

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



18TH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 185

Introduced by Representative Fidel Nograles

**A RESOLUTION
STRONGLY CONDEMNING THE RECENT SERIES OF
KILLINGS OF LAWYERS, PROSECUTORS AND JUDGES;
DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND OTHER
APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN
AID OF LEGISLATION, OF THESE KILLINGS; AND URGING
THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND PHILIPPINE NATIONAL
POLICE TO FORM A SPECIAL TASK FORCE, IN
COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH THE
COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE INTEGRATED
BAR OF THE PHILIPPINES, TO CONDUCT THE NECESSARY
LEGAL ACTIONS**

Whereas, the State recognizes Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 16, to provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;

Whereas, the Department of Justice (**DOJ**) serves as the government's prosecution arm and administers the government's criminal justice system by investigating crimes, prosecuting offenders and overseeing the correctional system;

Whereas, thru its dual function The **DOJ**, through its offices and constituent/attached agencies, is also the government's legal counsel and representative in litigations and proceedings requiring the services of a lawyer; implements the Philippines' laws on the admission and stay of aliens within its territory; and provides free legal services to indigent and other qualified citizens.;

Whereas, the DOJ envisions a just and peaceful society anchored on the principles of transparency, accountability, fairness and truth. More so an effective, efficient and equitable administration of justice.

Whereas, the DOJ is at the helm of the country's march toward progress;

Whereas, over the past days there have been a spate of killing lawyers, most notably were the killings on July 23 in Negros Oriental, Atty. Anthony Trinidad who was assassinated, shot dead, while his wife was left wounded; and another incident was on July 30 in Cagayan De Oro City, Misamis Occidental atty. Nicolas Gomez Jr., 67 was shot several times;

Whereas, the killings continue to add to the growing list of murders and attempts on the life of lawyers, judges, and prosecutors in the country, among others Prosecutor Rogelio Velasco on May 11, 2018; Prosecutor Madonna Tanyag on June 4, 2018, Judge Ricky Begino on June 12, 2018, Judge Edmundo Pintac on October 8, 2018; Atty Benjamon Ramos on November 6, 2018, Atty Rex Jasper Lopo on March 13, 2019; and Judge Reyamar Lacaya on May 9, 2019. The count has reached to more than forty (40) in number since 2016, as reported by media.¹

Whereas, under the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers,² governments shall guarantee for the functioning of lawyers such that they are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; and where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.

Whereas, our lawyers who are the watchmen of the rule of law and who serve the poor are themselves assassinated with impunity, therefor no one would be safe;

Whereas, our lawyers aid the State in assuring access to justice of the poor, and ensures that adequate legal assistance is not denied to any person by reason of poverty.³

Whereas, under the Code of Professional Responsibility, a lawyer shall make his legal services available in an efficient and convenient manner

¹ Jodesz Gavilan, *List: Judges, prosecutors, lawyers killed under Duterte gov't*, Rappler, 8 November 2018 and updated 29 July 2019, available at <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/216239-list-judges-prosecutors-lawyers-killed-under-duterte-government>, last accessed on 3 August 2019.

² Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, Adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 27 August to 7 September 1990, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner.

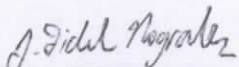
³ §11, Article III, 1987 Constitution.

compatible with the independence, integrity and effectiveness of the profession;⁴

Whereas, it is imperative that an investigation on this series of killing lawyers be conducted so that the legislature may enact the necessary measures that would protect and create stiffer safeguards.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved by the House of Representatives, strongly condemning the series of killing lawyers, prosecutors and judges; directing the Committee on Justice and other appropriate committees to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, of these killings; and urging the Department of Justice and Philippine National Police, to form a special task force, in coordination and collaboration with the Commission on Human Rights and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, to conduct the necessary legal actions to bring those who are accountable to justice for the security and welfare of the people in the legal profession.

Adopted,


FIDEL NOGRALES
Representative
Second District of Rizal

⁴ Canon 2, Code of Professional Responsibility.