

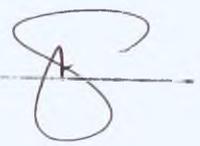
**NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**  
First Regular Session

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23 MAY -8 P3:21

**SENATE**  
**S. B. NO. 2141**

RECEIVED BY: 

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Introduced by **SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**

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**AN ACT DECLARING AUGUST 9 OF EVERY YEAR AS THE  
PHILIPPINES-ISRAEL FRIENDSHIP DAY**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The bilateral relations between the Republic of the Philippines and Israel are historic. In 1937, former President Manuel L. Quezon welcomed 1,300 Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust through the “Open Door Policy.”<sup>1</sup> He called on all Filipinos to welcome refugees and instructed the government to assist them.<sup>2</sup> This act was long before the Philippines issued Commonwealth Act No. 613, or the “Philippine Immigration Act of 1940,” and became a State party to the 1951 Refugee Convention in 1981.<sup>3</sup>

In 1947, the official establishment of the State of Israel was made through the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 on November 29, 1947. Thirty-three (33) countries voted in favor of said resolution, including the Philippines.<sup>4</sup>

The Philippines and Israel formally established diplomatic relations in 1957 with the signing of the Treaty of Friendship. Subsequently, the Philippine Embassy in Tel Aviv and the Israeli Embassy in Manila were opened in 1962.<sup>5</sup>

In 2009, in recognition of, and to express gratitude to, former President Manuel L. Quezon and the Filipino people for the Open Doors Policy, Israel

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<sup>1</sup> February 10, 2020, Remembering our humanitarian legacy with ‘Safe Haven: Jewish Refugees in the Philippines,’ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/ph/17553-jewish-refugees.html> (date last accessed: April 18, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> 1947: The international community says YES to the establishment of the State of Israel, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Available at <https://mfa.gov.il/Jubilee-years/Pages/1947-UN-General-Assembly-Resolution-181-The-international-community-says-Yes-to-the-establishment-of-the-State-of-Israel.aspx> (date last accessed: April 18, 2023).

<sup>5</sup> History of Philippine-Israel Relations, Israel Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines. Available at <https://www.iccp.ph/about-us/history-of-philippine-israel-relations/> (date last accessed: April 18, 2023).

built an Open Doors Monument at the Holocaust Memorial Park in Rishon Lezion, Israel. The monument was designed by Filipino artist Luis “Junyee” Yee Jr. It has three (3) open doors, in increasing heights, symbolizing the courage and humanitarianism of the Filipino people in providing haven to Jewish refugees.<sup>6</sup>

As to trade and investment relations of the two nations, in 2020, Israel ranked 34<sup>th</sup> among the Philippines’ trading partners (out of 225 partners), 39<sup>th</sup> in export market (out of 212 markets) and 31<sup>st</sup> among import suppliers (out of 205 suppliers).<sup>7</sup> The top Philippine products exported to Israel include electronics, chemicals, marine products, and processed foods.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, in commemoration of both nations’ steadfast and unwavering commitment to continue harmonious and peaceful diplomatic relations, the declaration of the Philippines-Israel Friendship Day on August 9 of every year is being proposed to provide an opportunity to deepen such ties and explore ways to further strengthen cooperation between the two nations.

Thus, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**JOEL VILLANUEVA**

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<sup>6</sup> September 5, 2018, President Duterte offers wreath at Open Doors Monument in Israel. Available at [https://mirror.pco.gov.ph/news\\_releases/president-duterte-offers-wreath-at-open-doors-monument-in-israel/](https://mirror.pco.gov.ph/news_releases/president-duterte-offers-wreath-at-open-doors-monument-in-israel/) (date last accessed: April 18, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> History of Philippine-Israel Relations, Israel Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines. Available at <https://www.iccp.ph/about-us/history-of-philippine-israel-relations/> (date last accessed: April 18, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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

1           **SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the  
2 State to strengthen the relationship between the Philippines and countries with which  
3 it has shared history, values, and traditions, and to commemorate notable acts of  
4 bravery and compassion of the Filipino people.  
5

6           **SEC. 2. Philippines-Israel Friendship Day.** – It is hereby declared that the  
7 ninth day of August of each year shall be the Philippines-Israel Friendship Day. This  
8 day shall commemorate the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the  
9 Philippines and Israel birthed from the signing of Proclamation No. 173 by President  
10 Manuel L Quezon, which called on all Filipinos to welcome and help Jewish refugees  
11 who were escaping the horrors of the Holocaust.  
12

13           **SEC. 3. Lead Agency.** – The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) is hereby  
14 mandated to spearhead the celebration, in collaboration with the National Historical  
15 Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) and other relevant government agencies and  
16 institutions. The DFA shall also lead the implementation of projects and events  
17 promoting the friendship and cultural understanding between the Philippines and Israel.  
18

19           **SEC. 4. Separability Clause.** – Should any provision of this Act or part hereof  
20 be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions or parts not affected  
21 thereby shall remain valid and effective.  
22

23           **SEC. 5. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or  
24 portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby  
25 repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.  
26

1           **SEC. 6. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
2 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

3  
4           *Approved,*