Filipinos’ Right to Food: Violated?
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According to Social Weather Stations surveys, the Philippines experienced a historically high level of hunger in the first quarter of 2012. This is the culmination of a general upward trend in hunger incidence for the past decade. Almost 1/4 of Filipino families went hungry. Despite various laws, programs, and efforts undertaken by the Philippine Government, hunger is still rampant in the country.

This is disappointing because the field of international law is full of promises and declarations that resolve to combat hunger by enshrining the rights to adequate food and freedom from hunger. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Rome Declaration on Food Security.

The Author establishes in this Essay the binding nature of these agreements, characterizing some as “soft law” — that which is binding upon states without need for a formal treaty. The question asked, then, is that given these requirements, can it be said that the Filipino’s right to food is being violated? If so, is such violation excusable?

Violations of the right may be through action or inaction of the state, or through actions of entities beyond state regulation. The Author examines the efforts made by the Philippine Government to combat the rising hunger, and notes that structures and initiatives are in place. Based on these, the Author posits that the Philippine Government’s failure to respect the right to food is an excusable one, yet warns that more concrete action must be taken in order to truly say that the right is respected and fulfilled.