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SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 1041

RECEIVED BY: 

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

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE APPROPRIATE SENATE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE REPORTED DRASTIC INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF DEATHS DUE TO INTENSIFIED ANTI-DRUG OPERATIONS IN CENTRAL LUZON, LABELED THE NEW “EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS EPICENTER”, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF COMING UP WITH REMEDIAL LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT THE WAR ON DRUGS IS NOT USED BY STATE ACTORS AS LICENSE TO COMMIT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND OTHER ILLEGAL ACTS

WHEREAS, Section 4, Article II of the 1987 Constitution prescribes that the prime duty of the Government is to serve and protect the people;

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the same declares that the maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty and property, and the promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessing of democracy;

WHEREAS, it is enshrined in Section 11 of the same that, “[t]he State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.”;

WHEREAS, Section 1 of the Bill of Rights provides in part that, “[n]o person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor any person be denied the equal protection of the law”;

WHEREAS, the Philippines is a state party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and is bound to protect and preserve basic human rights, such as the right to life;

WHEREAS, since taking office in 2016, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has carried out a “War on Drugs”, a pledge to rid the country of illegal drugs;

WHEREAS, according to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), from July 2016 to November 2018, 5,050 persons were reported to be killed while 164, 265 drug personalities were arrested¹;

WHEREAS, it is important to note that last year, the Caloocan Regional Trial Court convicted three (3) policemen guilty of the murder of 17-year old Kian delos Santos. This is the first conviction of abusive cops in the War on Drugs²;

WHEREAS, in the pending petitions separately filed by Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) and the Center for International Law (CenterLaw) before the Supreme Court questioning the constitutionality of the government's War on Drugs, the High Court ordered the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) to furnish the petitioners copies of police documents³. These documents would put to test the government's claim that it was investigating every single death and that the killings were legitimate police operations⁴;

WHEREAS, almost three years into his term, President Duterte vowed to launch an even harsher war on illegal drugs and swore to finish the war in the remaining three (3) years of his administration⁵;

WHEREAS, the past year, various news reports show that while Metro Manila has registered a reduction on the number of deaths in their drug-related operations, nearby provinces and regions have recorded more than one death a day, specifically Central Luzon, and that it has become the new focus of the War on Drugs;

WHEREAS, based on a 2018 Philippine National Police (PNP) data, 542 drugs suspects were killed in police operations in Central Luzon, accounting for 29.6% of the

¹ Tomacruz, S. Rappler.com. "Duterte gov't tally: 'Drug war' deaths breach 5,000-mark before 2019" Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/220013-duterte-government-tally-killed-war-on-drugs-november-2018>

² Buan, L. Rappler.com. "Policemen guilty in Kian delos Santos killing". Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/217770-calooacan-policemen-convicted-murder-kian-delos-santos-killing>

³ Navallo, M. Abscfn News. "Supreme Court orders SolGen to release 'Tokhang' police reports". Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/02/19/supreme-court-orders-solgen-to-release-tokhang-police-reports>

⁴ Buan, L. Rappler.com. "Government, SC engage in tug-of-war over tokhang documents". Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/227327-philippine-government-supreme-court-tug-of-war-release-tokhang-documents>

⁵ Romero, Alex. Philstar Global. "Duterte vows to finish war on drugs". Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2019/02/26/1896810/duterte-vows-finish-war-drugs>

total drug operation kills in 2018, while 285 drugs suspects were killed in the National Capital Region representing only 15.57% of the total⁶;

WHEREAS, Rappler dubbed Central Luzon as the new “Extrajudicial Killings Epicenter”, and the new killing fields of President Rodrigo Duterte’s War on Drugs⁷;

WHEREAS, in an ambush interview, Central Luzon Police Chief of Staff Senior Superintendent Rhoderick Armamento justified the increase saying that the region aggregated more killings simply because the police have tracked down more drug suspects and that they chose to “fight back” or “*nanlaban*” -- the most common narrative of the PNP legitimizing their killings since the beginning of the anti-drug war campaign of the Duterte Administration⁸;

WHEREAS, Armamento also explained that the Central Luzon police have been “efficient to produce seemingly endless list of drugs suspects with cases ripe for operation”⁹;

WHEREAS, news reports said that there has also been an exodus of cops from Metro Manila to Central Luzon. In fact, the Regional Director of Central Luzon, Chief Superintendent Joel Coronel, headed the Manila City Police District during the peak months of the anti-drug campaign; current Bulacan Provincial Director Chito Bersaluna was the previous Caloocan City Police Chief midst the killing of Kian delos Santos in 2017; Central Luzon Regional Chief of Intelligence Amante Daro, Meycauayan City Police Chief Aquino Olivar and Malolos City Chief Emerey Abating were former Manila Police Station Commanders; Central Luzon Police Chief of Staff Senior Superintendent Rhoderick Armamento was former Valenzuela City Police Chief; and Nueva Ecija Provincial Director, Senior Superintendent Victor Rosete, had served as Parañaque police chief;

WHEREAS, despite the dramatic increase of drug-related deaths in Central Luzon, cops in Region III have low number of seized illegal drugs with Metro Manila

⁶ Talabong, R. Rappler. com. “Rise in Central Luzon drug kills? Commanders, were 'hardworking' – PNP”. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/224501-rise-drug-killings-central-luzon-pnp-says-commanders-hardworking>

⁷ Talabong, R. Rappler. com. “New killing fields in Duterte's drug war”. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/224159-central-luzon-new-killing-fields-duterte-drug-war>

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Supra footnote #7

cops having hauled 143.85 kilograms (kg) of shabu while Central Luzon cops only heaved 11.98 kilograms (kg)¹⁰;

WHEREAS, the manner of executions reflects the killings made here in Metro Manila, the difference being the drug operations are committed in another area, with new victims¹¹;

WHEREAS, it is urgent to investigate this apparent shift of focus to Central Luzon and to assess the strategy pursued by the administration's drug war;

WHEREAS, it is also imperative to look into the factual and legal issues relating to these killings and determine whether these killings were products of legitimate police operations; the rights of suspects or persons subject of operations have been observed; and existing procedures on arrest, seizure and arrest have been complied with;

WHEREAS, Congress through relevant and appropriate legislation must end the perpetration of the culture of impunity by facilitating the enforcement of the full extent of the law against persons, both state and non-state actors, responsible for summary killings;

WHEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, to direct the appropriate Senate Committee to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the reported drastic increase in the number of deaths due to anti-drug operations in Central Luzon, labeled as the new "Extrajudicial Killings Epicenter", with the end in view of coming up with the remedial legislation to ensure that the War on Drugs is not used by state actors as license to commit human right violations and other illegal acts.

Adopted,


LHILA M. DE LIMA

¹⁰ Supra footnote #7

¹¹ Supra footnote #7