

# Reps. Bello, Bag-ao, Belmonte, Gutierrez file ambitious bill seeking to end hunger

By [XIANNE ARCANGEL](#), GMA News February 3, 2014 1:17pm

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/346767/economy/agricultureandmining/reps-bello-bag-ao-belmonte-gutierrez-file-ambitious-bill-seeking-to-end-hunger>

Can hunger be completely eradicated in the Philippines?

Four lawmakers think so, especially if more land is allocated to producing more food.

On Monday, Representatives Ibarra Gutierrez, Arlene “Kaka” Bag-ao, Jose Christopher Belmonte and Walden Bello filed the Right to Adequate Food Framework bill which seeks to make the provision of sufficient food for all Filipinos a government priority.

Under the bill, government will be required to increase the land devoted to food production by 50 percent of all prime agriculture land in every region. A Commission on the Right to Adequate Food will also be created as an agency attached to the Philippine Commission on Human Rights to assess the impact and efficiency of the government’s programs against hunger.

The lawmakers said the comprehensive bill aims to harmonize the provisions of all laws related to Filipinos’ right to adequate food. The proposal also seeks to clarify the scope and content of the right, and establish standards for the government to meet the target of totally phasing out the incidence of hunger in the Philippines.

“[The Constitution] make[s] it a State policy, and gives the State the corresponding obligation, to guarantee the fulfillment of the peoples’ right to adequate food,” the lawmakers said in the bill’s explanatory note.

Should House Bill 3795 be passed, the government will be required to reduce the level of hunger incidence by 25 percent – from its current level – when the law takes effect. The incidence of hunger should be brought down by another 25 percent in the fifth and seventh years until it is completely eradicated in the 10th year.

In an interview with reporters, Gutierrez said eradicating hunger is possible if the government allocates sufficient resources to ensure the stability of food production all over the country.

“Ang pangangailangan sa pagkain ay dapat tingnan na isang batayang karapatan at hindi afterthought at market-driven na konsepto. Kung kinakailangan na ang gobyerno ay mag-allocate ng mas maraming resources o mag-realign ng programa para ma-meet ang goal na [walang magu-gutom na Pilipino], then so be it. This is the principle behind our bill,” he said.

Among the acts considered as a deliberate attempt to deny any individual access to food are the imposition of a food blockade, refusal to implement a food-related program and obstructing access to food in time of calamity or war.

The penalty of prison may be imposed on any individual or group found guilty of committing these acts. – **VS, GMA News**

# House bill sets penalty for blocking access to food during calamities

[INQUIRER.net](http://www.inquirer.net)

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Read more: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/573306/house-bill-sets-penalty-for-blocking-access-to-food-during-calamities#ixzz2sKSTTUmT>



MANILA, Philippines – A bill was filed at the House of Representatives penalizing any person blocking access to food during calamities or war.

This is one of the penal provisions in the Right to Adequate Food Framework bill filed on Monday by Akbayan Representatives Ibarra Gutierrez and Walden Bello, Dinagat Island

Rep. Kaka Bag-ao, and Quezon City 6th district Rep. Jose Christopher Belmonte.

The proposed law seeks to make right to adequate food a government priority.

The bill was filed just as reports of looting by survivors on business establishments prompted police response in provinces hit by Super Typhoon “Yolanda” during the early weeks of slow humanitarian aid.

Owners of businesses in Yolanda hit areas at times resorted to wielding a gun to stave away hungry survivors.

The penalty of prison mayor or minimum six to maximum 12 years “will be imposed on any public or private actor, who deliberately starves or denies access to food to any particular individual or group,” the bill read.

Prohibited acts include: deliberate food blockade; refusal to implement a food-related program; discrimination in implementing a food-related program; negligence in implementing food-related programs, resulting in death;

Obstructing access to food, theft, corruption or black marketeering of food being given as humanitarian aid, as well as distribution of expired, or unsafe food at a school feeding program or other feeding program, in times of calamity or war; and contamination of food or water sources, through mining activities, aerial spraying of plantations, or any other similar means.

The bill also seeks to create the Commission on Right to Adequate Food under the Commission on Human Rights.

“Every person has a right to be free from hunger,” the bill read.

