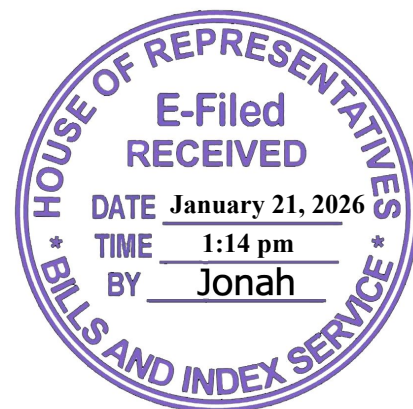


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL No. 7235

Introduced by Honorable Representative
SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Gabriela Women's Party)
RENEE LOUISE M. CO (Kabataan Partylist)
ANTONIO L. TINIO (ACT Teachers Partylist)

**AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 22 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING
HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO BE KNOWN AS "NATIONAL
FARMERS DAY"**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On January 15, 1987, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), a national peasant organization, held a camp-out in front of the office of the then-Ministry of Agrarian Reform to assert their demand for genuine agrarian reform.

On January 20, 1987, peasant leaders engaged in a dialogue with then Minister of Agrarian Reform Heherson Alvarez. However, the government failed to provide a clear and substantial response to the farmers' demands.

On the morning of January 22, 1987, farmers led by KMP marched toward Malacañang to further press their call for genuine agrarian reform. They were later joined by members of various sectoral organizations, including the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), League of Filipino Students (LFS), and Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Maralitang Lungsod (KPML). The demonstrators reached Liwasang Bonifacio at around 1:00 p.m., where a brief program was held. By approximately 4:30 p.m., an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 marchers had reached C.M. Recto Avenue.

During the mobilization, Oplan Yellow was implemented by the Capital Regional Command (CAPCOM). Task Force Nazareno was deployed in the vicinity of Malacañang, while civil disturbance control units of the Western Police District (WPD) were activated.

While KMP leaders were negotiating with authorities to allow the marchers to proceed toward the gates of Malacañang, police officers abruptly and indiscriminately opened fire, shooting directly at the crowd.

As a result, thirteen (13) marchers were killed, namely: Danilo Arjona, Leopoldo Alonzo, Adelfa Aribe, Dionisio Bautista, Roberto Caylao, Vicente Campomanes, Ronilo Dumunico, Dante Evangelio, Angelito Gutierrez, Rodrigo Grampan, Bernabe Laquindanum, Sonny Boy

Perez, and Roberto Yumul. Thirty-nine (39) individuals sustained gunshot wounds, while twelve (12) others suffered minor injuries. All casualties were among the marchers.

In the aftermath of what is now known as the “Mendiola Massacre,” former President Corazon C. Aquino issued Administrative Order No. 11 on January 22, 1987, creating the Citizens’ Mendiola Commission to investigate the incident.

Among the findings of the Commission were:

- a. The crowd dispersal units of the police and the military were armed with .38 and .45 caliber handguns and M-16 armalites, which is a prohibited act under paragraph 4(g), Section 13, and punishable under paragraph (b), Section 14 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 880.
- b. The security men assigned to protect the WPD, INP Field Force, the Marines, and supporting military units, as well as the security officers of the police and military commanders, were in civilian attire in violation of paragraph (a), Section 10, Batas Pambansa Blg. 880.
- c. There was unnecessary firing by the police and military crowd dispersal control units in dispersing the marchers, a prohibited act under paragraph (e) Section 13, and punishable under paragraph (b), Section 14, Batas Pambansa Blg. 880.
- d. Tear gas was not used at the start of the disturbance to disperse the rioters. After the crowd had dispersed and the wounded and dead were being carried away, the MDTs of the police and the military, with their tear gas equipment and components, conducted dispersal operations in the Mendiola area and proceeded to Liwasang Bonifacio to disperse the remnants of the marchers.

The Mendiola Massacre served as a wake-up call for the Aquino administration and underscored the urgency of enacting a legislated land reform program in the country. It stands not as a mere historical footnote but as a pivotal and bloody testament to the enduring land question in the Philippines.

Thirty-nine (39) years on, the events of that tragic day risk being forgotten. While some journalists referred to it as “Black Thursday,” it remains etched in public memory as the “Mendiola Massacre.”

This bill was originally formulated by the Anakpawis Party-list to ensure that this tragic event is formally recognized in Philippine history, to honor the heroism of the peasants who gave their lives in the struggle for genuine agrarian reform, and to affirm the historic and continuing role of farmers in the pursuit of a just, prosperous, and democratic society.

During the 13th Congress, the bill was approved by the Committee on Revision of Laws under Committee Report No. 1955 and was included in the Business for the Day on November 15, 2006.

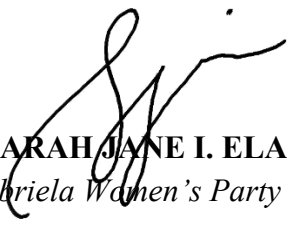
This bill passed Third Reading in the 14th Congress and was transmitted to the Senate on January 28, 2010, one step closer to becoming law.

Even though the legislation received approval from the House of Representatives on Second Reading on February 5, 2013, the 15th Congress failed to pass it.

The measure was refiled in the 16th Congress but was not deliberated at the committee level. It was again refiled in the 17th and 18th Congresses and referred to the Committees on Agriculture and Food and on Revision of Laws, respectively. During the Eighteenth Congress, the bill was approved on Third Reading and transmitted to the Senate on June 3, 2020.

In the 19th Congress, the bill once more passed Third Reading in the House of Representatives. The Makabayan Bloc now refiles this measure in the 20th Congress to continue the pursuit of long-overdue official national recognition of the Filipino peasantry's heroic struggle for land and justice.

In view of the foregoing, the early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO

Gabriela Women's Party



REP. RENEE LOUISE M. CO

Kabatagan Partylist



REP. ANTONIO L. TINIO

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**AN ACT DECLARING JANUARY 22 OF EVERY YEAR A SPECIAL WORKING
HOLIDAY IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY TO BE KNOWN AS "NATIONAL
FARMERS DAY"**

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

SECTION 1. January 22 of every year is hereby declared a special working holiday in the entire country to be known as "National Farmers Day" in honor of the indispensable role of farmers and in recognition of their struggle for land and justice.

SECTION 2. To ensure meaningful observance of the holiday as herein declared, all heads of government agencies and instrumentalities, including government-owned and controlled corporations, especially those that are dealing directly with the farmers as well as local government units, and employers in the private sector shall encourage and afford sufficient time and opportunities for their employees to engage and participate in any activity conducted within the premises of their respective offices or establishments in support and sympathy to farmers across the country to celebrate "National Farmers Day".

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,