

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City



**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**  
Second Regular Session

**HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1374**

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**INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVES**

**ARIEL B. CASILAO**

**CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE, EMMI A. DE JESUS, ANTONIO L. TINIO,  
ARLENE D. BROSAS, FRANCE L. CASTRO, AND SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING FOR THE NATIONAL CONDEMNATION OF THE HISTORICAL  
INJUSTICE AND ATROCITIES UNDER THE "HOWLING WILDERNESS"  
MILITARY CAMPAIGN COMMITTED BY THE AMERICAN COLONIAL FORCES IN  
THE ISLAND OF SAMAR IN 1901**

**WHEREAS**, last August 11, 2017, marked the 116<sup>th</sup> year of historical injustice and tragic occupation by the 74-man contingent of the Company C, 9<sup>th</sup> United States Infantry Regiment led by Capt. Thomas Connell of Balangiga town in Eastern Samar, that led to the atrocious offensives of the colonial forces in 1901 of the Samar island labeled as "howling wilderness," chiefly directed by US Brigadier Gen. Jacob H. Smith;

**WHEREAS**, resenting the occupation of Balangiga town and oppression against the local populace by the US colonial forces, on September 28, 1901, as the Balangiga bell rang, townspeople and Filipino guerrillas attacked the occupying force of the American troops and being humiliated as news of the uprising and defeat of the colonialists reached their homeland, the US colonial government appointed General Smith to accomplish the task pacifying Samar as retaliation starting October 1901 to the early part of 1902;<sup>i</sup>

**WHEREAS**, Gen. Smith was branded by the US mass media as "Howling Jake," "The Monster," and "Hell Roaring Jake" due to his atrocities in the Samar island, basically famed by his citation: "I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn; the more you kill and burn, the better it will please me... The interior of Samar must be made a howling wilderness;"<sup>ii</sup>

- males above ten years old were ordered massacred and whole towns were burned down;<sup>iii</sup>

- food and trade to Samar were cut off, intended to starve the revolutionaries into submission;
- according to Major Waller, one of Gen. Smith's officers, that over an eleven-day period his men burned 255 dwellings, shot 13 carabaos and killed 39 people;<sup>iv</sup>
- exhaustive research in the 1990s made by British writer Bob Couttie as part of a ten-year study of the Balangiga Massacre tentatively put the figure at about 2,500; David Fritz used population ageing techniques and suggested a figure of a little more than 2,000 losses in males of combat age but nothing to support widespread killing of women and children. Some Filipino historians believe it to be around 50,000;<sup>vii</sup>
- the earliest reference to a 50,000 plus death toll is American historian Kenneth Ray Young;<sup>vii</sup>

**WHEREAS**, the atrocities in the Samar campaign of the US colonial forces were also executed in other parts of the country:

- in January 1901, in Batangas and nearby provinces: "all property was destroyed, all houses put to the torch and the country was made a "desert waste ... of death and desolation." 54 According to statistics compiled by U.S. Government officials, by the time Bell was finished at least 100,000 people had been killed or had died in Batangas alone as a direct result of the scorched-earth policies, and the enormous dent in the population of the province (which was reduced by a third) is reflected in the census figures," led by Brigadier General Franklin Bell;<sup>viii</sup>
- in April 1901, in Abra: "whole villages had been burned, storehouses and crops had been destroyed and the entire province was as devoid of food products as was the valley of Shenandoah after Sheridan's raid during the Civil War," led by Gen. Smith;<sup>ix</sup>
- in August 1901, in Panay: "the 18th regulars marched from Iloilo in the south to Capiz [now Roxas] ... in the north under orders to burn every town from which they were attacked. The result was they left a strip of land 60 miles wide from one end of the island to the other, over which the traditional crow could not have flown without provision," also led by Gen. Smith;<sup>x</sup>
- in November 1901, in Bohol: at US Senate hearings in 1902, entire towns were burned as "punishment" in a military campaign led by Brigadier General Robert Hughes;<sup>xi</sup>