## **Solons file ‘right to adequate food’ bill**

by [Charissa Luci](#)

February 3, 2014 (updated)

<http://www.mb.com.ph/solons-file-right-to-adequate-food-bill/>

Lawmakers on Monday filed the Right to Adequate Food Framework Act, which seeks to guarantee the right of every person to be free from hunger regardless of their age, sex, health status, and occupation.

House Bill 3795 or the proposed “Right to Adequate Food Framework Act of 2014” which calls for the creation of a three-man Commission on the Right to Adequate Food was filed on Monday by Akbayan party-list Reps. Ibarra “Barry” M. Gutierrez III and Walden F. Bello, Dinagat Islands Rep. Arlene “Kaka” J. Bag-ao and Quezon City Rep. Jose Christopher Y. Belmonte.

The authors said the measure seeks to address the “lack of a comprehensive framework embodying right to adequate food.”

“A comprehensive framework law, therefore, is essential to make the right to adequate food meaningful. This comprehensive law will not only harmonize provisions of all laws related to Filipinos’ right to adequate food but would also clarify the scope and content of the right, establish standards for compliance, lay down principles to shape the process of realization, and prohibit violations of the right to adequate food,” they said.

Under HB 3795, the Commission is tasked to receive and investigate complaints of violations of the right to adequate food from individuals and groups as well as to establish a continuing program of research, education and information to enhance respect for the primacy of the right to adequate food.

The Commission, which will be appointed by the President for a term of seven years is also directed to recommend to Congress effective measures to promote the right to adequate food, to harmonize existing laws affecting the right to adequate food, to ensure their complementation, and the availability of remedies for violations and compensation to victims of violations of the right to adequate food.

The bill also provides for the creation of a Inter-Agency Council on the Right to Adequate Food, which will be headed by the chairperson of the commission.

The council members include a representative from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Health; Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Environment and Natural resources; Department of

Energy; National Economic and Development Authority, and National Anti-Poverty Commission.

Two representatives from people's organizations and non-governmental organizations shall also sit in the Council.

HB 3795 slaps a penalty of prison mayor on any public or private actor, who deliberately starves or denies access to food to any particular individual or group.

The following acts are penalized under the proposed Act: Blockade; Refusal to implement a food-related program; Discrimination in implementing a food-related program; Negligence in implementing food-related programs, resulting in death; Obstructing access to food in time of calamity or war; Theft, corruption or black marketeering of food being given as humanitarian aid, in time of calamity or war; Distribution of expired, or unsafe food at a school feeding program or other feeding program, in time of calamity or war; Contamination of food or water sources, through mining activities, aerial spraying of plantations, or any other similar means; and Other analogous acts.

The bill defines a food blockade as an act of knowingly and willfully cutting off food supplies from a particular area by force, either in part or totally.

“The penalty is imposable without prejudice to any other criminal, civil or administrative liability under Philippine law,” the authors said.

Civil and administrative liabilities shall be slapped against any public officer or employee who directly or indirectly obstructs, defeats, violates or in any manner impedes or impairs any of a person's rights to adequate good .

” Any violation of a provision of this Act, whether committed by public or private actors, will similarly give rise to liability for damages. Appropriate cases may be filed before the courts to compel compliance with the provisions of this Act. These cases will be without prejudice to liability for damages, as well as administrative liability that may be incurred,” the bill said.

## Zero Hunger Bill aims to end hunger in PHL in 10 years

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**By PNA**

<http://philippinetimesofsouthernnevada.com/news/the-philippines/zero-hunger-bill-aims-to-end-hunger-in-phl-in-10-years/>

Four members of the House of Representatives on Monday filed a measure that will end hunger in the country.

Congressmen Barry Gutierrez and Walden Bello (both from Akbayan party list), Kaka Bag-ao (Dinagat Island) and Kit Belmonte (Quezon City) filed House Bill 3795 or the Right to Adequate Food Framework Act of 2014.

The bill mandates that the government would establish a clear policy targets to end hunger in the Philippines in 10 years by specifically setting targets for increasing food productivity such as increasing the area of land devoted to food production, improving the poor communities ownership of land and access to productive resources and the role of women in food production.

Section 4 of the bill notes: “The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food, or means for its procurement.”

