

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. **524**



Introduced by Hon. Rodolfo G. Biazon

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Over recent years, reports of an increased number of killings of political and community activists along with perceived enemies of the government, predominately those associated with leftist or left-oriented groups, have caused increasing alarm and concern in the Philippines and in the international community. The methodology of the attacks has led many to conclude that the attacks constitute a politically-motivated pattern of killings.

The attacks mostly carried out by unidentified men who shoot the victims before escaping on motorcycles, or by abduction and subsequent execution of a certain individual, have very rarely led to the arrest, prosecution and punishment of those responsible. It is widely thought that the killings constitute a pattern and that a continuing failure to deliver justice to the victims represents a failure by the Government of the Philippines to fulfill its obligation to protect the right to life of every individual in its jurisdiction.

The Government of the Philippines should implement Amnesty International's 14-Point Program for the Prevention of Extrajudicial Executions. As an integral part of this Program, the authorities should urgently reiterate a clear, unequivocal message to all members of the police, military and other security forces that involvement in, or acquiescence to, such unlawful killings will never be tolerated. All such cases must be fully and promptly investigated and all those responsible, whether linked to the armed forces or not, should be brought to justice. Only in this manner can public confidence in the impartial and effective administration of justice be restored and a peace process, with respect for human rights by all sides at its heart, is revived.

This bill seeks to provide a reward system for persons who provide information leading to the arrest or prosecution of those involved in political killings. If passed into law, this bill can help facilitate the enforcement of proper laws in the country. The rewards system proposed by this bill can strongly urge witnesses or persons with knowledge of the crime to come forward and cooperate with the appropriate authorities in solving political killings in the country.

In the pursuit of the principles of the Philippine Constitution which states that the prime duty of the government is to serve and protect the people and that the maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty, and property, and promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment of the blessings of democracy by all people, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodolfo G. Biazon".

RODOLFO G. BIAZON
Representative
Lone District, Muntinlupa City

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A REWARDS PROGRAM FOR INFORMATION ON POLITICAL
KILLINGS AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Title.* This Act shall be known as the “*Rewards for Information On Political Killings Act.*”

Sec. 2. *Declaration of Principles.* – Article II Section 4 of the Philippine Constitution states that the prime duty of the Government is to serve and protect the people. Section 5 of the same Article of the Constitution states that the maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty and property, and promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessings of democracy.

Sec. 3. *Policy and Objectives.* – In the pursuit of the above stated principles, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect the people from political killings and provide the means and systems to prevent and prosecute the commission of such acts.

Sec. 4. *Definition of Terms.* – For the purpose of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- a. Political Killings – refer to extra-legal, summary and arbitrary executions. Generally speaking, political killings have three main characteristics: (1) They have taken place at the order, complicity or with the acquiescence of the authorities; (2) They violate national laws such as those prohibiting murder, as well as international human rights and humanitarian standards forbidding arbitrary deprivation of life; and (3) They have not occurred by accident, in self-defense, or through ignorance.
- b. Summary or Arbitrary Execution – is a variety of execution in which a person is accused of a crime and then immediately killed without benefit of a full and fair trial.

Sec. 5. *Rewards for Information.* – There is hereby established a Rewards for Information On Political Killings under the Department of Justice to be administered by the Secretary of Justice, which is authorized to grant rewards to individuals who furnishes information leading to:

- a) the arrest or conviction of any person or persons for the commission of an act of political killing as defined in this Act, within the territorial jurisdiction of the Philippines;
- b) the arrest or conviction of any person or persons for conspiring or attempting to commit a political killing as defined in this Act, within the territorial jurisdiction of the Philippines;
- c) the prevention, frustration, or favorable resolution of an act of political killing as defined in this Act, within the territorial jurisdiction of the Philippines; and
- d) the prevention of entry into the territorial jurisdiction of the Philippines of any person or persons known or suspected to commit political killings or members of any group notorious or known for political killings.

Sec. 6. *Determination of Entitlement and Maximum Amount.* – The Secretary of Justice shall determine whether an individual furnishing information described in Section 5 of this Act is entitled to a reward and the amount to be paid. Under this Act, the reward may be in an amount not to exceed Ten Million Pesos (P10, 000,000.00). However, a reward of Five Hundred Thousand (P500, 000.00) or more may not be made without the written approval of the President.

Sec. 7. *Withhold Identity: Witness Protection.* – If it is determined that the identity of the recipient of a reward or of the members of the recipient's immediate family must be protected, the Secretary of Justice may withhold the identity of the recipient from the public or place the informant under the Witness Protection Program; *Provided*, that any reward granted under this Act shall be certified for payment by the Secretary of Justice.

Sec. 8. *Exception of government officials.* – No officer or employee of any government entity, who, while in the performance of his or her official duties, furnishes the information described in Section 5 shall be eligible for any monetary reward under this Act.

Sec. 9. *Penalty Provision.* – any person who provides false or misleading information to avail of or affect the grant of any reward under this Act shall be fined not more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P500,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than six months but not more than one year. If the person providing false or misleading information is a government official or employee, apart from the aforementioned penalty, he shall be immediately removed from office and perpetually disqualified from holding any government position.

Sec. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The Department of Justice shall promulgate such rules and regulations as are necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

Sec. 11. *Appropriations.* – The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged to the budget of the Department of Justice as provided in the current General Appropriations Act.

Thereafter, the necessary sum for the implementation of this Act shall be provided in subsequent General Appropriations Acts.

Sec. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – Any provision/s of law, presidential decree, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Sec. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,