

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

SENATE

P.S.R. No. 705



INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS

RESOLUTION

CONDEMNING ACTS OF HARASSMENT, RED-TAGGING AND INTIMIDATION, ESPECIALLY BY NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES, AGAINST PRIVATE CITIZENS CONDUCTING COMMUNITY PANTRIES IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES

WHEREAS, motivated by the desire to provide food and essentials to underprivileged Filipinos affected by the economic impacts of the pandemic, a group of young people decided to open a community pantry in Maginhawa Street, Quezon City;

WHEREAS, the concept of a community pantry is a physical space – in many cases, a table – where food and other consumables are provided for free to anyone in the community who may be in need, with the supply coming from voluntary donations from members of the same community;

WHEREAS, inspired by the Maginhawa initiative, community pantries started sprouting all over the country overnight, responding to the urgent needs of Filipinos for food and creating a platform for civic-minded citizens to express solidarity with those in need;

WHEREAS, using the tag line “*magbigay ayon sa kakayanan, kumuha ayon sa pangangailangan*”, the community pantry concept speaks to and draws from Filipinos’ innate sense of *bayanihan*, particularly in times of crises and emergencies;

WHEREAS, instead of lauding the civic-mindedness of these citizens, national government officials and law enforcement officers cast aspersions on these efforts – accusing community pantries of being fronts for the communist party and for inciting people to go against the government;

WHEREAS, the spokesperson of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade, Jr. admitted that they have profiled the organizers of community pantries in the country¹;

¹ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/ntf-elcac-parlade-admits-profiling-organizers-community-pantries>

WHEREAS, Department of Interior and Local Government Undersecretary Martin Diño likewise chimed in by saying that organizers of community pantries should seek permission from local governments;

WHEREAS, multiple reports from community pantries reveal that police officers have been asking for the names, numbers and social media accounts of community pantry organizers, and have been paying visits to community pantries in police cars;

WHEREAS, according to the organizer of the original community pantry in Maginhawa, Ana Patricia Non, “*natatakot po ako maglakad mag-isa papunta sa community pantry ng alas-5 ng umaga dahil po sa walang basehang paratang sa amin*”, and as a result of this, she had to suspend operations due to safety concerns²;


WHEREAS, these heavy-handed tactics by State agents against community pantries seeking to address a gap in the delivery of basic services are not just undemocratic, they punish Filipinos who are already suffering because of the pandemic and who desperately need the lifeline extended by these community pantries;

WHEREAS, instead of harassment and threats against community pantry organizers, they should be lauded for embodying all that is good and noble in the Filipino and in the Filipino community especially during times of hardship and hunger;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE TO STRONGLY CONDEMN ACTS OF HARASSMENT, RED-TAGGING AND INTIMIDATION, ESPECIALLY BY NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES, AGAINST PRIVATE CITIZENS CONDUCTING COMMUNITY PANTRIES IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES;

RESOLVED, FURTHER, TO URGE THE EXECUTIVE TO UNDERTAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF COMMUNITY PANTRY ORGANIZERS, INASMUCH AS THEY PROVIDE AN INVALUABLE SERVICE TO COMMUNITIES IN THESE TIMES.

Adopted,


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator

² <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/20/21/maginhawa-community-pantry-redtagging-covid-19>