


FOURTEENTH CONGRESS)
OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

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SENATE
P. S. Res. No. 255

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Sen. M.A. Madrigal

RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS WHO UNDERTOOK, OR OTHERWISE PARTICIPATED IN, THE UNWARRANTED AND ILLEGAL ARREST OF MEDIA PERSONNEL DURING THE MANILA PENINSULA STANDOFF OF 29 NOVEMBER 2007 SHOULD BE METED OUT THE APPROPRIATE PENALTIES SUCH AS, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE ISSUANCE OF STERN REPRIMANDS AND THE RECORDING OF SUCH REPRIMANDS IN THE OFFICERS' RESPECTIVE PERSONNEL OR "201" FILES

WHEREAS the so-called Manila Peninsula standoff last 29 November 2007 has gained infamy, both nationally and internationally, not so much for the failed attempt of Senator Antonio Trillanes IV's group to cause the downfall of the Arroyo government but for the direct, serious and blatant attack by military and police officers alike on the sacrosanct freedom of the press by reason of the patently unwarranted and illegal arrests of media personalities and personnel covering the standoff;

WHEREAS the illegal acts of taking into custody these media personalities are in flagrant violation of Article III, Section 4 of the 1987 Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of the press especially respecting matters or events of significant national interest such as the then unfolding events of 29 November 2007;

WHEREAS the uncivilized, nay barbaric, acts perpetrated by military and police officers in handcuffing the media personnel through the use of plastic wires and herding them off like animals into overcrowded buses further constitute cruel and inhuman punishment that is strictly proscribed under the Constitution;

WHEREAS the military and police officers who performed, or otherwise participated in the commission of the foregoing illegal and morally questionable acts should be held totally accountable for their respective acts under the penal laws of the land as well as the applicable military and police regulations;

WHEREAS the penalties that ought to be imposed upon the erring military and police officers should, at the very least, include the issuance and imposition of stern warnings or reprimands against them and the permanent recording of these reprimands in their respective personnel or "201" files, to the end that these penalties should be considered in the succeeding evaluation of their service records for purposes of promotion or other service-related purposes;

WHEREAS various media outfits and organizations such as the Manila Overseas Press Club, through its President, Mr. Tony Lopez, have publicly issued calls for the imposition of these penalties upon the military and police officers who committed these despicable acts against media personalities who were legitimately, not to mention bravely, performing their necessary tasks by covering the events of that fateful day of 29 November 2007;

WHEREAS the Philippine Senate, as the protector of the people against the excesses and abuses of the Arroyo government and its agents, including the military and police officers who were involved in the Manila Peninsula caper, fully supports the members of the media in the legitimate pursuit of their vocation and safeguards the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of the press;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Senate express its sense that the military and police officers who undertook, or otherwise participated in, the unwarranted and illegal arrest of media personnel during the Manila Peninsula standoff of 29 November 2007 should be meted out the appropriate penalties such as, but not limited to, the issuance of stern reprimands and the recording of such reprimands in the officers' respective personnel or "201" files.

Adopted,


M. A. MADRIGAL