Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 920

Introduced by
BAYAN MUNA Representatives CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE,
FERDINAND R. GAITE and EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT

RESOLUTION
URGING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO INVESTIGATE,
IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLING
OF PEASANT LEADER JOHN FAROCHILIN
AND THE ILLEGAL ARRESTS, DETENTION AND TORTURE
OF CIVILIANS IN PANAY ISLAND COMMITTED BY THE
61st INFANTRY BATTALION OF THE PHILIPPINE ARMY

WHEREAS, the Philippines has not been spared by the catastrophe and continuing distress brought
about by the COVID-19 pandemic against which the whole world is struggling to defeat;

WHEREAS, to date, the Duterte administration’s response is a mere dismal health solution and
delivery of socio-economic measures through a highly militarized operation to combat COVID-19.
Evidently, the militarist solutions resulted in a massive violation of human rights where arrests and
detention for quarantine infractions exceed the targeted number of mass testing necessary to identify
and isolate those infected by the deadly virus;

WHEREAS, these human rights violations are worse in far-flung areas against activists and innocent
civilians as the military continues its counter-insurgency program despite the threat of COVID-19.
One such case is the extrajudicial killing of peasant leader, John Farochilin, and the illegal arrest,
detention, and torture of 11 civilians in the Panay Island;

WHEREAS, Farochilin was shot to death with high-powered firearms by elements of the 61st
Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army (IB-PA), led by 1st Lt. Ferdinand Vera in the morning of 18
April 2020. The 50-year-old Farochilin was at his farm in Sitio Anoy, Brgy. Cabalaunan, Miag-ao, Iloilo
when the incident happened. He sustained bullet wounds in the head and in the chest;

WHEREAS, subsequently, the Philippine Army’s 3rd Infantry Division (ID) reported an alleged
armed encounter in Sitio Anoy where an unidentified member of the New People’s Army (NPA) was
killed, thus fabricating and implying that Farochilin was a member of the NPA;

WHEREAS, contrary to what the 3rd ID has concocted, Farochilin was not a member of the NPA
but the chairman of Agham na sang mga Mangguma sa Miag-ao (Alliance of Farmers in Miag-ao) and a
council member of the Paghimpug sang Mangguma sa Panay kag Guimaras (Pamanggas). He also served
as a barangay kagawad of Brgy. Onop, Miag-ao;

WHEREAS, Farochilin was a peasant leader who participated in various activities of peasant
organizations in Iloilo City to protest the Rice Tarification Law and pickets to demand for assistance
from the Iloilo Provincial Government. His concern for the human rights of his fellow farmer-
members constantly brought him to gatherings to present the situation in his locality. Just recently, on
3 March 2020, he attended the round-table meeting at the Commission on Human Rights office in
Iloilo City to discuss red-tagging and threats against members of progressive organizations;

WHEREAS, Pamanggas, in a public statement, called for justice for Farochilin, who was a good man
and a dedicated farmer leader;
WHEREAS, meanwhile, on the same day, 18 April 2020, 11 other civilians were arrested by elements of 61st IB-PA under the command of the same 1st Lieutenant de Vera;

WHEREAS, at around 10:00 a.m. that day, eight (8) of those arrested, who are residents of Brgy. Igpanolong, Sibalom, Antique, namely:

1) Carlo Sentino, 18,
2) Darwin Pino, 14,
3) Kent Samillano, 15,
4) Keven Salvador, 14,
5) Russel Morada, 21,
6) Jefferson Samillano, 18,
7) Christopher Monsale, 17, and
8) Joever Monsale, 19,

went to Sitio Anoy, Brgy. Cabalaunan, Miag-ao, Iloilo, which is reached by crossing a mountainous border from their place of residence, to gather honey from hornet hives in the forest. They also frequent Sitio Anoy in the past since they have relatives there;

WHEREAS, however, on their way back, the said army soldiers arrested them and brought them to an alleged NPA camp in Sitio Anoy;

WHEREAS, by this time, Romeo Esmadiana, 37, resident of Brgy. Bololacao, Sibalom and two others namely, Eduardo Esmadiana, 16, and Ryan Kervee Aungon, 22, who are both residents of Brgy. Tordesillas, Sibalom, were also arrested by elements of the 61st IB-PA in the mountains of Brgy. Tordesillas. Earlier that day, when Eduardo failed to look for his mother who went to get cogon grass from the mountains, he asked Romeo and Aungon to accompany him to look for her, and subsequently crossed paths with the Philippine Army in the mountains;

WHEREAS, the 61st IB-PA later reported to the media an alleged encounter with members of the NPA at Sitio Anoy, Brgy. Cabalaunan, where it supposedly has overrun an NPA training camp, killed an NPA member, and captured eight (8) of them;

WHEREAS, the 11 arrested were then brought to the Army’s Camp at Monteclaro in Miag-ao, Iloilo where they were interrogated and some of them were tortured;

WHEREAS, the hands of Carlo Sentino were reportedly burned and his fingers sustained boils; his eyes were hit by finger flicks and he was punched in the abdomen at gunpoint;

WHEREAS, a bolo was reportedly placed against Russel Morada’s neck; he was also punched in the stomach at gunpoint;

WHEREAS, the same maltreatment were reportedly done to Joever Monsale and Jefferson Samillano;

WHEREAS, the next day, 19 April, Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) came to Camp Monteclaro and conducted paraffin tests on Sentino, Morada, Monsale and Samillano;

WHEREAS, on 20 April 2020, Miag-ao Police Station Chief Police Capt. Joveito Bose filed charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives at an inquest before the Iloilo Provincial Prosecutor, against Sentino, Morada, Monsale and Samillano, as well as against Romeo Esmadiana and Aungon. They were detained at the Miag-ao Municipal Jail. The five minors were turned over to the Sibalom Department of Social Welfare and Development where they were kept under mandatory quarantine;

WHEREAS, the respective Pumang Barangays of the illegally arrested residents attested that all detainees are civilians and are of good standing in the community. Relatives of some of them went to the Sibalom Police Station in the afternoon of 18 April, after they went missing;
WHEREAS, the Sangguniang Bayan of Brgy. Igpanolong passed a Resolution declaring and confirming
the identity of the eight individuals arrested, that they are not members of the NPA, that they are of
good moral character, and called for their release. Likewise, residents of Brgy. Igpanolong signed a
Petition for the release of the same arrested residents;

WHEREAS, as soon as details on the incident were acquired, Karapatan sent out public releases to
expose the real facts of the so-called encounter and facilitated the filing of complaint before the
Commission on Human Rights;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, for the House of Representatives, through its
Committee on Human Rights, to investigate, in aid of legislation, the extrajudicial killing of peasant
leader John Farochilin and the illegal arrest, detention, and torture of civilians in Panay Island
committed by the 61st IB of the Philippine Army.

Adopted,

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist