

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS  
Second Regular Session  
House Resolution - 649



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Introduced by  
Gabriela Women's Party Representatives  
LIZA LARGOZA-MAZA and LUZVIMINDA ILAGAN

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**RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THROUGH THE  
COMMITTEES ON WOMEN, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND OVERSEAS FILIPINOS TO LOOK  
INTO THE ALLEGATIONS OF TRAFFICKING USING CONSULAR PRIVILEGES AS  
SHOWN IN THE CASES OF MARICHU BAOANAN AND ARLENE GADO AND  
RECOMMEND MEASURES THEREOF**

WHEREAS, the recognition of human rights is a valuable tenet in the 1987 Philippine Constitution which states: "the State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights" (Article II, Section II);

WHEREAS, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 penalizes trafficking of persons especially women and minors for forced labor, sex and prostitution, institutes policies and establishes mechanisms to prevent the proliferation of trafficking;

WHEREAS, the Philippine government is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women which guarantees the rights and welfare of women;

WHEREAS, On June 24, 2008, Marichu Suarez Baoanan filed charges of trafficking, forced labor, peonage and racketeering against former United Nations Ambassador Lauro Baja, Jr., Norma Castro Baja, his daughter Maria Elizabeth Baja Facundo and the Baja-owned Labaire International Travel Inc;

WHEREAS, in her complaint Baoanan claims she was told by Norma Baja that she would arrange for Baoanan to come to the US and work as a nurse and that for Php 500,000.00 she would get a plane tickets, a US visa, work authorization and assistance in getting employment in the US;

WHEREAS, on December 2005, Norma Baja took her regular passport and accompanied her and a certain "Dorie" to the Department of Foreign Affairs to apply for a new diplomatic passport as Ambassador Baja's personal employees;

WHEREAS, Baoanan was able to produce Php 250,000.00, issued a diplomatic passport and upon arrival in the US on January 2006 was told that she had to work for the Bajas as domestic helper for six months to pay off the remaining Php 250,000.00;

WHEREAS, from January to April 2006, Baoanan claims she was made to work 16 hours daily, seven days a week, in the Baja household and was paid only a total of \$100 for three months of work, and another \$100 for taking care of Facundo's son who, she said, was allowed to hit her;

WHEREAS, in a similar case, Arlene Gado, a Filipina domestic helper arrived in the US in 2005 after signing a contract in the Philippines to work for Anthony Mandap, then vice consul in the Consulate General of the Philippines in San Francisco;

WHEREAS, shortly after arriving in the US she was transferred to the household of Angelita Reyes, Mandap's mother in law where she served as the Reyes' domestic helper and caretaker for two years, getting a meager \$250 to \$325 a month for her services;

WHEREAS, in May 2007, Angelita Reyes, pleaded guilty to charges of third degree criminal restraint and was ordered by the courts to pay \$78,000 in back wages to Arlene Gado;

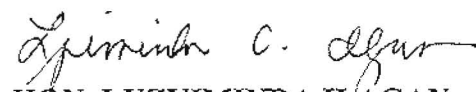
WHEREAS, the Mariposa Alliance and GABRIELA Network USA in their statement allege the Department of Foreign Affairs is a haven for traffickers;

WHEREAS, according to the Mariposa Alliance and GABRIELA Network USA, "There have been innumerable stories of Filipinas seeking sanctuary from their brutal employers at consulates and embassies only to be returned to the same employers; of Filipinas funneled into the sex trade by embassy and consular personnel; of Filipinas traded as domestic workers by embassy and consular personnel to their relatives and friends as favors; of Filipinas coerced into paid-for marriages and sex work to enable embassy and consular personnel to make enormous profits";

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives through the Committees on Women, Foreign Affairs and Overseas Filipinos to look into the allegations of trafficking using consular privileges as shown in the cases of Marichu Baoanan and Arlene Gado and recommend measures thereof.

Adopted,

  
HON. LIZA LARGOZA-MAZA

  
HON. LUZVIMINDA ILAGAN