

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

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 329



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

A RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 70, SERIES OF 2018

WHEREAS, last December 4, 2018, President Rodrigo Duterte signed the Executive Order No. 70 creating a national task force, saying it will address the causes of armed conflict with communists at the local level;

WHEREAS, Executive Order (EO) No. 70 seeks to establish a National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) to "ensure the provision of social services, employment opportunities, and improved quality of life in communities that have been experiencing, or are vulnerable to, armed communist conflict";

WHEREAS, this EO No. 70 is adopting the "whole-of-nation" approach of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations – a strategy being an affirmation that a "purely military option in combating terrorism and extremism" is not enough;

WHEREAS, the task force, chaired by the President himself and vice-chaired by National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr., is composed of various national government agencies and two private sector representatives;

WHEREAS, NTF-ELCAC was supposedly created to solve problems of insurgency and to supervise the delivery of the aforementioned services, however, it does not fulfill its promise. Instead, it has been continuously used as an excuse for political persecution and harassment targeting the government's top critics – duly-elected leaders, community workers, sectoral organizers, unionists, human rights defenders, even peace advocates, and activists in general;

WHEREAS, the claims of NTF-ELCAC that different progressive groups and party-lists are fronts of Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army (CPP-NPA) placed the lives of civilians in grave danger;

WHEREAS, there have been alarming and rising reports of harassment, threats, killings, and sudden disappearances of some leaders and members of the Gabriela Women's Party (GWP) and other organizations critical of the administration;

WHEREAS, a barangay health worker and member of GWP, Gloria Jandayan, together with her daughter who is also a lay volunteer, Gleceria Balangiao, were illegally arrested and brought to the Philippine Army's 1st Special

Forces Battalion Camp in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon last February 11. Jandayan was accused of being a medic of the NPA by Captain Lorefel Judaya INF;

WHEREAS, another Gabriela member, Mae Tugot, was illegally arrested in Macabalan, Cagayan de Oro City also by the Philippine Army's 1st Special Forces Battalion last March 20, 2019;

WHEREAS, leaflets circulated in the Cagayan Province have wrongfully linked the GWP Vice President for Internal Affairs, Mia Liquigan, to the CPP-NPA;

WHEREAS, the third nominee of Gabriela Women's Party for the midterm elections and a consumer rights advocate in Western Visayas, Lucy Francisco was tagged as a supporter of NPA in leaflets and posters disseminated in Iloilo City;

WHEREAS, attacks of harassment and intimidation by both the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police (AFP-PNP) officers to members of Gabriela Women's Party intensified during the midterm election period as the PNP distributed printed materials that named Gabriela Women's Party as NPA supporter;

WHEREAS, the AFP-PNP even had tarpaulins with false propaganda put up in different areas of the country maligning and accusing GWP and other organizations as NPA fronts and as enemies of the state, thereby placing the lives of its members in danger;

WHEREAS, the NTF-ELCAC also filed a petition for cancellation of GWP's registration with the Commission on Elections even though its mandate that is stipulated in EO No. 70, series of 2018, does not include such;

WHEREAS, apart from attacks towards Gabriela Women's Party, its members and allied organizations, there have also been incidents wherein the EO No. 70 was directly invoked by the AFP to justify its rather unlawful violence towards the people they should be serving and protecting;

WHEREAS, on August 6, 2019, Brandon Lee, a human rights defender from the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance (CHRA) was shot multiple times in front of his house after he was tagged an "enemy of the state";

WHEREAS, in 2015, agents of the AFP accused Brandon Lee and other Ifugao Peasant Movement (IPM) members as supporters and members of the CPP-NPA;

WHEREAS, weeks before Brandon Lee was shot, frequent surveillance of Brandon's residence by the elements of the AFP, as well as the offices of IPM, and Justice and Peace Advocates of Ifugao, of which he is also a member, was observed;

WHEREAS, preceding Brandon Lee's case, Duterte declared a "state of lawlessness" on Negros last year citing Memorandum Order (MO) No. 32 and EO No. 70 – which led to the killing of 42 civilians;

WHEREAS, the declaration led to a spike in the atrocities that in the eight months of the implementation of this anti-insurgency policy, the body count more than doubled to 87 under MO32, indicating an almost 350% increase in the rate of killings;

WHEREAS, the AFP conducts their retaliation by targeting civilians in hitting back the NPA for the latter's legitimate act of war. Activists, particularly peasant advocates who organize and mobilize against oppressive feudal relations, are a popular target among state forces. With impunity, they ignore the fact that these activists are civilians and unarmed;

WHEREAS, the policy has even led to at least 11 state armed groups to occupy Negros—from AFP battalions and PNP Special Action Forces to state-backed death squads and paramilitary factions;

WHEREAS, to this today, 89 people have been killed in Negros, including lawyers Benjamin Ramos and Anthony Trinidad;

WHEREAS, this executive order puts the youth in the frontlines of danger as students compose the large victims of the red tagging schemes of the government;

WHEREAS, according to a news report, the government, through the NTF-ELCAC has formally requested the European Union to halt funding progressive groups and Lumad schools such as Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (ALCADEV), Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation, Inc. and the Salugpungan Ta'tanu Igkanugon Community Learning Center, Inc.;

WHEREAS, following this request, the Department of Education (DepEd) suspended the said Lumad schools without proper investigation as it relied only on the report and self-serving affidavits submitted by the NTF-ELCAC;

WHEREAS, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Eduardo Año also said the department will review the memorandum of agreement with state universities and colleges regarding police visibility in infiltrated schools and universities;

WHEREAS, Secretary Año said that in line with the government's "whole-of-nation-approach" in eliminating local armed conflict as stated in EO No. 70, police presence in schools and universities can be increased to deter the recruitment program of leftist groups;

WHEREAS, police presence in schools and universities translates to the exercise of de-facto martial law powers of surveillance and crackdown among students, especially activists;

WHEREAS, since the Duterte regime's implementation of this so-called task force, it has been able to scare the people with its fear-mongering tactics nationwide: calling all critics terrorists, communists, and enemies of the State, inciting violence against them, moving to defund their organizations, and ultimately silencing those who challenge the administration's narrative;

WHEREAS, human rights violations and state terrorism should be exposed and efforts and campaigns should be initiated to hold the Philippine government accountable as the primary duty-bearer of human rights promotion and defense. Its aim to silence all legitimate opposition shall not be met;


WHEREAS, there is a P522 million allocation for the NTF-ELCAC in the 2020 proposed budget, which could have been allotted for programs and direct social services that will address the people's actual demands;

WHEREAS, if the establishment of the executive order's real aim is to provide and deliver services, there would be no need for building a national task force to end local communist armed conflict. Instead, the budget for the said NTF-ELCAC for 2020 could have been allotted to direct social services;

WHEREAS, EO No. 70 was just deceitfully packaged to "ensure the provision of social services, employment opportunities, and improved quality of life in communities that have been experiencing, or are vulnerable to, armed communist conflict", but is now exposed to suppress dissent, sow fear, and force the people to surrender their rights;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Committee on Human Rights conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the human rights violations brought about by the implementation of Executive Order No. 70, series of 2018.

Adopted,



ARLENE D. BROSAS
Gabriela Women's Party



CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist



FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist



EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist



FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers' Partylist



SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Kabataan Partylist