

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 663



Introduced by

BAYAN MUNA Representatives EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and FERDINAND R. GAITE,
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 COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO STRONGLY CONDEMN AND INVESTIGATE THE ILLEGAL AND FORCIBLE ENTRY OF PARAMILITARY GROUP ALAMARA INTO THE LUMAD EVACUATION CENTER AND SANCTUARY AT THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES (UCCP) – HARAN CENTER IN DAVAO CITY

WHEREAS, on January 25, 2020, at around 9:00 AM, bolo-wielding members of the military-backed Alamara paramilitary group forcibly entered the evacuation center in the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)-Haran in Davao City, where around 500 *lumad* evacuees are taking sanctuary since 2015 due to the militarization of their communities;

WHEREAS, without showing any written valid order from any competent authority, members of the paramilitary group destroyed the evacuation center's barbed fences using wirecutters and bolos, and, eventually destroyed the gate of the compound despite calls from the evacuees to talk peacefully. Fearful of their lives and safety, the evacuees were then forced to retreat to a UCCP-owned training center, also located inside the Haran compound. By 11:00 AM, the paramilitary group forcibly entered and occupied the evacuation center and reportedly ransacked the library, clinic and the secretariat office;

WHEREAS, the forcible entry of the Alamara paramilitary group comes after the Regional Peace and Order Council of Region XI approved a resolution on January 15 calling for the immediate closure of UCCP-Haran. The resolution, authored by Davao del Norte Governor Edwin Jubahib falsely accused the administrators of the UCCP Haran of violating the Indigenous People's Rights Act. Gov. Jubahidb, who arrived later in the scene of the incident, repeatedly, but, failed to convince the *lumad* evacuees to go with him as he admitted that he cannot stop the activities of the Alamara and their military backers and he cannot assure their security if they return to their militarized communities;

WHEREAS, since the 1990's the UCCP Haran has provided sanctuary and shelter for displaced communities, particularly the *lumdads* evacuating from their communities due to the militarization brought by logging concessions operating in their ancestral lands. Since 2014, the UCCP Haran has served as the sanctuary for *lumad* evacuees from Talaingod and Kapalong

towns in Davao del Norte; Arakan town in Cotabato province; and some towns in Compostela Valley, whose communities were threatened by the increased presence and encampment of soldiers in their communities, as well as the conduct of military aerial bombardment during counterinsurgency operations ;

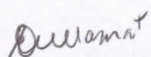
WHEREAS, the military-backed Alamara paramilitary group is notorious for its long record of human rights violations against *lumad* communities. Lumad evacuees report of several instances when Alamara members arrest residents in their communities and bring them to the military camp for interrogation. The sanctuaried *lumad* in UCCP Haran evacuated their ancestral lands precisely to avoid the harassment perpetrated by the Alamara and the military. Thus, the illegal entry into the UCCP-Haran evacuation center, on top of the previous criminal acts committed by the Alamara, should warrant the immediate arrest of its members;

WHEREAS, appallingly, while the Alamara members destroyed the gate of the evacuation center and forcibly occupied the same, members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) were only watching idly. The police made no move to apprehend the members of the paramilitary group for breaking in and destroying the property of UCCP Haran and for committing a crime with impunity in their very presence. Lumad evacuees and church leaders questioned the police for their condemnable inaction and lack of concern for the already visibly harassed and terrified evacuees and administrators of the center, including UCCP Bishop Hamuel Tequis. Worse, at around 12:00 noon, police officers even blocked the gates of UCCP Haran and implemented an illegal lock down, preventing media personnel from entering to cover the press conference of Bishop Tequis and the evacuees inside the UCCP Compound;

WHEREAS, it was very apparent that the illegal and forcible entry of the members of Alamara group inside the UCCP-Haran center was the result of the RPOC Resolution to close it down. Though the forcible closure last January 25 failed due to the resistance mounted by the *lumad* evacuees, it is very clear that the said RPOC resolution and the action taken by the Alamara and their supporters are blatant and gross violations of the *lumad* evacuees' right to liberty of abode. The RPOC has no authority to impose the closure of a religious institution that provides sanctuary in a private property to the evacuees. The resolution is contradictory to the mandate of the Peace and Order council and is in fact violative of the indigenous people's right to self-determination;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives, through the Committee on Human Rights, condemn and investigate the illegal and forcible entry of paramilitary group Alamara into the *lumad* evacuation center and sanctuary at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)-Haran Center in Davao City.

Approved,

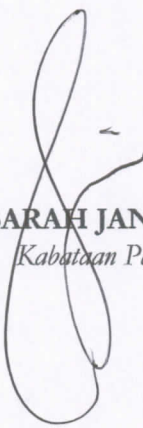

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Bayan Muna Partylist


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