

1 Republic of the Philippines
2 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
3 Quezon City

4
5 EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
6 Second Regular Session

7
8 HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 1832
9



10 Introduced by

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

16
17 **RESOLUTION**

18 **URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THROUGH THE COMMITTEE**
19 **ON HUMAN RIGHTS, TO CONDEMN AND INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF**
20 **LEGISLATION, THE KILLING OF THREE (3) CIVILIANS AND THE**
21 **DISAPPEARANCE OF KEMEUL IAN COMETA BY**
22 **POLICE OPERATIVES IN STA. ROSA, LAGUNA**
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25 **WHEREAS**, human rights group Karapatan Timog Katagalugan (Karapatan-TK) reported that
26 on May 21, 2021, joint operatives from the Philippine National Police (PNP) Special Action Force,
27 PNP Region 4, (PRO 4) Regional Mobile Force Battalion, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines
28 supposedly served a warrant of arrest for a certain "Rommel Rizza" in an apartment in Brgy.
29 Macablang, Sta. Rosa, Laguna. However, the said operation resulted, instead, in the killing of three
30 (3) individuals renting the apartment, namely: Christina Estocado, Christopher Buton, and Lowel
31 Riza Mendoza. Witnesses also claimed that a fourth injured individual, later identified as Kemeul
32 Ian Cometa, was later taken by the raiding team. As of May 30, though, Cometa's whereabouts
33 are still unknown;

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35 **WHEREAS**, witnesses quoted by Karapatan-TK said the police forcibly entered the residence
36 and immediately opened fire. They reportedly heard shouting "huwag kayong lalaban!" at around
37 1 AM, then they heard screaming and other noises. They then heard 2 rounds of gunshots. The
38 witnesses also saw four (4) vehicles: two (2) police mobile, one (1) white van, and one unmarked
39 (1) car. Later, they saw three (3) bodies in cadaver bags taken outside the apartment while one (1)
40 person was carried on a stretcher. Another witness said no encounter occurred as the gunshots
41 they heard were continuous and with no exchanges of gunfire;

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43 **WHEREAS**, Karapatan-TK confirmed that the bodies of the three (3) victims were brought to
44 the St. Peter Funeral in Brgy. Dita, Sta. Rosa, Laguna, and, that the fourth person who was taken
45 in custody by the police during the operation is Kemeul Ian Cometa, whose whereabouts remain
46 unknown. Cometa, a student leader at the University of the Philippines – Los Banos, was also a
47 former coordinator of Kabataan Party-list Laguna;

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49 **WHEREAS**, according to Karapatan-TK, the families of the victims are given a hard time in
50 claiming the victims' bodies. The police reportedly insisted that the family of Christopher Buton,
51 one of the victims, travel from Palawan to Laguna despite difficulties and travel restrictions. It was

1 only after more than one week that the body of another victim, Cristina Estocado, was given to
2 her family;

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4 **WHEREAS**, before the incident, there has been a recent series of harassment and killings in
5 Southern Tagalog against activists and civilians. In March alone of this year, ten (10) activists have
6 been killed in Southern Tagalog. On March 7, 2021, nine (9) individuals were killed in simultaneous
7 police operations all over Southern Tagalog in what is now known as the “Bloody Sunday”
8 massacre. Police serving search warrants ended up killing the victims after alleged shootouts. But
9 families and witnesses of these operations assert that no shootouts occurred. The victims were
10 identified as members of progressive organizations. On March 28, labor leader Dandy Miguel was
11 also shot dead by unidentified gunmen while aboard his motorcycle on his way home in Laguna;

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13 **WHEREAS**, the growing number of victims being killed during police operations and search
14 warrant executions is not only highly questionable, but even condemnable. This latest massacre of
15 three (3) civilians and the disappearance of Kemeul Ian Cometa in Sta. Rosa, Laguna are highly
16 condemnable acts and must be subjected to a thorough and impartial investigation;

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18 **WHEREAS**, it is imperative for members of Congress, as representatives of our people, to defend
19 the rights of our people and check on excesses and violations, especially in this time of crisis. It
20 must bring perpetrators to account to put a stop to the killings and rights violations against its
21 people. Laws and rules should serve the interest of our people, and should not be weaponized to
22 suppress their rights and oppress them;

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24 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the
25 House of Representatives, through the Committee on Human Rights, issue condemnation and
26 conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the massacre of three (3) civilians and the
27 disappearance of Kemeul Ian Cometa in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

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30 *Adopted,*

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33 **REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT**
34 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

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38 **REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**
39 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

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38 **REP. FERDINAND B. GAITE**
39 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

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43 **REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS**
44 *GABRIELA Women's Party*

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43 **REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO**
44 *ACT Teachers Partylist*

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49 **REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**
Kabatagan Partylist