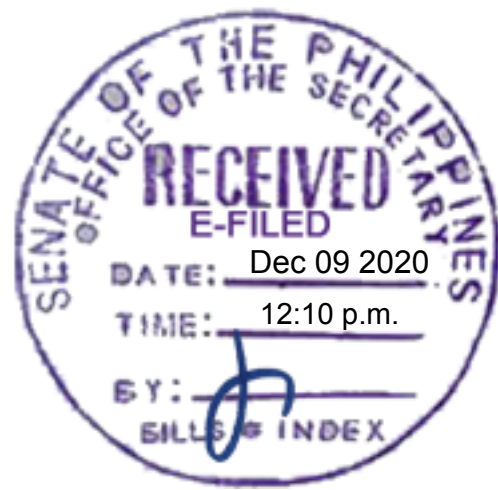


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Second Regular Session )



**SENATE**

**P.S. Res. No. 592**

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Introduced by **SENATORS LEILA M. DE LIMA, RISA HONTIVEROS and FRANKLIN M. DRILON**

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**RESOLUTION  
EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE TO JOIN THE  
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN COMMEMORATING THE  
2020 HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**

1           WHEREAS, on 10 December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly  
2 adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)  
3 through Resolution 217. It became the first global enunciation of human rights. It  
4 was one of the first major achievements of the United Nations (UN) as one body of  
5 nations coming together post-war, to celebrate life and human rights, and protect  
6 and uphold them. A “milestone document that proclaims the inalienable rights which  
7 everyone is entitled to as a human being – regardless of race, colour, religion, sex,  
8 language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other  
9 status”;<sup>1</sup>

10           WHEREAS, when the General Assembly adopted the Declaration, it was  
11 proclaimed as a “common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations”,  
12 towards which individuals and societies should “strive by progressive measures,  
13 national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and  
14 observance”;<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. *Human Rights Day*. Retrieved on 6 December 2020, from:  
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. *Human Rights Day*. Retrieved on 6  
December 2020, from: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day>

1           WHEREAS, the UDHR recognized that “the inherent dignity and the equal  
2 and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of  
3 freedom, justice and peace in the world”;<sup>3</sup>

4           WHEREAS, thereafter, the Human Rights Day has been observed by the  
5 international community every year on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December. Commemorating the  
6 adoption of the UDHR, it is a yearly reminder of the significance of human rights to  
7 which everyone is entitled to. An important once-a-year event to remind one and all  
8 that human rights is an ever-present, never diminished, and always protected set of  
9 fundamental rights and freedoms that guarantees protection of every individual  
10 everywhere, without distinction based on his personal circumstances;

11           WHEREAS, more than seventy years since the adoption of the UDHR, the  
12 celebration of Human Rights Day is as important now as it is then – to serve as a  
13 constant reminder that human rights are always sacred and precious, and should  
14 thus never be regarded as less important than issues on development or criminality.  
15 The disregard and contempt for human rights that resulted in unspeakable acts  
16 against our fellow human beings and outraged the conscience of mankind should not  
17 be allowed to persist – for they have no place in a civilized world, not 72 years ago  
18 when the UDHR was adopted, not today, not ever;

19           WHEREAS, the Philippines has witnessed atrocious assaults against human  
20 rights and human life – some of which are part of recent memory. In the 2020  
21 Annual Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of  
22 human rights in the Philippines, it detailed the widespread human rights violations  
23 and persistent impunity in the Philippines. In detailing the human rights violations  
24 that have plagued the Philippines, it said that “[w]hile important human rights gains  
25 have been made, and challenges remain, an overarching focus on national security,  
26 countering terrorism and illegal drugs has resulted in numerous systematic human  
27 rights violations, including killings and arbitrary detention, persistent impunity and  
28 the vilification of dissent.”<sup>4</sup> As to the widespread and systematic killings which  
29 remarkably increased after the launching of the anti-illegal drugs campaign in 2016,  
30 it noted that “ill-defined and ominous language, coupled with repeated verbal

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<sup>3</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights. *Preamble*. 10 December 1948.

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Council. (29 June 2020) *Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Situation of Human Rights in the Philippines*.

1 encouragement by highest-level State officials to use lethal force, may have  
2 emboldened the police to treat the circular as permission to kill”;<sup>5</sup>

3 WHEREAS, indeed, human rights concerns in the Philippines, though long-  
4 standing, have become more acute in recent years. Despite this reality, and especially  
5 because of it, the need to celebrate Human Rights Day has become more necessary;

6 WHEREAS, this year’s theme for the Human Rights Day is “Recover Better –  
7 Stand Up for Human Rights”. It “relates to the COVID-19 pandemic and focuses on  
8 the need to build back better by ensuring Human Rights are central to recovery  
9 efforts.” It thus punctuates our country’s fight against COVID-19, and the State’s  
10 constitutional duty to value the dignity of every human person and guarantee full  
11 respect for human rights as part and parcel of its mandate to uphold the welfare of  
12 the people even amidst a global pandemic;

13 WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has given rise to a new avenue for  
14 human rights violations. As countries grant emergency powers to their leader to  
15 address the pandemic, autocrats took advantage of the circumstance to abuse their  
16 people’s trust. According to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR)  
17 Michelle Bachelet, “Emergency powers should not be a weapon governments can  
18 wield to quash dissent, control the population, and even perpetuate their time in  
19 power. They should be used to cope effectively with the pandemic – nothing more,  
20 nothing less;”<sup>6</sup>

21 WHEREAS, according to the UNHCR, certain rights, including the right to life,  
22 the prohibition against torture and other ill-treatment, and the right not to be  
23 arbitrarily detained continue to apply in all circumstances;<sup>7</sup>

24 WHEREAS, this year’s celebration poses a challenge to all nations, to remain  
25 firm in their commitment to uphold and protect human rights in spite of the  
26 challenges of the times – to value the sanctity of human life, to create equal  
27 opportunities for all, to address the failures exposed and exploited by COVID-19, and  
28 apply human rights standards to tackle entrenched, systematic, and  
29 intergenerational inequalities, exclusion and discrimination;<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Retrieved from:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25828&LangID=E>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Supra* Note 1.

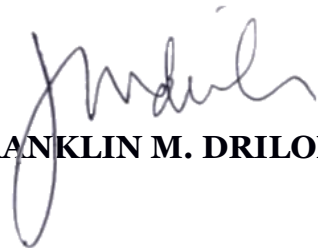
1           WHEREAS, the Senate of the Philippines joins the international community  
2 in commemorating the momentous day of nations coming together to celebrate  
3 human rights, and in faithfully staying true to its commitment to guarantee full  
4 respect for human rights at all times, especially in this time of global pandemic where  
5 people’s rights have been sidelined as the world grappled to survive one of the worst  
6 health crises in modern human history;

7           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, as it is hereby  
8 Resolved, to express the sense of the Senate to join the international community in  
9 commemorating the 2020 Human Rights Day.

*Adopted,*

  
**LEILA M. DE LIMA**

  
**RISA HONTIVEROS**

  
**FRANKLIN M. DRILON**