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OF THE PHILIPPINES)
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SENATE
P. S. R. No. 264

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH, WOMEN AND FAMILY
RELATIONS AND THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL DEFENSE AND
SECURITY TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON THE
RECRUITMENT BY INSURGENCY/REBEL GROUPS OF CHILDREN AS
COMBATANTS IN ARMED CONFLICTS

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 7610, otherwise known as the Special Protection of Children against Child Abuse, Exploitation And Discrimination Act, Article X, Section 22, provides that: "Children are hereby declared as Zones of Peace. It shall be the responsibility of the State and all other sectors concerned to resolve armed conflicts in order to promote the goal of children as zones of peace";

WHEREAS, Republic Act No. 7610, Article X, Section 22 (B), provides further that "Children shall not be recruited to become members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, of its civilian units or other armed groups, nor be allowed to take part in the fighting, or used as guides, couriers, or spies";

WHEREAS, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 38 provides further that: "States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces";

WHEREAS, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Article 4, states that: "Armed groups that are distinct from the armed forces of a State should not, under any circumstances, recruit or use in hostilities persons under the age of 18 years and States Parties shall take all feasible measures to prevent such recruitment and use, including the adoption of legal measures necessary to prohibit and criminalize such practices";

WHEREAS, according to the military, an estimated 2,000 to 6,000 minors fight in the New People's Army (NPA) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF);

WHEREAS, according to a study conducted by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour of the International Labour Organization, child soldiers are defined as children used in any activities related to armed conflict;

WHEREAS, the number of children involved in armed conflict is increasing due to a number of factors such as propaganda, forced recruitment, abduction, psychological reasons (i.e. thrill and excitement), and social tension (i.e. peer pressure);

WHEREAS, Human Rights Watch further observes that children most likely to be recruited are poor, separated from their families, displaced from their homes, living in a combat zone and with limited access to education;


WHEREAS, due to their participation in the conflict, children generally end up dead or with physical disabilities, as well as experience psychological trauma (*i.e.* sleeplessness and paranoia), fear, illiteracy, and the destruction of their livelihood and property;

WHEREAS, children aged from 7 to 15 exposed to armed conflict suffer multiple symptoms of mental disturbance and mental morbidity;

WHEREAS, the government has the duty to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers by insurgency/rebel groups, secure the demobilization of child soldiers, and ensure their rehabilitation and reintegration into society;

WHEREFORE, be it resolved, as it is hereby resolved by the Philippine Senate, to direct the Senate Committee on Youth, Women and Family Relations and the Senate Committee on National Defense to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation on the recruitment by insurgency/rebel groups of children as combatants in armed conflicts.

Approved,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO
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/dpm