**WHEREAS**, on July 24, 2017, President Rodrigo Duterte in his second State of the Nation Address (SONA) urged the United States to return the bells of the Balangiga church : "That's why I say today – give us back those Balangiga bells. They belong to the Philippines. They are part of our national heritage. Isauli naman ninyo, masakit iyon sa amin (Return it to us, that is painful for us);"

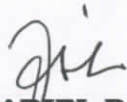
**WHEREAS**, the historical injustice and atrocities committed by American colonialism against the people of Samar and whole country remain unsettled, hence, for the advancement of nationalism and social justice in the country, as contribution to rectifying the country's colonially-dictated history, this resolution is seriously urging for a national condemnation of the "howling wilderness" campaign in the Samar island committed by American colonial forces;

**WHEREAS**, this resolution, briefly calls for the following demands:

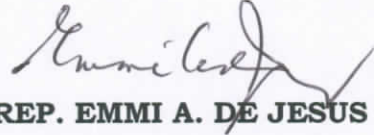
- the immediate return of the Balangiga bells to the Philippines, which were treated by the United States as war booty;
- the national condemnation by the Filipino people of the atrocities committed by US colonial forces and Gen. Smith in the Samar island that even the American people condemned as "howling wilderness;"
- and the public apology from the US as a colonial power that committed historical atrocities against the Filipino people as an initial measure of reparation;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the House of Representatives, to urge for the national condemnation of the historical injustice and atrocities under the "howling wilderness" military campaign committed by the American colonial forces in the island of Samar in 1901.

Adopted,

  
**REP. ARIEL B. CASILAO**  
ANAKPAWIS Party-list

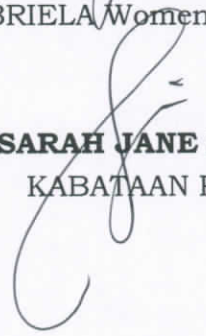
  
**REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**  
BAYAN MUNA Party-list

  
**REP. EMMI A. DE JESUS**  
GABRIELA Women's Party

  
**REP. ANTONIO L. TINIO**  
ACT Teachers Party-list

  
**REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS**  
GABRIELA Women's Party

  
**REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO**  
ACT Teachers Party-list

  
**REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**  
KABATAAN Party-list

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- i Borrinaga, Rolando O. *Vintage View: The Balangiga Incident and Its Aftermath*.
- ii "President Retires Gen. Jacob H. Smith," *The New York Times*, July 17, 2017.
- iii Agoncillo, Teodoro C. (1990) [1960], *History of the Filipino People* (8th ed.), Quezon City: Garotech Publishing, p. 228, ISBN 971-8711-06-6, "In their desperation, the American soldiers turned arsonists burning whole towns in order to force guerrillas to the open. One such infamous case of extreme barbarity occurred in the town of Balangiga, Samar, in 1901-1902."
- iv Nebrida, Victor. "The Balangiga Massacre: Getting Even" in Hector Santos, ed., *Philippine Centennial Series*.
- v Dumindin, Arnaldo. "Philippine-American War, 1899-1902," March 30, 2008.
- vi "A Philippine Newslink Interview with Bob Couttie, Author of: *Hang the Dogs, The True and Tragic History of the Balangiga Massacre*, page 2". *Philippine Newslink*, December 15, 2004.
- vii Young, Kenneth Ray, "Guerrilla Warfare Revisited," *Leyte Samar Studies*, XI:1, 1977, pp 21-31.
- viii Francisco, Luzviminda, "The First Vietnam: The U.S.-Philippine War of 1899," 1973.
- ix Report of the Provincial Governor of Abra, Senate Doc. no. 331, part 1,430 and Francisco, Luzviminda.
- x *Boston Herald* , August 25, 1901 (quoting a letter from an American officer) and Francisco, Luzviminda.
- xi Dumindin, Arnaldo.