

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 598



Introduced by
BAYAN MUNA Party-List Representatives FERDINAND R. GAITE,
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE, and EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative FRANCE L. CASTRO,
GABRIELA Women's Party Representative ARLENE D. BROSAS,
and KABATAAN Party-List Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

RESOLUTION
URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE
COMMITTEES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND VISAYAS DEVELOPMENT,
TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION,
THE REPORTED BOMBING AND MILITARIZATION OF LAS NAVAS,
NORTHERN SAMAR AND OTHER AREAS AND PROVINCES
IN EASTERN VISAYAS
AGGRAVATING THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES
OF THE PEOPLE

WHEREAS, on October 26, 2019, residents of Barangay Capoto-an, Las Navas were shocked and came running for their lives as bombs fell destroying their farms, crops and houses. Based on reports, the three 500-pound bombs came from F-50 fighter jets of the 8th Infantry Division ng Philippine Army as part of what the military calls "surgical airstrike" against alleged New People's Army (NPA) camp in the said barangay. More than 90 families were affected by the bombing including 140 minors;

WHEREAS, at least twenty-four families from Bgy. Capoto-an evacuated to nearby barangays as a result of the bombing. One frightened mother reported that his children ran out during the bombing and has gone missing for days. She claimed that the bombs destroyed her vegetable farms wherein no rebel ever camped;

WHEREAS, after the bombings, Bgy Capoto-an were subjected to intensified combat operations by the military. Residents were subjected to illegal search, some of their belongings taken or destroyed. Many could not work in their farms out of fear. Two days after the bombing, residents of nearby Bgy. Sag-od were gathered by the military and were forced to admit that they were armed guerillas. The residents of Bgy Sag-od filed a complaint to the Las Navas Mayor and to the Department of Interior and Local Government but no solution was provided;

1 **WHEREAS**, prior to the bombing, Bgy Capoto-an residents were subjected to forced
2 meetings and interrogation by the military. A certain 1st Lt. Daniel Sumawang and several
3 other uniformed military men allegedly gathered the residents and interrogated several
4 individuals for several hours and forced them to admit they are supporters or members of the
5 NPA;

6 **WHEREAS**, several human rights violations which happened even prior to the bombing of
7 were documented by the National Fact Finding and Relief Mission initiated by Stand with
8 Samar-Leyte Network in Las Navas on November 11-12, 2019. At least two were victims of
9 extra judicial killings, namely Apolonio "Baba Pining" Lebico in Bgy. San Jorge, Las Navas
10 and Melvin Obiado Cabe in Sitio Inuman, Bgy. Tagab-iran, Las Navas allegedly by
11 unidentified military men on April 25, 2019 and May 6, 2019, respectively. Harassments,
12 intimidation, forced /fake surrender, red-tagging, coercion, forced entry in houses and illegal
13 searches by military men were reported in Bgy. San Jose, Bgy. Epaw, Bgy. Cuenco and Bgy.
14 Capoto-an, all of Las Navas;

15 **WHEREAS**, such bombing and human rights violations aggravate the severe economic
16 hardships already experienced by the people of Las Navas and other areas and provinces in
17 Eastern Visayas. Las Navas is one of the poorest towns in Northern Samar. Previously
18 massive pest infestation among coconut and abaca crops have already destroyed the
19 livelihood of the small farmers;
20

21 **WHEREAS**, widespread food insecurity and economic displacement have plagued Eastern
22 Visayas since the onslaught of Super Typhoon Yolanda. Coconut industry, the biggest
23 subsector in agriculture in Eastern Visayas is in a slump as copra prices fell to an all-time low
24 of P5/kilo, compared to P34.90/kilo last year. Pest infestation affected the region's top
25 crops: bunchy top virus for abaca, black bug for rice and cocolisap for coconut;
26

27 **WHEREAS**, the heightened militarization resulted to economic displacement. The intense
28 militarization, like the pest infestations, affected the farmers' economic activities. Farmers
29 are not only fearful of proceeding to their farms due to military presence, but are actually
30 actively prevented from engaging in any farm work. Military personnel reportedly encircle
31 whole communities, guard the main entrances to barangays, control the entry and exit of
32 people. These caused fear among the peasantry and contribute to the decrease in agricultural
33 production;
34

35 **WHEREAS**, as if the bombings and human right violations were not enough, the military
36 allegedly pressured the local government of Las Navas and other towns to pass resolutions
37 declaring as persona non grata certain organizations and individuals. Among those declared
38 "persona non grata" is Baby Senobio, a native of Las Navas, and a leader of Northern Samar
39 Small Farmers Association Aries Alimboyao of Katungod Northern Samar, Joshua Sagdullas
40 of Bayan Eastern Visayas, and Jun Berino of Samahan Han Gudti Nga Parag-uma Sinirangan
41 Bisayas, on account of their role in organizing and leading the campaigns of Las Navas
42 farmers for land, rights, and welfare. Also declared persona non grata were Aries Alimboyao
43 of Katungod Northern Samar, Joshua Sagdullas of Bayan Eastern Visayas, and Jun Berino of
44 Samahan Han Gudti Nga Parag-uma Sinirangan Bisayas. They were subsequently subjected
45 to military harassment, surveillance, and villification endangering their lives and safety.
46 Members of cause-oriented groups listed in the supposed LGU resolutions were likewise
47 unjustly vilified and feared for their lives. Such military-instigated resolutions are also being
48 pushed in other LGUs in other provinces and regions;
49


1 **WHEREAS**, affected residents of Las Navas and other areas and provinces in Eastern
2 Visayas attribute the intense militarization and massive human rights violations to President
3 Rodrigo Duterte's Memorandum Order No 32 signed on November 22, 2018 which placed
4 Samar island along with Bicol region and Negros island under 'State of Lawlessness'. Five
5 hundred (500) barangays were subjected to combat operations, affecting more than 300,000
6 farmers, caused four mass evacuations and resulted to killing of 34 civilians in Eastern
7 Visayas since Memorandum No 32 was signed;

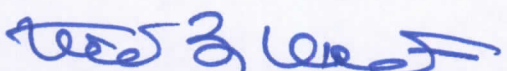
8
9 **WHEREAS**, Memorandum Order 32 is reportedly part of the implementation of President
10 Duterte's Executive Order No 70 signed in December 4, 2018, and which institutionalizes the
11 whole of nation approach in attaining inclusive and sustainable peace. But instead of bringing
12 peace, communities, people's organizations and civilians are killed, harrassed and terrorized
13 by state forces such as what is happening in Las Navas, and other areas in Eastern Visayas
14 and elsewhere in th country;

15
16 **WHEREAS**, there is a need for Congress to investigate the bombing and reports of human
17 rights violations experienced by the farmers and residents of Eastern Visayas, especially
18 considering that similar reports of killings and human rights violations were already reported
19 particularly in the regions identified under Memorandum Order No 32. As duly-elected
20 representatives of the people, Congress must heed the people's call for the cessation of
21 bombing and militarization, immediate pull-out of military forces in their barangays, and
22 immediate and adequate government support. Congress must support the people's longing for
23 peace and genuine pro-people development;

24
25 **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the House of Representatives, through the
26 Committees on Human Rights and Visayas Development, to investigate, in aid of legislation,
27 the reported bombing and militarization of Las Navas, Northern Samar and other areas and
28 provinces in Eastern Visayas aggravating the economic difficulties of the people.


29
30 *Adopted,*


REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
BAYAN MUNA Partylist


REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
BAYAN MUNA Partylist


REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
BAYAN MUNA Partylist


REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT TEACHERS Party-List



REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women's Party



REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
KABATAAN Party-List