

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 10902



Introduced by REP. SITTIE SHAHARA "BAI DIMPLE" I. MASTURA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Islamic faith has played a significant role in enriching the culture, diversity, and heritage of our great Filipino nation. The invaluable contributions of our Muslim forebears are deeply ingrained in the collective history of our people. It is, therefore, crucial to extend due recognition to our Muslim brothers and sisters and join them in commemorating the introduction and spread of Islam in the Philippines.

November 7 marks the celebration of Sheikh Karimul Makhdum Day, commemorating the arrival of Islam in the Philippine archipelago via Tawi-Tawi, often referred to as the "Cradle of Islam" in the Philippines. On this day in 1380—637 years ago—Arab trader and missionary Sheikh Karimul Makhdum first set foot on Simunul Island and constructed the first Muslim prayer hall, or langgal, in Bohe Indangan, Tawi-Tawi. This mosque, built in 1380, is where Islam was first preached in Sulu, as documented by Dr. Cesar Adib Majul (1977, 1999) based on his and Dr. Najeeb Saleeby's (1905, 1908) studies of Sulu genealogical accounts (sarsila). The arrival of the Makhdumin is widely regarded as having systematized and formalized the social infrastructure necessary for the practice and propagation of Islam in the Philippines.

While our people are well-versed in the arrival and spread of Catholicism in the Philippines, the arrival and spread of Islam have not been accorded the same level of historical attention. It is heartening to see this oversight being addressed, starting with Tawi-Tawi, where the seeds of Islam were first planted. This commemoration affirms the historical fact that Islam was practiced in the Philippines well before the advent of Catholic Christianity. This long-neglected part of our history is now receiving the recognition it rightly deserves, reminding us that there is more to the Philippine story than the introduction of Christianity, as important as that event is in our nation's past.

The narrative of Sheikh Karimul Makhdum is vital to understanding the Moro people's history. His arrival in Simunul laid the foundation for the Islamic faith to take root and thrive in the Philippines. More importantly, this narrative must be interwoven with the broader history of our nation, fostering a greater understanding of the Moro people within the national consciousness. This knowledge is not only a reflection of our shared past but also a tool for peace, unity, and goodwill among people of different faiths. It is a piece of our national soul that must be brought into the light for all Filipinos to appreciate.

Sheikh Makhdum was both a trader and a devout Muslim. His life reminds us that, as Muslims, our faith transcends commerce and daily life. Whether or not they are in the company of their ummah (community), Muslims are called to be living examples of the truth of their faith. It is our duty, as part of da'wah, to preach our faith through both words and actions, wherever we may be. Sheikh Makhdum exemplified this, and the celebration of his arrival underscores the importance of living our faith, embodying its principles in our interactions with others, and striving for peace.

The historical significance of Sheikh Makhdum Day has been acknowledged in the past. During the 15th Congress, then Rep. Sonny Angara filed House Bill No. 409, which was later ratified as Republic Act No. 10573. This law declared the Sheikh Karimul Makhdum Mosque, one of the oldest existing Muslim houses of prayer in the Philippines, as a National Historical Landmark. The Senate counterpart was authored by the late former Senator Edgardo J. Angara.

Further, the defunct Regional Government of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) also recognized this milestone by passing Muslim Mindanao Autonomy Act (MMA) No. 17, which declared the Sheikh Makhdum centennial celebration a special non-working holiday for the region.

The approval of this bill will provide long-overdue recognition of the contributions of Islam to the cultural and civilizational development of the Philippines. This act will send a strong message of inclusion and equality, acknowledging the vital role of our Muslim brothers and sisters in shaping our nation's identity.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



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**AN ACT DECLARING THE SEVENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER OF EVERY YEAR A
SPECIAL NATIONAL WORKING HOLIDAY IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST PHILIPPINE MOSQUE AND THE
INTRODUCTION OF ISLAM IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Sheikh Karim’ul
2 Makhdum Day.”

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to instill inclusivity
4 to all regardless of religious beliefs, in line with the constitutional right to freely
5 exercise and enjoy their religion. Moreover, it is the State’s policy to provide due
6 recognition to the indispensable contributions of Muslim Filipinos in the development
7 of Philippine culture and civilization.

8 Sec. 3. *National Holiday* – Every seventh (7th) day of November hereinafter is
9 hereby declared as “Sheikh Karim’ul Makhdum Day”, a special national working
10 holiday in commemoration of the establishment of the first Philippine Mosque, and
11 the introduction of Islam in the Philippines.

12 Sec. 4. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
13 publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) newspapers of general
14 circulation.

Approved,