

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

**FIFTEENTH CONGRESS**  
**First Regular Session**

**House Resolution No. 1474**

---

Introduced by **DIWA Party-list Representative Emmeline Y. Aglipay**

---

**A RESOLUTION**  
**DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSEAS WORKERS AFFAIRS TO**  
**CONDUCT AN INQUIRY IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE RECENT PIRACY**  
**INCIDENTS, ESPECIALLY INTO THE DEATH OF CHRISTOPHER CEPRADO, TO**  
**ENSURE THAT ALL FILIPINO SEAFARERS ARE ACCORDED THE EQUAL**  
**PROTECTION OF THE LAW**

**WHEREAS**, Christopher Cortez Ceprado (hereinafter referred to as “Ceprado”) was among the 17 Filipino crew members of the chemical tanker MT Sea King, which vessel was attacked by heavily armed pirates last May 7.

**WHEREAS**, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the pirates looted and ransacked the vessel’s equipment and even took the personal effects of crew members while the ship was in the port of Benin’s largest city, Cotonou.

**WHEREAS**, the other crewmen were unharmed, but Ceprado’s lifeless body was found on May 11 aboard the Marshall Island-flagged ship.

**WHEREAS**, according to SunStar Manila, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said it is not clear how Ceprado died or if the pirates were responsible for his death.

**WHEREAS**, prior to this incident, the German-owned MV Beluga Nomination was hijacked by Somali pirates 390 nautical miles north of Port Victoria in the Seychelles on January 22, 2011.

**WHEREAS**, a Filipino crewman of the MV Beluga, Mr. Farolito Vallega, was shot and killed by the Somali pirates as two anti-piracy naval patrol vessels attempted a rescue mission on January 26, 2011, while another Filipino crewman is still missing after jumping overboard during the rescue operation.

**WHEREAS**, according to the International Chamber of Commerce, there have already been 248 attacks with 28 vessels hijacked worldwide in 2011 alone. While the waters off Somalia continues to remain the most piracy-prone area, the risk to crews and shipping off Nigeria and its neighboring states remains high as well especially since incidents are not reported.

**WHEREAS**, figures from the International Maritime Bureau show that there are currently over 700 hostages being held on over 30 vessels. The Maritime Sun News says that at least 130 Filipino seafarers on board 11 vessels had been held captive by Somali pirates, based on DFA records.

**WHEREAS**, there is a spike in pirate attacks as 6 of the 8 raids off Cotonou, Benin during this year took place in May. Of the eight attacks, four vessels were hijacked and two were boarded by pirates who robbed ship and crew property and in some cases, cargo.

**WHEREAS**, Filipino seafarers are greatly, if not the most, affected since POEA data showed that a total of 330,424 Filipino seafarers were deployed abroad in 2009, which make up about one-third of the total seafarers' population globally; therefore, the Philippine government must take an aggressive role in addressing the plight of our Filipino seafarers who will continue on becoming victims of these illegal activities.

**WHEREAS**, Filipino seafarers have remitted US\$3.8B in 2010, which amount has been constantly increasing since 2006, thereby greatly boosting the Philippine economy.

**WHEREAS**, Presidential Decree No. 532, the only Philippine law against piracy, promulgated decades ago on August 8, 1974, defines piracy as “any attack upon or seizure of any vessel, or the taking away of the whole or part thereof or its cargo, equipment, or the personal belongings of its complement or passengers, irrespective of the value thereof, by means of violence against or intimidation of persons or force upon things, committed by any person, including a passenger or member of the complement of said vessel, in Philippine waters, shall be considered as piracy. The offenders shall be considered as pirates and punished as hereinafter provided.”

**WHEREAS**, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (hereinafter referred to as “POEA”) issued Board Resolution No. 4, which declared as a “high risk” zone certain coordinates within the Gulf of Aden. The resolution also mandates that Filipino seafarers will receive double the amount of their basic wage, overtime pay, and leave pay while sailing within the declared high-risk zone. On any death, injury or illness while sailing within those areas, the seafarers are also entitled to a double amount of compensation and benefits.

**WHEREAS**, only those Filipino seafarers who become victims of pirate attacks in “high risk” zones are entitled to these benefits, while those who become victims in other areas are left with no recourse.

**WHEREAS**, although Ceprado died under the same conditions and circumstances describing piracy, he is not entitled to double compensation and benefits because the pirate attack leading to his death occurred in Cotonou, which is not within the “high risk” areas declared by the POEA Board Resolution No. 4.

**WHEREAS**, the inadequacy of our piracy laws necessitates additional legislative measures to make them more all-encompassing, so as not to prejudice other Filipino seafarers who are likewise prone to pirate attacks.

**NOW THEREFORE**, be it resolved that, the House of Representatives direct the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs to conduct an inquiry in aid of legislation into the recent piracy incidents, especially into the death of Christopher Ceprado, to ensure that all Filipino seafarers are accorded the equal protection of the law.

**Rep. Emmeline Y. Aglipay**  
DIWA Party-list