

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 245



Introduced by **Kabataan Party-list Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**

RESOLUTION

URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO EXPRESS THEIR SUPPORT TO THE UNITY STATEMENT OF THE YOUTH IN THEIR CALL "NO TO MARTIAL LAW IN SCHOOLS"

WHEREAS, it is stated in Section 11 of Article II of the 1987 Constitution that the State shall value the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights;

WHEREAS, in Section 1 of Article III of the 1987 Constitution, "[N]o person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws," and Section 18 of the same article provides that no person shall be detained [more so, tortured or enforcedly disappeared] solely by reason of his political beliefs and aspirations;

WHEREAS, student councils, publications, institutions and youth organizations, issue this unity statement in response to the Senate probe on legal progressive organizations, which was initiated by neophyte senator Ronald "Bato" De La Rosa amid allegations of minors who went missing because they joined such groups;

WHEREAS, the state orchestrated the filing of trumped-up charges against several youth leaders for "kidnapping" their members. This is based on false claims. In fact, there are no "missing minors" – only students of legal age whose choice of joining legal cause-oriented organizations is yet to be accepted by their parents, who are understandably concerned about the welfare of their children;

WHEREAS, we cherish our families, and our love for them drives us to continue striving for a just and peaceful society: one wherein no parent has to worry about the safety of their children, and no family is broken apart by senseless killings. We struggle towards a society wherein all families have access to basic social services and livelihood opportunities, and every toiling parent is justly compensated for their hard work;

WHEREAS, in the Senate hearing convened on August 7, 2019, it was evident that the state belittles the capacity of its citizens to willingly participate in social issues at a young age. It should note that even citizens aged below eighteen (18) are also guaranteed the right to expression, association and peaceful assembly;

WHEREAS, above all, the Duterte Administration does not have the credibility to say that they want to bring families together, for it is they who wreck Filipino families on a daily basis. It is they who orphaned thousands of children – and even killed children – in the course of the fake and ineffective war on drugs. It is they who cause anxiety and sorrow on parents of students and youth who were harassed, illegally arrested, abducted or killed by the state based on false claims that the victims are members of armed groups;

WHEREAS, it becomes clearer that the real motive of the state is not to ensure the safety of the youth. It is using family matters to justify and lay down the foundations for increased and unrestricted presence of state forces inside schools as part of intensified counter-insurgency operations in urban centers nationwide. Senator De La Rosa himself exposed this motive when he asserted during the Senate hearing that the AFP and PNP must be allowed to freely enter school campuses to recruit members. This is an outright violation of International Humanitarian Law, which shields schools from being used for military and counter-insurgency purposes;

WHEREAS, the state itself has been consistently violating international doctrines that protect schools as zones of peace. For instance, it has occupied Lumad schools as military camps or barracks. In July 2019, it closed 55 Lumad schools upon recommendation of counter-insurgency task force head Hermogenes Esperon. Now it rushes to reinstate mandatory Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) through senior high school, thereby automatically recruiting students, mostly minors, into the reserve force against their free will;

WHEREAS, it is very disappointing that the Philippines has not yet endorsed the international Safe Schools Declaration which reiterates that “places of education are places of safety”. It is also alarming that state forces are the main perpetrators of illegal arrests, extra-judicial killings and human rights violations across the country today. Consequently, their forcible entry into universities and colleges will only lead to attacks on the youth, especially on the right to organization and expression. Their plan to enter schools will threaten the academic freedom which must be enjoyed by students, teachers and learning institutions themselves;

WHEREAS, state forces have already done so much within and along the borders of school campuses. They conduct surveillance operations, disseminate propaganda materials that red-tag student and youth leaders, and conduct fora vilifying progressive organizations in the guise of “anti-drug and anti-terror seminars”. These schemes are systematically done in order to instill fear upon students and youth, who are doing nothing wrong when expressing grievances and general discontent over the repressive policies and unfulfilled promises of the current national administration;

WHEREAS, the youth come forward to declare our unity in resisting this latest wave of attacks from the state. We call on the national government to:

(1) immediately stop its escalating campaign to demonize student activism and youth involvement in addressing the problems of our society;

(2) dispense with its plan to relax existing agreements between the government and academic institutions, which hinder state forces from freely entering and roaming around campuses; and

(3) junk all trumped-up cases filed against youth leaders who are being publicly branded as "kidnappers" of the "missing minors".

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the House of Representatives are urged to express their support to the unity statement of the youth in their call "No to Martial Law in Schools".

Adopted,

Rep. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

Kabataan Party-list

