

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 1328



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 FRANCE L. CASTRO,
and KABATAAN Party-List Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

RESOLUTION

URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE
ARREST OF INDIGENOUS WOMAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER BEATRICE
"BETTY" BELEN IN AG-AGAMA, BRGY. WESTERN UMA, LUBUAGAN,
KALINGA

WHEREAS, on 25 October 2020, indigenous leader and woman human rights defender Beatrice "Betty" Belen of the Uma tribe in Lubuagan, Kalinga was arrested by a composite team from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) of the Philippine National Police and the 503rd Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army (IBPA). According to Cordillera Human Rights Alliance, state forces served search warrants for 11 people in Lower and Western Uma, Lubuagan, Kalinga, which included Belen. At around 4 AM, Beatrice, her husband, and their two grandchildren were led outside their home by state forces when the search was conducted. After the search, Beatrice was arrested when the search team allegedly recovered three (3) rifle grenades. Belen was arrested and brought to the Kalinga Police Provincial Office in Tabuk. The homes of eleven (11) other villagers were also searched;

WHEREAS, according to the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance, Beatrice was brought to Tabuk City Jail in Kalinga and was initially detained in a cell with male detainees. This is in direct violation of Rule 11 of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of Prisoners which states that men and women shall be detained in separate institutions. She was transferred to a separate cell only upon the assertion of her lawyer. No case has been filed against her however she is subject to preliminary investigation on allegations of illegal possession of explosives;

WHEREAS, Beatrice Belen is the former vice-chairperson of Innabuyog, an alliance of women's organizations in the Cordillera. She is currently a member of the provincial and regional advisory council of Innabuyog-Gabriela. Beatrice was among the most vocal in their community's opposition against the proposed geothermal project of American multinational energy corporation Chevron in Cordillera. The project threatened to enter their ancestral land negatively affecting the

1 lives and health of community members. In 2012, Beatrice led the community barricade against
2 the entry of Chevron's personnel;

3
4 **WHEREAS**, because of her leadership in the campaign against Chevron's geothermal project,
5 Belen became the target of harassment and threats from state security forces since 2015. According
6 to local media outlet Northern Dispatch, on October 7, 2015, around 20 soldiers in full battle gear
7 suddenly entered Belen's home while she was with her children and grandchildren. They subjected
8 her to interrogation and made accusations that her opposition to the entry of Chevron was backed
9 by the New People's Army. On August 11, 2016, elements of the 501st IBPA informed Beatrice's
10 family that she and other members of the Uma tribe were being summoned to the military camp
11 set up in their village;

12
13 **WHEREAS**, during the pandemic, soldiers from the 503rd IBPA went to communities in Kalinga
14 tagging Belen and members of Innabuyog, Cordillera People's Alliance, and Timpuyog ti
15 Mannalon iti Kalinga (Peasant Association in Kalinga) as front organizations of the Communist
16 Party of the Philippines and New People's Army;

17
18 **WHEREAS**, indigenous people have long been subjected to harassment and threats for their
19 defense of ancestral lands. These attacks against indigenous land defenders have intensified since
20 President Duterte issued Executive Order 70 establishing the National Task Force to End Local
21 Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). The task force has been notorious for terror-tagging
22 indigenous peoples, farmers, and activists to justify harassment, illegal arrests, and even extra-
23 judicial killings. According to rights group Karapatan, as of March 2020, there are at least 36
24 indigenous political prisoners who were active in leading campaigns to defend ancestral lands and
25 were subsequently jailed over trumped-up charges of illegal possession of firearms and other
26 fabricated cases;

27
28 **WHEREAS**, the arrest of Beatrice Belen comes only a few days after Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade
29 Jr. of the NTF-ELCAC issued statements of terror-tagging against women's organizations and
30 celebrity women's rights advocates. Belen's arrest is one of the most recent arrests of regional
31 leaders of women's rights group Gabriela. According to rights group Karapatan, there are 102
32 women political prisoners in the country;

33
34 **WHEREAS**, Belen's arrest and the search of several homes in their village also comes only a few
35 days after the issuance of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Anti-Terror Law. The
36 said measure has been widely opposed by indigenous people and various sectors for its broad and
37 vague provisions which is seen to endanger dissenters and critics. The arrest of Belen over alleged
38 illegal possession of firearms is an example of the danger that state-backed terror-tagging brings
39 to the lives and liberty of indigenous women rights defenders;

40
41 **WHEREAS**, it is imperative for members of Congress, as representatives of our people, to defend
42 the rights of our people and check on excesses and violations committed against them. Laws and
43 rules should serve the interest of our people and perpetrators of abuses against it should be held

1 to account. Congress is duty-bound to conduct investigations to be able to uphold justice and
2 protect the people against abuses especially during extraordinary times such as the COVID-19
3 pandemic;

4
5 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the
6 House of Representatives through the Committee on Human Rights, conduct an investigation, in
7 aid of legislation, on the indigenous woman human rights defender Beatrice “Betty” Belen in Ag-
8 Agama, Brgy. Western Uma, Lubuagan, Kalinga.

9
10 *Adopted,*

11
12
13
14
15
16
17 
18 **REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT**
19 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

20
21 
22 **REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**
23 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

24
25
26
27 
28 **REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE**
29 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

30
31
32
33 
34 **REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS**
35 *GABRIELA Women's Party*

36
37
38 
39 **REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO**
40 *ACT Teachers Partylist*

41
42
43
44 
45 **REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**
Kabataan Partylist