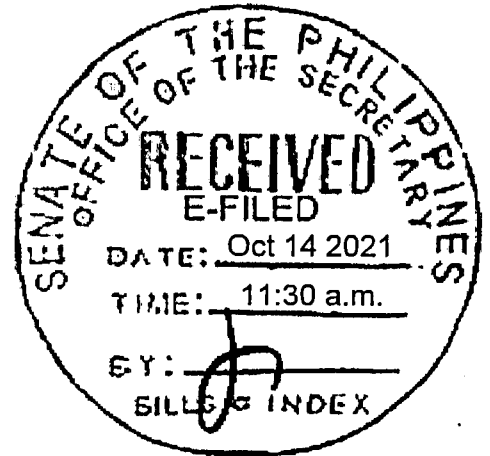


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)



SENATE

P.S. Res. No. 932

Introduced by **SENATOR LEILA M. DE LIMA**

RESOLUTION

**HONORING THE LATE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (CHR)
CHAIRPERSON JOSE LUIS MARTIN “CHITO” C. GASCON FOR HIS
INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS IN UPHOLDING, PROTECTING AND
PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS EXEMPLIFIED BY HIS CRUSADE TO
STAND AND ADVOCATE FOR THE SANCTITY OF JUSTICE AND HUMAN
RIGHTS EVEN IN THE MIDST OF RISING THREATS OF REPRESSION**

1 WHEREAS, the Philippine Senate has always honored and paid its respects to
2 remarkable Filipinos for their outstanding legacy and service to the people;

3 WHEREAS, on Saturday, 9 October 2021, it was confirmed that Commission
4 on Human Rights (CHR) Chair Jose Luis Martin “Chito” C. Gascon had succumbed
5 to COVID-19 at the age of 57;¹

6 WHEREAS, Chito Gascon was a lawyer, civil organizer and a lifelong human-
7 rights advocate. When the Philippines transitioned from tyranny under the Marcos
8 dictatorship to democracy under President Corazon C. Aquino, he became the
9 youngest member of both the body which drafted the 1987 Constitution and of the
10 reconstituted Congress from 1987 to 1992;²

11 WHEREAS, he has been described as a “longstanding social justice activist”
12 who “began organizing against the Marcos dictatorship as a student leader before the
13 1986 nonviolent People Power Revolution.”³ As a political activist and social

¹ Al Jazeera. (11 October 2021) *Filipino human rights head who clashed with Duterte dies of COVID*. Retrieved 11 October 2021, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/9/filipino-human-rights-head-who-clashed-with-duterte-dies-of-covid>

² Human Rights Foundation. *Jose Luis Martin Chito Gascon Filipino lawyer and chair of the Philippines Commission on Human Rights*. Retrieved 11 October 2021, from <https://hrf.org/speakers/jose-luis-martin-chito-gascon/>

³ *Ibid.*

1 reformer he worked on human rights, democracy, and governance concerns for
2 decades;

3 WHEREAS, his background on human rights and political reform is rife with
4 both wisdom and experience. Having earned his Bachelor of Arts (BA Philosophy)
5 and Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degrees from the University of the Philippines, and his
6 Master of Law (LLM) degree specializing in International Law (Human Rights, Law
7 of Peace, and Settlement of International Disputes) from Cambridge University as a
8 member of St. Edmund's College through a joint British Chevening and Cambridge
9 Overseas Trust Scholarship,⁴ Chair Gascon has been fortified by his knowledge and
10 expertise on human rights;

11 WHEREAS, in the midst of the martial law reign and in the wake of the
12 assassination of the late Senator Benigno "Ninoy" S. Aquino Jr. on 21 August 1983,
13 Chair Gascon helped mobilize protest actions in schools demanding for justice,
14 human rights and political change;⁵

15 WHEREAS, Chair Gascon was also a student leader and activist. He was
16 elected to chair the University of the Philippines Student Council in 1985. He led the
17 youth movement to actively participate in the February 1986 Non-Violent People
18 Power Revolution. The 1st Human Rights Awareness Fair in campuses was organized
19 by him;⁶

20 WHEREAS, a dedicated public servant through and through, he held several
21 key government positions such as Undersecretary for Legal, Legislative and Special
22 Concerns at the Department of Education (DepEd) from 2002-2005, Board Member
23 of the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) from 2010-2011, and
24 Undersecretary for Political Affairs at the Office of the President from 2011-2014. He
25 likewise became a part of the Government Delegation to the UN Human Rights
26 Council for the Universal Periodic Review in 2012 and a Panel Member for Peace
27 Negotiations with the National Democratic Front (NDF) from 2001-2004. He also
28 served as Chair of the Government's Human Rights Monitoring Committee (GPhMC)
29 of that peace process within the framework of the Comprehensive Agreement on

⁴ Liberal International. *Chito Gascon, Member Philippines*. Retrieved 11 October 2021 from <https://liberal-international.org/people/chito-gascon/>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Id.*

1 Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) from
2 2010-2014;⁷

3 WHEREAS, further to his notable role in peace processes, he assisted in peace
4 negotiations involving the conflict with Muslim rebels in Mindanao as a member of
5 the Technical Working Group on Power Sharing and Alternate Panel Member in
6 peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and with the AdHoc
7 High-Level Working Group for the Tripartite Review of the 1996 Final Peace
8 Agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) together with the
9 Organization of Islamic Cooperation’s Peace Committee for Southern Philippines;⁸

10 WHEREAS, in 2015, then former President Benigno “Noynoy” S. Aquino III
11 appointed Gascon as Chair of the CHR, the last position he held before his untimely
12 passing;

13 WHEREAS, as one of the critics of the current administration and the
14 rampant extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses attributed to it, Chair Gascon
15 was no stranger to personal attacks hurled against him in the last five years. When
16 pressed by media for a reaction on tirades made by President Duterte and his allies
17 against him, Chair Gascon would honorably remark, “*trabaho lang tayo*”;⁹

18 WHEREAS, Chair Gascon is an epitome of courage and resolve who had never
19 cowered even in the face of threats of reprisal. His decades-long crusade to stand and
20 advocate for the sanctity of justice and human rights now serves as a guiding light for
21 many more who will follow his footsteps;

22 WHEREAS, Chair Chito Gascon’s tireless service to the Filipino people
23 deserves not only our gratitude but our utmost respect. He is one of the few good
24 men in government who served no master but the law and the Filipino people;

25 WHEREAS, it is only fitting that the Senate recognize Chair Gascon’s
26 immeasurable contributions to public service and honor him for his exemplary
27 service, dedication, and commitment in the upholding and promoting of human
28 rights, justice and accountability;

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Gavillan, J. (09 October 2021) *In fight vs rights abuses under Duterte, Chair Chito never backed down.*
Retrieved 11 October 2021 from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/commission-human-rights-chairperson-chito-gascon-fight-abuses-duterte-profile>

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, as it is hereby
2 resolved, to honor the late Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Chairperson Jose
3 Luis Martin "Chito" C. Gascon for his invaluable contributions in upholding,
4 protecting and promoting human rights exemplified by his crusade to stand and
5 advocate for the sanctity of justice and human rights even in the midst of rising
6 threats of repression.

Adopted,


LEILA M. DE LIMA