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

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 118

Introduced by
BAYAN MUNA Representatives EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and FERDINAND R. GAITE,
GABRIELA Women's Party Representative ARLENE D. BROSAS,
ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative FRANCIS L. CASTRO,
and KABATAAN Party-List Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

RESOLUTION
URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION
ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS OF MINDANAO
INTERFAITH SERVICES FOUNDATION INC. (MISFI) ACADEMY IN
BARANGAY MATUPE, SAN FERNANDO, BUKIDNON

WHEREAS, on 29 August 2020, Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation, Inc. (MISFI)
Academy school buildings were destroyed by around fifty (50) armed members of paramilitary
group Bagani in Sitio Laburon, Brgy. Matupe, San Fernando, Bukidnon;

WHEREAS, according to the Save Our Schools Network, a support network for indigenous
schools in Mindanao, at around 7:15 AM, two (2) teachers who remained on the campus were
tending to their farm when they were alerted of the incident. Upon arriving at the school grounds,
the teachers saw members of the paramilitary group Bagani destroying the school building and
tearing textbooks. The teachers were about to take photos of the incident but were threatened by
paramilitary leader Lito Gamay saying President Duterte would know about the incident.
According to the community, the Bagani paramilitary is allegedly under the 89th Infantry Battalion
Bravo Company which has set up camp in Brgy. Kalagangan, San Fernando, about a 30-minute
walk away from the school. The structures destroyed included two (2) school buildings and the
teachers’ cottage which were built back in 2007 by the community with the help of European
Union Aid and SFO-Overpelt of Belgium;

WHEREAS, MISFI is a non-stock, non-profit religious institution serving marginalized peoples
of Mindanao, including Lumad, Moro, and Christian communities. The MISFI Academy is its
centerpiece program which provides services to Lumad, Moro, and Christian communities, and
provides free education services for indigenous children in remote Lumad communities. Under
the Duterte administration, the school has been subjected to intensifying vilification and red-tagging by state forces, with school teachers, students, and parents, subjected to harassment.

WHEREAS, Lumad schools providing education to indigenous children have long been
subjected to vilification, red-tagging and harassment by state forces under the Duterte
administration. According to the Save Our Schools Network, 176 out of 215 indigenous schools have been forcibly closed down since 2016;

WHEREAS, Article 14, Section 1 of the Philippine Constitution guarantees all citizens the right to education stating that: “The State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels, and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all”;

WHEREAS, Article 14, Section 17 of the Philippine Constitution states that “the State shall recognize, respect, and protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to preserve and develop their cultures, traditions, and institutions. It shall consider these rights in the formulation of national plans and policies”;

WHEREAS, the closure of the schools is a violation of the right of indigenous people as guaranteed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) Article 14 stating that “Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.”

WHEREAS, the documented cases of harassment and attacks against MISFI Academy along with other Lumad schools, its students, parents, teachers, and administrators have been occurring long before the closure of these schools. The closure of these schools appears to be part of the systemic attacks against the effort of the Lumad people to protect their ancestral lands and to uphold their right to education and self-determination;

WHEREAS, the closure and destruction of these schools violate indigenous children’s right to education and indigenous communities' right to self-determination. It is imperative for members of Congress, as representatives of our people, to defend the rights of our people and check on excesses and violations committed against them. Laws and rules should serve the interest of our people, and should not be weaponized to suppress their rights and oppress them;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the destruction of the school buildings of Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation, Inc. (MISFI) Academy school buildings in Barangay Matupe, San Fernando, Bukidnon.
Adopted,

REP. EUREMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women's Party

REP. FRANCIS L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Partylist

REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Kabataan Partylist