfare of Children, Executive Director of the National Authority for Child Care, and Executive Director of the Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC), among others;

**WHEREAS**, in fulfillment of its mandate, IACAT launched several programs in order to prevent and suppress trafficking in persons;

**WHEREAS**, in 2011, the IACAT also launched the 1343 Actionline to serve as the dedicated government hotline to combat human trafficking and other related cases;<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS**, in 2019, Barangay IACAT Webinar was launched with the objective of reaching out to Local Government Units, various communities, and the general public so that they can fully understand the actual situation of trafficking in persons in the countryside, as well as to inform them of the proper procedure and venue for filing of illegal recruitment complaints;<sup>3</sup>

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, the IACAT partnered with Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) and the Blas Ople Center to launch the Integrated Case Management System (ICMS) to efficiently monitor cases of human trafficking;<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS**, on August 17, 2023, the IACAT issued the 2023 Revised Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) Guidelines on Departure Formalities for International-Bound Filipino Passengers (Revised Guidelines) effective on September 3, 2023;<sup>5</sup>

**WHEREAS**, under the Revised Guidelines, the immigration officer may require travelers to answer clarificatory questions and supporting documents, such as proof of financial capacity, proof of employment, sponsor's valid work visa or residence permit, notarized original affidavit of support and guarantee, among others, in addition to the standard travel requirements;<sup>6</sup>

**WHEREAS**, according to IACAT, the Revised Guidelines seeks to streamline and formalize the departure requirements for various categories of Filipino passengers embarking on international travel,<sup>7</sup> with the goal of mitigating the rising number of Filipinos who are victims of human trafficking;<sup>8</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the additional requirements under the Revised Guidelines have raised concerns among Filipinos, specifically on the propriety of these new or additional requirements in light of the people's Constitutionally-guaranteed right to

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) Accomplishment Report CY 2020. Available at <https://iacat.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2020-IACAT-Annua-TIP-Report-2.pdf> (Accessed on August 28, 2023)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> 2023 Revised Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) Guidelines on Departure Formalities for International-Bound Filipino Passengers. Available at [https://www.officiaigazette.gov.ph/downloads/2023/08aug/2023\\_Revised\\_IACAT\\_Guidelines\\_on\\_Departure\\_Formalities\\_for\\_International-Bound\\_Filipino\\_Passengers.pdf](https://www.officiaigazette.gov.ph/downloads/2023/08aug/2023_Revised_IACAT_Guidelines_on_Departure_Formalities_for_International-Bound_Filipino_Passengers.pdf) (Accessed on August 29, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> August 24, 2023. Rappler. Revised departure rules mostly apply to new travelers, says DOJ available at <https://www.rappler.com/nation/doj-says-revised-departure-rules-mostly-apply-new-travelers/> (Accessed on August 27, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> August 26, 2023. Manila Times. New travel requirements draw flak available at <https://www.manilatimes.net/2023/08/26/news/national/new-travel-requirements-draw-flak/1907089> (Accessed on August 27, 2023).

travel and the recent reports regarding the involvement of law enforcement agencies in trafficking in persons;<sup>9</sup>

**WHEREAS**, for example, during the hearing of the Senate Committee on Women, Family, Children and Gender Equality held on November 29, 2022, that victims of illegal recruitment for a scamming job in Myanmar recalled that their passports were already stamped even before passing through the immigration counter;<sup>10</sup>

**WHEREAS**, during the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee hearing held on March 20, 2023, it was revealed that a chartered flight bound for Dubai allegedly carried "unauthorized individuals" whose entries were facilitated by immigration officers;<sup>11</sup>

**WHEREAS**, in 2022, out of the 32,404 Filipinos whose departure was deferred, there were 472 (or 1.46%) who were found to be victims of human trafficking;<sup>12</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the prevention of human trafficking is an inter-agency task that not only involves providing stringent requirements on international-bound Filipinos, but also proper awareness and education among Filipinos, and the apprehension of law enforcement agents and other government officials who facilitate or connive with wrongdoers, among others;

**WHEREAS**, in order to enhance measures to effectively combat trafficking in persons, there is a need to evaluate the existing programs being implemented by the government consistent with a whole-of-government approach;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES**, that the appropriate committee/s of the Senate conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the government's actions to strengthen its anti-trafficking in persons program, especially for international-bound Filipino passengers.

*Adopted,*

  
**JOEL VILLANUEVA** 

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<sup>9</sup> Article III, Section 6, 1987 Philippine Constitution.

<sup>10</sup> Committee Records, Senate Committee on Women, Family, Children and Gender Equality. November 29, 2022

<sup>11</sup> March 20, 2023. Blue Ribbon wraps up probe on alleged human trafficking in NAIA. Available at <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1197728#:~:text=MANILA%20%2D%20The%20Senate%20Blue%20Ribbon,15%20privilege%20speech> (Accessed August 29, 2023)..

<sup>12</sup> March 16, 2023. Statement of the Bureau of Immigration. Available at [https://web.facebook.com/officialbureauofimmigration/posts/bureauofimmigration-publicservice/601750018659441/?\\_rdc=1&\\_rdr](https://web.facebook.com/officialbureauofimmigration/posts/bureauofimmigration-publicservice/601750018659441/?_rdc=1&_rdr). (Accessed on August 28, 2023).