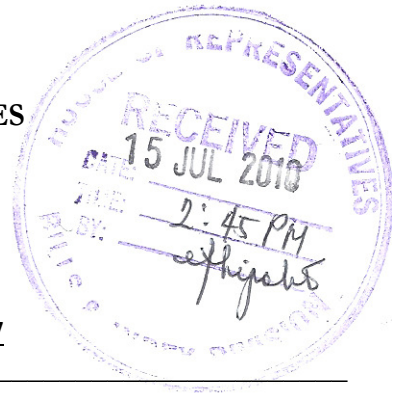


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 67



Introduced by Rep. TEODORO A. CASIÑO

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE DUBIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF INTERPRETER GREGAN CARDEÑO WHO WAS WORKING WITH THE U.S. MILITARY UNIT LIAISON COORDINATION ELEMENTS (LCE) ON FEBRUARY 2, 2010, IN CAMP RANAO, DATU SABER, MARAWI CITY AND THE RELATED KILLING OF MAJOR JAVIER IGNACIO WHO PROFESSED TO HAVE VITAL INFORMATION ON CARDEÑO'S DEATH

WHEREAS, on February 2, 2010, Gregan Cardeño, 33, a Christian pastor from Zamboanga Sibugay was hired on paper as a security guard through a private military contractor called Skylink Security and General Services but was actually an interpreter for American troops under the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) in Camp Siongco, Awang, Maguindanao. Cardeño was fluent in Filipino, English, Tausug, Visayan, and Bahasa Indonesia;

WHEREAS, on February 1, 2010 he was airlifted from the Edwin Andrews Air Base in Zamboanga City with three soldiers and was set to first go to Cotabato before proceeding to his assignment in Maguindanao;

WHEREAS, Cardeño later told his family that he was not brought to Cotabato or Maguindanao but was instead sent to Camp Ranao, Marawi City, headquarters of the 103rd Brigade of the Philippine Army;

WHEREAS, on the afternoon of February 3, SPO3 Ali Guibon Rangiris of Philippine National Police – Marawi informed the victim's family of Cardeño's alleged suicide two days after he was hired and left work. Cardeño was said to have used his bed sheet to hang himself in his room inside the US troops' barracks in Camp Ranao and left a suicide note for his family;

WHEREAS, based on the victim's conversation with his family prior to his death, Cardeño said he wanted to go home after being asked to do something else other than what he was hired for. He did not reveal exactly what it was. He also asked his sister to contact Skylink

for his salary and so that he could be pulled out of the base. The call was cut off and Cardeno later called his wife to ask her if she would still accept him. Again, the line went dead;

WHEREAS, the police report on the incident showed that Cardeno was working with the Liaison Coordination Elements (LCE), a unit of the US military defined as a group assisting the Armed Forces of the Philippines in intelligence work for anti-insurgency operations;

WHEREAS, a subsequent autopsy report done by the National Bureau of Investigation showed that there were five deep and burnt puncture wounds on Cardeno's feet, inner thighs and on the upper right arm. A human rights group assisting the family reported to have observed an enlarged scrotum, enlarged opening of the anus, a deep wound on the upper right part of his neck and three injuries on his head – all of which were not mentioned in the autopsy reports;

WHEREAS, further, the victim's mobile phone was found empty of messages, phone numbers and pictures. The family believes there was an apparent cover-up, pointing out that Rangiris even used the victim's phone to find their contact number and called them;

WHEREAS, during a Fact- Finding Mission (FFM) conducted last March 2 to 4, 2010, the victim's family, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), human rights groups, members of the media and other participants were prohibited from seeing the victim's room. The FFM also reported that evidence was not preserved properly, since they were in the hands of American troops. In addition, the local police allowed US troops to keep the corpse in their custody and the latter, along with Skylink, transported the victim's body without any permit or death certificate issued;

WHEREAS, human rights groups observed that the pictures taken by the police at the crime scene showed Cardeno, wearing a "green shirt and a pair of denim pants with his underwear partially shown, but when the cadaver was delivered to the funeral home, it was already without a shirt and only wearing a camouflaged cargo shorts." Also, the bed sheet used by Cardeno, was not in police custody;

WHEREAS, two months after Cardeno's death, Major Javier Ignacio, a family friend and commanding officer of the Western Mindanao Command's Military Police, was killed by motorcycle-riding men on March 26, just hours after attending the re-autopsy of Cardeno's body conducted by the CHR;

WHEREAS, Ignacio, who recommended the victim for the interpreter job, told the family he had vital information and that he was being threatened and bribed in exchange for his silence. He died instantly after being shot on the back and the head;

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court recently granted the family's petition for writ of amparo and habeas data, finding the petition – which stemmed from suspicions of a cover up - "sufficient in form and substance;"

WHEREAS, Cardeño's death exposed the existence of an LCE unit in Marawi City and possible clandestine operations being in violation of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement;

WHEREAS, the case further reiterates the need to review the Visiting Forces Agreement and work for its abrogation. As has been the case a decade ago, its ratification has merely undermined the country's sovereignty, expanded US military presence and even further contributed to the human rights violations in the country;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Committee on Human Rights conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the dubious circumstances surrounding the death of interpreter Gregan Cardeño who was working with the U.S. military unit Liaison Coordination Elements (LCE), on February 2, 2010 in Camp Ranao, Datu Saber, Marawi City and the related killing of Major Javier Ignacio who professed to have vital information on Cardeño's death.

Adopted,


REP. TEODORO A. CASIÑO
Bayan Muna Party-list