

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



23 SEP 18 A11:53

**SENATE**

**P.S.R. No. 798**

RECEIVED BY: JS

---

**INTRODUCED BY SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS**

---

**RESOLUTION**

**CALLING FOR THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE CONTINUING ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS, THE LATEST VICTIMS BEING JONILA CASTRO AND JHED TAMANO.**

**WHEREAS**, the 1987 Constitution guarantees that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law" and that the "right of the people to be secure in their persons... shall be inviolable";

**WHEREAS**, on September 2, 2023, Alyansa para sa Pagtatanggol ng Kabuhayan, Paninirahan at Kalikasan sa Manila Bay (AKAP KA Manila Bay) reported the abduction of two (2) anti-reclamation environmental defenders- Jonila Castro, aged 21, and Jhed Tamano 22, who were allegedly taken in Barangay Lati, Orion, Bataan at around 7:00 p.m. while on the way to conduct relief operations and consultations with communities;

**WHEREAS**, after learning of their disappearance, the families of the victims immediately coordinated with members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP); to date, there is still no information on the victims' whereabouts and the extent of law enforcement's efforts to locate them;

**WHEREAS**, it is reported that Jonila had previously received several visits from military officers; earlier this year, a certain "Justin Gutierrez" identified himself as a sergeant of the AFP and had contacted Jonila and her mother- offering help to "set their kid straight"; independent fact-finding efforts by environmental, church, and human rights organizations suggest that state agents are involved in the victims' disappearance;

**WHEREAS**, on September 7, 2023, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) expressed grave alarm over the incident which happened "only a few days after the observance of the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearance";

**WHEREAS**, the CHR called for "immediate and exhaustive efforts from law enforcement agencies to search for the missing young environment advocates",

stressed that “arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of liberty, such as illegal arrest, detention, or abduction, are severe human rights violations punishable under the Republic Act No. 10353 or the Anti-Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance Act of 2012”, and explained that “[t]his latest case of twin abduction manifests the continuing susceptibility of activists to enforced or involuntary disappearance;”

**WHEREAS**, indeed, the Philippines is a dangerous country for environmental defenders- a report by Global Witness, an environment advocacy non-governmental organization, found that eleven (11) environmental defenders were killed in 2022, making the Philippines the deadliest country for environmental activists in Asia;

**WHEREAS**; pervasive threats of hostility and violence against environmental defenders is a devastating irony- the country faces some of the highest natural disaster risk levels in the world, and the Global Peace Index 2019 identified the Philippines as the country most susceptible to hazards brought about by climate change; in 2023, a survey conducted by Social Weather Stations (SWS) revealed that 93% of Filipino adults personally experienced climate change impacts in the last three (3) years, and 76% believed humanity could stop or slow down climate change with sufficient efforts;

**WHEREAS**, under the Philippine Act on Crimes Against International Humanitarian Law, Genocide, and Other Crimes Against Humanity (Republic Act No. 9851), the CHR, the Department of Justice, the PNP, and other concerned law enforcement agencies are mandated to designate investigators for cases of enforced or involuntary disappearance of persons; and under Republic Act No. 10353, the PNP and AFP, upon inquiry, are duty-bound to issue certifications in writing “on the presence or absence and/or information on the whereabouts of such disappeared person”;

**WHEREAS**, despite these laws, there are escalating attacks against advocates who defend the environment through peaceful and responsible means, an apparent lack of commitment to protect and support environmental defenders, and an unwillingness to seek justice for victims;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED TO CALL FOR THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE CONTINUING ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS, THE LATEST VICTIMS BEING JONILA CASTRO AND JHED TAMANO.**

Adopted.

  
**RISA HONTIVEROS**  
Senator