

By JOSEPH G. LARIOSA

(© 2009 *Journal Group Link International*)

The United States Congress Urges Review of RP Assistance in Maguindanao Massacre's Wake

CHICAGO, Illinois (JGLi) – The United States Senate and the House of Representatives have passed a concurrent resolution, expressing “sympathy for the 57 civilians who were killed in the Southern Philippines” last Nov. 23rd.

House Concurrent Resolution 218, which passed last Dec. 18th, also “calls for a thorough, transparent, and independent investigation and prosecution of those who committed the killings and anyone who may have ordered them, and that the proceedings be conducted with the highest possible level of professionalism, impartiality, and regard for witness protection to assure the Filipino people that all the responsible persons are brought to justice.”

Written by Joseph G. Lariosa

Wednesday, 06 January 2010 18:06 - Last Updated Wednesday, 06 January 2010 20:10

The resolution introduced by Rep. Howard Berman (D-Ca-28) last Dec. 8th also “urges the Departments of State and Justice and other United States Government agencies to review their assistance programs to the Government of the Philippines, and to offer any technical assistance, such as forensics support, that Philippine authorities may request.”

The resolution, which was endorsed by 22 congressmen, also “regrets the senseless killing of unarmed civilians and expresses its deepest condolences to the families of the 57 victims.” The victims include 31 journalists.

Condemning a Culture of Impunity

It also “condemns the culture of impunity that continues to exist among clans, politicians, armed elements and other persons of influence in the Philippines.”

The resolution also calls for “an end to extrajudicial killings and election-related violence; and calls for freedom of press and the safety of the reporters investigating the massacre.”

Written by Joseph G. Lariosa

Wednesday, 06 January 2010 18:06 - Last Updated Wednesday, 06 January 2010 20:10

News of the passage of resolution was inserted in an invitation by an Alliance of Filipinos for Immigration Rights and Empowerment (AFIRE) officer, Jerry Clarito, to the community to attend a Filipino Social Justice Forum "Addressing Human Rights Issues in the Philippines (Part II) Justice to Maguindanao Massacre."

The event will be a "conversation" of Pastor Jerry Miller with members of the Christian Peacemaker Team and Center for International Law on Sunday, Feb. 21st (next month) at 4 p.m. at the Edison Park United Methodist Church at 6740 North Oliphant in Chicago's Northside.

The event is made possible through a grant from the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church (GBCSUMC) and is sponsored by Edison Park United Methodist Church (www.edisonparkumc.com), Alliance of Filipinos for Immigration Rights and Empowerment (AFIRE) (www.afirechicago.org), CIRCA-Pintig (www.circayouththeater.org), National Association of Filipino-American United Methodists (NAFAUM) (www.nafaum-paglago.org), and Fellowship of Asian Americans.

Those attending the event will participate in drawing the community's resources to make the resolution of the US Congress happen and engage the mainstream media to protect the

Written by Joseph G. Lariosa

Wednesday, 06 January 2010 18:06 - Last Updated Wednesday, 06 January 2010 20:10

Philippine freedom of press and the safety of the reporters investigating the massacre. Workshops participants are encouraged to bring and share resources that have been helpful to them in dealing with human rights issues.

{xtypo_quote} Whereas extrajudicial killings and election-related violence are common in the Philippines, though never on this scale and rarely with this level of brutality . . . –Part of the United States Congress Joint Resolution about the Maguindanao Massacre's Effect on US-RP Relations {/xtypo_quote}

The resolution was read on Wednesday (Jan. 6) at the start of the first session of the U.S. Congress of the year, which noted that “those killed were on their way to file nomination papers on behalf of Ismael Mangudadatu, vice mayor of Buluan town, who intended to run against Andal Ampatuan, Jr., who is currently mayor of the town of Data Unsay in Maguindanao province, in next year's gubernatorial elections to succeed Andal Ampatuan, Sr., the father of Andal Ampatuan, Jr.;

The resolution that was received and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate also said:

“Whereas many of those killed were women and children, including the wife of Vice Mayor Ismael Mangudadatu and his two sisters;

“Whereas most of the women were reportedly raped and their bodies were mutilated after being shot;

“Whereas as of December 2, 2009, initial charges have been filed in connection with the massacre, according to press reports;

“Whereas the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists reports that at least 30 journalists and media workers were killed in the Maguindanao massacre;

“Whereas, the Committee to Protect Journalists reports that prior to the Maguindanao massacre, 30 journalists had been killed in the Philippines since 2000, and suspects were prosecuted in no more than 4 cases, putting into question the safety of journalists and the integrity of independent journalism in the Philippines;

“Whereas government prosecutors and judges with jurisdiction over the massacre have allegedly received threats and have been told to `go slow' on the investigation;

Written by Joseph G. Lariosa

Wednesday, 06 January 2010 18:06 - Last Updated Wednesday, 06 January 2010 20:10

“Whereas President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared a state of emergency in Maguindanao the day after the massacre, vowing that `no effort will be spared to bring justice to the victims’;

“Whereas extrajudicial killings and election-related violence are common in the Philippines, though never on this scale and rarely with this level of brutality; and

“Whereas the United States and the Philippines share a strong friendship based on shared history and the commitment to democracy and freedom.” (

lariosa_jos@sbcglobal.net

) # # #

© opyright 2009 The *Journal Group Link International*. The contents provided in the JGLi may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or otherwise distributed without the prior written authority of the *Journal Group Link International*.

Written by Joseph G. Lariosa

Wednesday, 06 January 2010 18:06 - Last Updated Wednesday, 06 January 2010 20:10

(**Editor's Note:** Watch out for the upcoming outlet-oriented, subscription-based website of *Journal Group Link International* that guarantees originally sourced stories, features, photos, audios and videos and multi-media contents.)

[Joomla SEO powered by JoomSEF](#)