WHEREAS, on May 24, 2020 at around 3:15 PM, 81 mm mortar hit at least two houses in Sitio Amai Zailon in Barangay Kitango, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao. The explosion resulted in the death of two children: Aslamiya Adam Tambak, 10 years old, and her sister Asnaida Adam Tambak, 7 years old, both females;

WHEREAS, shrapnels of the mortar also hit the children’s mother, Noraisa Adam Tambak, 40 years old, in the pelvic area and their brother, Norsayid Ulama, 5 years old. Twelve (12) other relatives in the same sitio were injured, including a five-year-old male. They were immediately brought to the Cotabato Regional Medical Center (CRMC) in Cotabato City;

WHEREAS, according to rights group Kawagib Alliance for Advancement of Moro Human Rights, at around 8 AM on the same day, Abu Talhan Zailon, uncle of the two children killed by the explosion, reported hearing at least 10 rounds of mortar shelling coming from the direction of Brgy. Elian where the 57th IBPA is based;

WHEREAS, in a statement, Lt. Col. Edgardo Vilchez, spokesperson of the 6th Infantry Division, denied that military operations were conducted on May 24, in observance of the Eid’l Fitr celebration. According to him, there were no operating troops in the area when the incident occurred. The spokesperson also said that there is an existing rido (family feud) in the area with ISIS-inspired terrorists allegedly planting improvised explosive devices (IED) in the area as perimeter defense. Before the incident, the military reportedly monitored a gathering of Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Kitango;

WHEREAS, the 1st Mechanized Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army based in Brgy. Elian, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, and the 57th Infantry Battalion based in Brgy. Elian and Bgy. Salibo, Datu
Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao, are the units who have been chasing the BIFF in the Second District of Maguindanao;

WHEREAS, in a news report, Musib Tan, town administrator of Datu Saudi Ampatuan said that earlier in the day, a gunfight could be heard in Brgy. Elian where the 57th ID had been battling Dawlah Islamiya Mindanao and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters since the past day. According to Tan, in a call, the military assured him it would have been impossible for them to make mistakes in coordinates as they only aimed in enemy position;

WHEREAS, residents of Sitio Amai Zailon in Barangay Kitango who were hit by the mortars state that there are no terrorists in their community. The father of the two children victims also pointed out that the weapon used in the explosion, 81 mm mortars, were part of the arsenal of the Philippine Army;

WHEREAS, this incident is only one among several reports of civilians being wounded and killed by indiscriminate bombings and shootings in communities in Maguindanao. According to rights group Kawagib, on May 22, mortar shelling in Sitio Bayog, in Bgy. Dapiawan at 9:00 in the morning also resulted to the death of Ustadz Abdul Madidis, a respected local religious leader. Other incidents remain unpunished such as the incident On August 2012, wherein a four-year-old girl Asmayra Usman died and her father Arsad Usman was wounded, due to the firing of a 50-caliber gun by the military in an evacuation center in Bgy. Salbo in Datu Saudi Ampatuan;

WHEREAS, it is imperative for members of Congress, as representatives of the people, to protect the rights of the people and seek accountability for violations against such. There is a need to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation on the incident to bring justice to the victims of this tragic incident and avoid further casualties and damage to civilian communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Committee on Human Rights and Committee on Muslim Affairs, jointly conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the May 24 Eid’l Fitr Bombing hitting civilian homes, killing 2 children and injuring 12 others in Barangay Kitango, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Maguindanao
Approved,

REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. ARELLE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women's Party

REP. FRANCIS L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Partylist

REP. SARAHJANE I. ELAGO
Kabatahan Partylist