

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



23 MAR 13 AIO :41

**SENATE**

**P.S. Res. No. 539**

RECEIVED BY 

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**INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS**

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**RESOLUTION**

**URGING THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TO IMMEDIATELY FULFILL ITS TREATY OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CEDAW AND PROVIDE JUST AND MEANINGFUL REPARATIONS TO THE "COMFORT WOMEN" AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**WHEREAS**, on March 9, 2023, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (hereafter "Committee") ruled that the Philippines failed to fulfill its treaty obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) when it did not seek redress for the wartime victims of sexual violence by the Japanese armed forces, also known as "Comfort Women";

**WHEREAS**, the decision stems from a complaint filed by 24 members of a non-profit organization called Malaya Lolos, who asserted that the failure of the Philippine government to press the Japanese government for reparations resulted in the continuing discrimination;

**WHEREAS**, the complainants were forcibly taken to the headquarters of the Imperial Japanese Army in San Ildefonso, Pampanga province, known as Bahay na Pula (Red House), on 23 November 1944 and were detained there for weeks and repeatedly subjected to rape, torture, and inhumane detention conditions;

**WHEREAS**, the complainants further alleged that the continued failure of the government to take up their cause is tantamount to a breach of its treaty obligations to "adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to prohibit all discrimination against women, and protect women's rights on an equal basis with men";

**WHEREAS**, according to Committee member Marion Bethel, "the case demonstrates that minimizing or ignoring sexual violence against women and girls in war and conflict situations is, indeed, another egregious form of violation of women's rights. We hope that the Committee's Decision serves to restore human dignity for all of the victims, both deceased and living";

**WHEREAS**, the Committee also noted that while Philippine war veterans, mostly men, were given benefits such as educational benefits, healthcare benefits, old age, disability and death pensions, these privileges were not made available to the former "Comfort Women";

**WHEREAS**, it has been the official position of the Philippine government that war reparations have been paid due to a 1956 treaty with Japan;

**WHEREAS**, the plight of the "Comfort Women" only came to light in the 1990s, when the survivors came out to tell their story after decades of trauma, shame and suffering;

**WHEREAS**, the advances made by the Philippines to address gender inequality and sexual violence in contemporary times only highlight the inexcusable failure to fight for victims of wartime sexual violence;

**WHEREAS**, there is only a small window of time to make meaningful reparations as many of the survivors have already passed away and the few that remain are in their twilight years;

**WHEREAS**, it is therefore of extreme urgency that the Philippine government take immediate measures to provide reparations to the survivors and the families of victims of the wartime sexual violence of the Japanese Imperial Army;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, TO URGE THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT TO IMMEDIATELY FULFILL ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CEDAW AND PROVIDE REPARATIONS TO THE "COMFORT WOMEN" AND THEIR FAMILIES**

*Adopted,*

  
**RISA HONTIVEROS**