

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1141



---

Introduced by  
REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women's Party),  
REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers Partylist), REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Kabataan Partylist),  
REPS. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT, CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and FERDINAND R. GAITE (Bayan Muna)

---

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our 84-year old Revised Penal Code (Act No. 3815) carries a provision that practically gives license to the taking of life without due process of law and without a consequent penalty. This provision is Article 247 which provides for *Death or Physical Injuries Under Exceptional Circumstances*. Under this article, a legally married person who having surprised his or her spouse in the act of committing sexual intercourse with another shall kill or seriously injure any or both of them in the act or immediately thereafter shall suffer the penalty of *destierro* (banishment). Far from being a penalty, *destierro* is not really intended as a penalty but to remove the killer spouse from the vicinity and to protect him or her from acts of reprisal principally by relatives of the deceased spouse.<sup>1</sup> So not only does the law absolve the killer, it also affords him or her protection via the imposition of *destierro*.

Worse, Article 247 is also made applicable to parents who shall kill or injure their minor daughters (sons not included) who are living with them and or their "seducers" under the same circumstances. A violation of the right to due process as it already is, Article 247 also clearly discriminates against women. It reinforces double-standards of morality applied to women and men and it unduly infringes on women's sexual rights.

As has been noted by legal experts, Article 247 does not actually define a crime since the accused will still have to be charged with parricide if the act resulted to death or with physical injuries if it only resulted to physical injuries. Article 247 is only utilized as a defense which must be proven by the accused.

That the law considers the spouse or parent as acting in a "justified burst of passion" had been cited as the justification for the existence of this Article in the Revised Penal Code.<sup>2</sup>

But, the veiled truth is that the article suggests that a married person's sexual intercourse with a person not his or her spouse is considered dishonorable, in the same manner that the minor daughter's sexual intercourse with her "seducer" is also prescribed to be dishonorable, such that when they are caught in the act, killing or injuring them is "justified". Sad to say, this is the Philippine version of honor killings being practiced in other countries but which is universally condemned by various human rights organizations. The last paragraph of Article 247 supports this position when it states that: "Any person who shall promote or facilitate the prostitution of his wife or daughter, or shall otherwise have consented to the infidelity of the

---

<sup>1</sup> People vs. Lauren, C.A., 57 O.G. 7367 as cited in The Revised Penal Code (Criminal Law) book of Luis B. Reyes, 13th Edition, 1993, page 423.

<sup>2</sup> People vs. Gonzales, 69 Phil. 66.

other spouse shall not be entitled to the benefits of this article." As in honor killings, the "justification" for the killing or injury under exceptional circumstances is the perceived shame or dishonor brought by the act of intercourse outside the marriage or with minor daughters, and not the "justified burst of passion."


In fact, The Revised Penal Code already recognizes passion or obfuscation under Article 13 thereof. But it is only recognized as a mitigating circumstance whereas in Article 247, it is an absolatory cause. This, all the more reinforces the observation that Article 247 provides for a Philippine version of honor killing.

So while Gabriela Women's Party is aware that there is an ongoing effort to overhaul the antiquated Revised Penal Code, Article 247 must be immediately repealed for the following reasons:

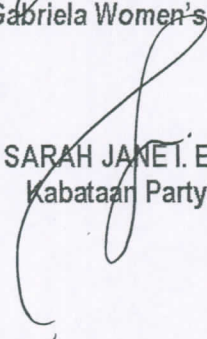
- 1) It violates Article 111, Section I of our Constitution which prohibits the taking of life without due process of law. Article 247 allows spouses and parents to take life under exceptional circumstances without due process. The decision to take life is placed solely on the persons "benefited" by the article;
- 2) There are preposterous gender-based assumptions contained in the article which reinforces the double-standard applied to women and men in terms of their sexual behavior and morality. This is very clear in that only parents of minor daughters can claim the "benefits" of this article. The same gender-based assumptions are also present with respect to killings committed by spouses. Although both husband and wife are entitled to the "benefits" of the article, almost all cases decided by the Supreme Court, with the exception of the 1934 case of Corazon Zamora de Cortez (who admitted to the killing of her husband's paramour when she caught them in the act of intercourse), show that the killings under exceptional circumstances are carried out by husbands; and
- 3) The article violates international conventions and domestic laws, as follows, to cite only a few: Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Convention on the Rights of the Child, RA 7610 and RA 9710.

In sum, immediate repeal of Article 247 of the Revised Penal Code will protect and preserve life, protect children and promote women's rights and gender equality.

The urgent passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
ARLENE D. BROSAS  
Gabriela Women's Party

FRANCE L. CASTRO  
ACT Teachers Partylist

  
SARAH JANET ELAGO  
Kabataan Partylist

  
EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT  
Bayan Muna Partylist

CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE  
Bayan Muna Partylist

  
FERDINAND R. GAITE  
Bayan Muna Partylist



Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1141

---

Introduced by

REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women's Party),  
REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers Partylist), REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Kabataan Partylist),  
REPS. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT, CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and FERDINAND R. GAITE (Bayan Muna)

---

AN ACT REPEALING ARTICLE 247 OF THE REVISED PENAL CODE

SECTION 1. Article 247 of the Revised Penal Code is hereby repealed.

SECTION 2. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*