Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 971

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

RESOLUTION
DIRECTING THE DEFEAT COVID-19 COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID
OF LEGISLATION, THE ALLEGED CONNECTION BETWEEN THE
PROLIFERATION OF PHILIPPINE OFFSHORE GAMING OPERATORS AND
ILLEGAL MEDICAL FACILITIES IN THE COUNTRY

WHEREAS, before the onset of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), there is an unusual
rise in the number of illegal operations of Philippine Offshore Gaming Operator (POGO) in the
country. According to Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), there are
only 60 accredited POGOs in the country employing around 120,000 workers, who are mostly
Chinese nationals. Furthermore, there are a lot of alleged cases of money laundering, trafficking,
prostitution and tax violations linked to the operations of these POGOs;

WHEREAS, on May 1, 2020, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said that the Inter-Agency
Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) allowed the POGOs to resume its
partial operations during the pandemic crisis, saying that the POGOs are part of the business
process outsourcing (BPO) sector, which the latter denied. Further, Roque justified that the
POGO can supposedly contribute to the COVID-19 revenue and employment generations;

WHEREAS, PAGCOR Chair Andrea Domingo said the licensed POGOs shall operate with 30%
manpower and under strict protocols, which includes mandatory shuttle services for their
employees, temperature checks upon entry and mandatory testing of all its employees going to
work;

WHEREAS, on April 27, 2020, the local government of Parañaque filed four (4) criminal
complaints against a certain Yumei Liang for running an illegal medical facility in a rented
residential unit along Garcia Street corner Airport Road in Barangay Baclaran. Hinya Rodriguez,
her Filipino utility staff, was also apprehended by the authorities while the unidentified relative of
Yumei escaped. The local authorities seized 470 boxes of unregistered medicine believed to be for
coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV);

WHEREAS, on May 1, 2020, around P40 million-worth of unregistered medicines from China
allegedly used to cure the COVID-19 was also seized by the NBI in a raid at a warehouse in Malate,
Manila;

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2020, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Region 3
(CIDG-Region 3) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also raided an illegal hospital
exclusive for treating Chinese workers infected by the COVID-19 at 628 Florida St., Fontana Leisure Park in Clark Freeport. Two (2) Chinese nationals namely Ling Hu, the alleged owner, and Seung-Hyun Lee, the alleged pharmacist, were arrested. However, the two suspects were released by the PNP Regional Office in Camp Olivas on the same day with no charges filed against them, according to Simon Wu, Fontana assistant general manager;

**WHEREAS**, the Fontana Development Corporation denied their involvement in any illegal activities. The Clark Development Corp. (CDC) meanwhile claimed that the villas are being operated by the Shidaikeji Technology Corporation (STC), a support service company to a POGO;

**WHEREAS**, the CDC placed the Fontana Leisure Park on lockdown after the disclosure of the illegal medical facility but did not issue a closure order to the STC;

**WHEREAS**, on May 20, 2020, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra instructed the Bureau of Immigration, in coordination with the police and the local government units (LGUs) to track down all those who sought treatment from the unauthorized facility in Pampanga. If found, they will be treated in legitimate medical facilities, without prejudice to charging those responsible on the illegal operation;

**WHEREAS**, on May 21, 2020, reacting to the Fontana incident, Secretary Roque assured the public that criminal cases supposedly await the arrested individuals practicing medicine without a license and using drugs not approved by the FDA;

**WHEREAS**, on May 21, 2020, the CIDG-Region 3 reported that the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel in full personal protective equipment conducted a swab testing of 490 Chinese tenants and POGO workers. The collected specimen will be sent to the Philippine Red Cross laboratory for reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (rPCR) testing;

**WHEREAS**, it is reported that around 70 Filipino POGO employees, tenants and delivery personnel stranded in the residential resort due to lockdown were not tested for COVID-19;

**WHEREAS**, upon receiving the list of test results on May 25, 2020, the repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) being quarantined for several weeks expressed their dismay over the alleged special treatment of foreign nationals over the Filipinos. According to PCG commandant Admiral Joel Garcia, the Philippine Red Cross, which relayed the list of test results, “did not distinguish between OFWs and the Chinese workers from Fontana, who were inadvertently included in their report;”

**WHEREAS**, on May 22, 2020, a certain Zhixing Chen and Lingjie Zhao were arrested during a warehouse raid in Bacoor City, Cavite for selling unregistered health capsules being touted as a remedy to the COVID-19. Boxes of medicine containing 259,200 capsules with Chinese labels were seized during the operation;

**WHEREAS**, on May 28, 2020, agents of the NBI and representatives of the FDA raided another illegal medical facility and drug store run to treat COVID-19 Chinese patients at Korean Town, Barangay Anunas, Angeles City, Pampanga; two (2) foreign nationals were arrested;

**WHEREAS**, in May 26, 2020, the Makati police raided an illegal medical facility used to treat COVID-19 foreign patients after receiving reports of the drainage frequently clogged by hospital waste. Police Major Gideon Ines Jr., chief of Makati Police Station Investigation and Detective Management Section, identified the suspects as David Lai, the head doctor, and Liao Songhua, the
assistant doctor of the clinic. The four foreign patients lying in the clinic were referred to the Makati Health Department;

WHEREAS, on May 28, 2020, the local government of Parañaque said that it will investigate the alleged mass testing of around 300 foreign POGO workers held at BF Homes Club House. According to the local government, the local laboratory didn’t seek any permit from the barangay or the city to screen Covid19 patients. Parañaque Mayor Edwin Olivarez said that the testing is illegal because it should be done by the Department of Health (DOH) and not at a subdivision’s open space;

WHEREAS, there is a strong clamor and call for the government to conduct mass testing, which until now is conducted in a still limited number, short of the very target set by the government itself. Yet, it despite this government failings, it is not acceptable that authorities will just close its eyes on foreign nationals establishing illegal medical facilities, and, worse, even prioritized for testing over the Filipinos. These nefarious activities should be investigated and stopped the soonest, not only because they are illegal, but, also because the same also even threaten the very health and safety of our people in this time of pandemic.

NOW THERFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the House of Representative, through its Defeat COVID-19 Committee to investigate, in aid of legislation, the alleged connection between the proliferation of Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators and illegal medical facilities in the country.

Approved,

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Mana Partylist

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Mana Partylist

REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Mana Partylist