



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

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**

First Regular Session

128

**HOUSE RESOLUTION No. \_\_\_\_\_**

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**Introduced by**

**BAYAN MUNA Party-List Representatives CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE,  
FERDINAND R. GAITE and EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,  
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**

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**RESOLUTION**

**DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN  
INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE SPATE OF KILLINGS AND  
OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE NEGROS ISLAND FOLLOWING  
THE ISSUANCE OF MEMORANDUM ORDER 32**

**WHEREAS**, last July 23, 2019, armed men shot and killed in broad daylight lawyer Anthony Trinidad in broad daylight along the national highway in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. Also wounded in the said attack was his wife Novie Trinidad. The lawyer was described as soft-spoken and kind-hearted and has lent his lawyering in the service of the poor<sup>1</sup>. Rights group Karapatan Alliance for Human Rights noted that prior to killing, Trinidad's name was included in a flyer that tagged him as supporter of the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA-NDF);

**WHEREAS**, in the said flyer that circulated in Guihulngan City, 15 names were included. Of the 15, one other activist, Haide Flores, was gunned down in August 2018. Another health worker in the leaflet received death threats. Notably, red-tagging preceded the extrajudicial killings in the island, such as the case of human rights lawyer Benjamin Ramos, Jr. who was killed in Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental in November 2018, and Escalante Councilor Bernardino

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/25/19/school-principal-2-others-killed-as-spate-of-violence-grips-negros-city>

Patigas, who was gunned down in Escalante city, also in Negros Occidental in April 22, 2019. Both were placed in the same poster-hit list, labelling them as terrorists;

**WHEREAS**, two (2) days after Trinidad's assassination, on June 25, 2019, school principal Arthur Bayawa, 55, and his sister Ardale, an employee of the Department of Education, were gunned also down in their home in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental. In a separate incident on the same day, barangay chairman Romeo Alipan, 64, was also shot several times after armed men stormed their home;

**WHEREAS**, Guihulngan has long been branded by the police and military as a stronghold of the communist rebels;

**WHEREAS**, on November 22, 2018 Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea signed Memorandum Order (MO) 32 instructing the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to end the "sporadic acts of violence" in the provinces of Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, Samar island and the Bicol region;

**WHEREAS**, the issuance of the memo comes after the killing of nine (9) sugarcane farmers in Sagay, Negros Occidental in October 20, 2018. The fatalities, including four (4) women and two (2) minors, belonged to the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW.) Human rights organization KARAPATAN-Negros Island allege that state agents are behind the massacre of farmers, in the fashion of human rights abuses committed against organized movements in the country;

**WHEREAS**, the barbarous attack in Sagay was not suppressed by the deployment of state forces, as in the directive of Memo 32. Contrarily, it was followed by a spate of killings and other human rights violations against personalities and members of the progressive movement in Negros;

**WHEREAS**, on April 2019, fourteen (14) farmers were killed in one night, drug-war Tokhang-style, in the Canlaon City, Manjuyod and Sta. Catalina towns in Negros Occidental. A fact-finding mission revealed that the victims were summarily executed.<sup>2</sup> Twelve (12) more farmers were arrested the same night;

**WHEREAS**, Defend Negros Network notes that, so far, there had been sixty-six (66) killings of human rights workers and farmers in the island under the Duterte administration. They attribute the spate of human rights violations to the counterinsurgency policy Oplan Kapanatagan<sup>3</sup> with a local counterpart in Negros dubbed Oplan Sauron;

**WHEREAS**, Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Albayalde announced that Oplan Sauron will be continued in Negros Island, citing "maganda ang epekto," (the results were

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bulatlat.com/2019/04/08/justicefornegros14-probe-reveals-state-security-forces-committed-murder-theft-other-abuses/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bulatlat.com/2019/06/23/66-killed-under-duterte-advocates-call-for-defense-of-human-rights-in-negros/>

good)<sup>4</sup>. Government-run Philippine News Agency boasted that in less than six months, 20 people were killed as part of the campaign<sup>5</sup>.

**WHEREAS**, the cases of human rights abuses, particularly the killings of human rights workers and farmers in the target areas of MO 32, clearly show that the clear and present danger to the public does not come from non-state actors but state forces. In all regions and provinces included in the memo, state forces of their agents are blamed for the killings and human rights abuse;


**WHEREAS**, MO 32 has manifested itself as another measure for tyrannical repression of progressive, democratic organizations and individuals. The “sporadic acts of violence” described in the issuance more clearly pertains to state-backed operations;

**WHEREAS**, it is the task of the House of Representatives to protect the human rights of the people. Issuances that fall contrary to human rights must be halted, and perpetrators brought to justice. The respect for human rights and democratic rights of the people must be held in the highest esteem;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the House of Representatives, through the Committee on Human Rights, to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the spate of killings and other human rights violations in the Negros Island following the issuance of Memorandum 32.

*Adopted,*

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


  
**Rep. FERDINAND R. GAITE**  
*BAYAN MUNA Party-list*

  
**Rep. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT**  
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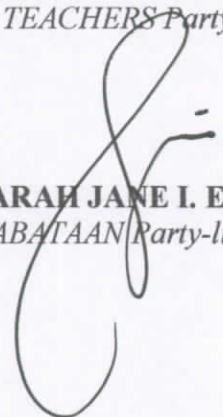
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1075740>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*



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

**Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO**  
*ACT TEACHERS Party-list*



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