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RECEIVED BY: *X. Arman*

SENATE

P. S. RES. NO. 405

Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION
AND MASS MEDIA TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF
LEGISLATION, ON THE LAPSES COMMITTED BY THE PHILIPPINE
NEWS AGENCY (PNA), WITH THE END IN VIEW OF ENABLING A
MORE INDEPENDENT AND RESPONSIBLE STATE-RUN NEWS
AGENCY, THAT WOULD BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF PROVIDING
ACCURATE INFORMATION TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

WHEREAS, Article 3, Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution states that “[t]he right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents, and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law”;

WHEREAS, the Philippine News Agency (PNA) was launched in 1973 as a teletype newswire service, up until it became a web-based newswire service in 2003¹;

WHEREAS, the PNA, under the supervision of the News and Information Bureau of the Presidential Communications Office, has been mandated to disseminate timely, reliable and relevant news articles to community newspapers, national dailies, and local and international readers and subscribers²;

WHEREAS, Vera Files reported that the PNA took down on May 20, 2017, a story posted five days earlier, claiming that 95 nations in the 27th Universal Period Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council were convinced that there were no extrajudicial killings in the Philippines³;

WHEREAS, UPR Info, a non-government organization dedicated to promoting the Universal Periodic Reviews conducted by UN Human Rights Council on the human

¹ ABOUT THE AGENCY. Retrieved from: <http://www.pna.gov.ph/about>. Last retrieved 7 June 2017

² *Ibid.*

³ VERA FILES FACT CHECK: PNA replaces its fake news that 95 states are convinced there are no EJKs in the country; no apology or reason given. Retrieved from: <http://verafiles.org/articles/vera-files-fact-check-pna-replaces-its-fake-news-95-states-a>. Last retrieved 7 June 2017.

rights records of different countries, posted on its Twitter account that “to the best of its knowledge, 95 states were not ‘convinced that extrajudicial killings are non-existent’” contrary to the PNA report;

WHEREAS, PNA, using the same uniform resource locator, replaced the headline and the entire text of what used to be an article entitled “95 nations in 3rd UPR convinced no EJKs in PHL” and re-titled the story as “PHL’s human rights situation commended at UPR” without mentioning the error;

WHEREAS, on another story, PNA reported last May 27 about the challenges faced by soldiers in clearing Marawi City of terrorists entitled “Urban warfare a challenge for soldiers in Marawi” featuring a photo of a soldier outside a house⁴;

WHEREAS, Rappler.com reported that the said article used a photo that was not taken during the siege of Lanao del Sur’s capital, and was instead taken from Wikimedia Commons⁵;

WHEREAS, according to the media repository platform, the original file name of the image is Vietconghunt.jpg and was described as “Troops of ‘A’ Company, 1st Air Cavalry Division, checking house during patrol” and was sourced from the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) with photo credits to the Signal Corps Photographs of American Military Activity;

WHEREAS, the PNA regretted these mistakes that have created doubts on its integrity;

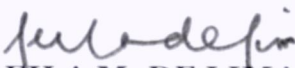
WHEREAS, the PNA must be responsible in ensuring that information it shares with the public is accurate and duly verified;

WHEREAS, the public needs to know why such lapses happened, and if these are mere errors or honest mistakes, or if they were a part of a sinister strategy, if any, to mislead and deceive the public;

WHEREAS, the PNA should be held accountable for its mistakes and lapses, and not allow itself to become another peddler of misinformation. Instead, it should be transformed into a shepherd of correct and accurate information to the public;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, to direct the Senate Committee on Public Information and Mass Media to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the lapses and errors committed by the Philippine News Agency, with the end in view of enabling a more independent and responsible state-run news agency, that would be at the forefront of providing accurate and correct information to the general public.

Adopted,


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⁴ Urban warfare a challenge for soldiers in Marawi. Retrieved from: <http://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/991451>. Last retrieved 7 June 2017.

⁵ Philippine News Agency uses Vietnam photo in Marawi siege story. Retrieved from: <http://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/fact-check/171315-philippine-news-agency-vietnam-photo-marawi>. Last retrieved 7 June 2017.