

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 72



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INTRODUCED BY GABRIELA WOMEN'S PARTY REPRESENTATIVES
LIZA LARGOZA-MAZA AND LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN
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RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN
INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE CONTINUED DEPLOYMENT
OF SOLDIERS IN BARANGAY COMMONWEALTH, QUEZON CITY AND IN
OTHER URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES IN METRO MANILA, AND TO PULL-
OUT THE DEPLOYED SOLDIERS PENDING COMPLETION OF THE
INVESTIGATION

WHEREAS, Section 3, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that, "Civilian authority is, at all times supreme over the military. The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and the State. Its goal is to secure the sovereignty of the state and integrity of the national territory";

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the aforementioned article further states that, "The maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty, and property, and promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment by all people of the blessings of democracy";

WHEREAS, sometime in November, 2006, it was reported that some soldiers in full military gear were deployed in Barangay Commonwealth and other barangays in Quezon City. The deployment, according to the authorities, was made to install peace and order in the communities and for the soldiers to render community service;

WHEREAS, the deployed soldiers used the day care centers, barangay halls and outposts as their detachments/quarters. Day care centers are supposed to be used by barangays for their social welfare services. (Article 25, Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), Local Government Code of 1991);

WHEREAS, since the deployment of the soldiers in Barangay Commonwealth, there have been reports that they went house to house, in full military gear, to inquire about the identities, activities and whereabouts of Gabriela officers and members;

WHEREAS, soldiers, also in full military gear, went around and talked to identified Gabriela members or those being organized by Gabriela in Barangay Commonwealth and warned them that membership or being identified with Gabriela is an act of rebellion and is punishable under the law. The soldiers also inquired about the identities of the Gabriela medical doctor volunteers who conducted health and sanitation training;

WHEREAS, prior to the May 14, 2007 mid-term elections, the executive department of the government made a public statement that they are pulling out the soldiers so as to eliminate suspicion that they are campaigning against the militant party-lists. However, some of the soldiers deployed in Barangay Commonwealth did not, in fact, leave the area and just rented some houses to make it appear that they are legitimate residents of the barangay;

WHEREAS, during the alleged pull-out, soldiers kept on visiting a Gabriela member and even offered her to be an informant in exchange of the protection that they will provide. The soldiers even told her that her activities were keenly monitored by them;

WHEREAS, sometime in July 2007, a truck carrying soldiers in uniform arrived in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City. Since then, soldiers in uniform in a group of three to four were seen roaming around the barangay;

WHEREAS, there was also an information that a portion of land in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City is being negotiated for the use of the soldiers as their barracks instead of using again the day care center or the barangay hall as their quarter - an indication that the soldiers will be staying for an indefinite period of time in the area;

WHEREAS, the continued operation of soldiers in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City also connotes further vilification of people's organizations and harassment to their organizers and members in the area;

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2007, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* reported that fifteen (15) military squads were deployed on July 31, 2007 to fifteen (15) more depressed barangays in Manila. The barangays are in the cities of Caloocan, Marikina, Malabon, Navotas and additional communities in Manila;

WHEREAS, according to AFP Metro Manila commander Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, the deployment was on top of the troops sent last month in six (6) barangays in Quezon City, and three (3) in Taguig City. He further stated that the troops will continue with their civil military activities there (and will) continue with our information and awareness campaign against the communist movement. (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 1 August, 2007);

WHEREAS, according to Col. Ricardo Visaya, chief of the Army's Civil Military Operations Battalion, the initial plan was to let the squads, each with 10 to 12 soldiers, stay in the barangays for three to four months. The plan was for the soldiers to remain in the barangays until the communities were "well aware" of the deception committed by communist rebels. (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 1 August, 2007);


WHEREAS, the statement of the authorities that the soldiers are in the area to install peace and order is untenable because there are other government agencies mandated to do the same like the barangay officials and police authorities (Chapters 3 and 4, Local Government Code of 1991; Section 24, Department of the Interior and Local Government Act of 1990). When it comes to community service such as medical mission, it is under the responsibility of the local government unit concerned to provide the same through its barangay health workers (Sections 16 and 17, Local Government Code of 1991);


WHEREAS, there is a pressing need to determine the real reasons behind the deployment of soldiers in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City and in other urban poor communities in Metro Manila because their mere presence creates a "climate of fear" among residents especially to children who are not used to seeing soldiers in full military gear as if there is an impending war; and

WHEREAS, the presence of military soldiers in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City and in other urban poor communities in Metro Manila and their actuations only strengthen the belief that the new internal security operation plan dubbed Oplan Bantay Laya II aims to militarize urban areas as part of the government's intensifying campaign against the militant mass and sectoral organizations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Committee on Human Rights conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, into the continued deployment of soldiers in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City and in other urban poor communities in Metro Manila, and to pull-out the deployed soldiers pending completion of the investigation.

Adopted,


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GABRIELA Women's Party


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