For the lawmakers, the commitment of the administration to support this legislation is key to meeting zero hunger in 10 years.

“Hunger and poverty are two sides of the same coin. The only way we will achieve zero hunger is by ensuring the right of small farmers and indigenous peoples to their land, and providing them adequate technical, financial and material support to improve their agricultural productivity,” Bello explained.

He also explained that the commitment to ensure food for all Filipino families also means supporting and improving our agricultural production, with a particular focus on poor farming communities and indigenous people. (PNA) FPV/Mary Rose S. Ila and Beatriz Sean S. Salud

# The Manila Times

## Zero hunger advocates

February 3, 2014 10:30 pm

<http://manilatimes.net/zero-hunger-advocates/73066/>



Photo By Miguel De Guzman

Members of indigenous groups join farmers at a rally held in front of the House of Representatives building in Quezon City to show support to a measure that seeks to ensure adequate food and end hunger.

# House bill seeks to end hunger in 10 years

by Michaela Romulo

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**FOOD FOR ALL.** Rep. Barry Gutierrez presents the Right to Adequate Food Bill during an anti-hunger mobilization organized by the National Food Coalition at the House of Representatives. Photo courtesy of Barry Gutierrez's Facebook Page

MANILA, Philippines – Is achieving zero hunger in the Philippines in 10 years achievable? A bill filled by 4 congressmen aims to make it so.

On Feb 3, 2014 Akbayan Representatives Barry Gutierrez and Walden Bello, together with Dinagat Representative Kaka Bag-ao and Quezon City District 6 Representative Kit Belmonte filled House Bill 3795, also known as the Right to Adequate Food Framework Act of 2014.

The bill seeks to establish a comprehensive framework to ensure the right of every Filipino to access adequate food at all times.

In the Philippines, about 15.6 million people are suffering from hunger and undernourishment, that is 16.2% of the population according to the [2013 report on The State of Food Security Around the World](#) by the United Nation Food and Agricultural Organization (UN FAO).

According to UN FAO data, the prevalence of undernourishment is on a downward trend, but here in the Philippines there has been a slight increase since 2006. Now plateauing at 16.2%, hunger remains a serious issue in the country. ([READ: SWS survey: More household poor, hungry at the end of 2013](#))

The bill, said Gutierrez, addresses the government's need for "a coherent and consistent direction, particularly one incorporating the human rights based approach, in its efforts to effectively address food and food-related issues such as poverty."

## **Provisions**

With its enactment, The Right to Adequate Food Framework Act of 2014 mandates the government to establish a clear set of policies to end hunger in 10 years.

Sec 4 of the bill says: "The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food, or means for its procurement."

Certain provisions in the bill that will help achieve food security for all include: increasing the agricultural productivity of small farmers and indigenous peoples by ensuring them the right to their land and providing technical, financial, and material assistance; increasing the amount of land used for food production; improving poor communities' ownership of land and access to resources; strengthening the role of women in food production; and the right to adequate food response during times of disasters and emergencies.

The bill also calls for the establishment of the Commission on the "right to adequate food," an implementing agency attached to the Philippine Commission on Human Rights to oversee the bill's overall effectiveness and ensure its compliance.

## **Unified framework**

This is not the first bill to be filed to address the problem of hunger.

Article II (Declaration of State Principles and Policies) in the 1987 Philippine Constitution mentions an improved quality of life, a guarantee of the full respect of human rights, and the promotion of comprehensive agrarian reform. It also alludes to government's responsibility to provide every citizen the right to food, though it is not explicitly stated.

Local legislation such as RA 9700 (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms), RA 8435 (Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act), and RA 7607 (Magna Carta for Small Farmers) to name a few, also provide a general consensus to work towards ensuring food security.

The Philippines is also a signatory to international declarations such as the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which also contain provisions for the right to food for all.

While many legal instruments already exist that aim to address hunger in the Philippines, the lack of a united framework presents problems between policy and implementation.

“So far, however, the government has only (been) able to institute incremental measures to promote food security,” said Gutierrez.

The passing of this law will be a step towards harmonizing the provisions of all existing laws related to the Filipino’s right to food. It also holds the government accountable to see that this right is fulfilled at the specified deadline of 10 years. – **Rappler.com**