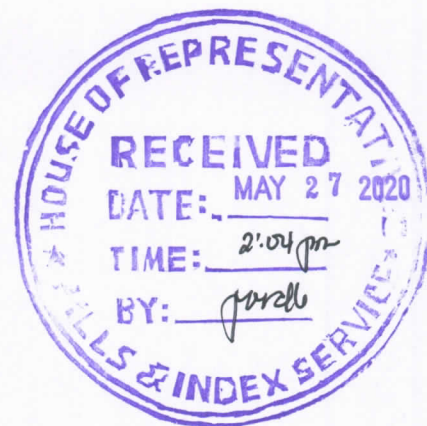


Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

**EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session



**HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 914**

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Introduced by

**ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO,**  
**BAYAN MUNA Party-List Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE,**  
**Rep. FERDINAND GAITE and Rep. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,**  
**GABRIELA Women's Party Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS,**  
**and KABATAAN Party-List Rep. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**

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**RESOLUTION**

**CONDEMNING IN THE STRONGEST TERMS**  
**THE ILLEGAL ARRESTS, DETENTION, AND OTHER VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS**  
**UNDER THE 1987 CONSTITUTION AND LAWS AGAINST SEVERAL TEACHERS**  
**AMIDST THE COMMUNITY LOCKDOWNS DURING THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DUE**  
**TO COVID-19 AND URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDUCT**  
**AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION INTO THE SAME**

WHEREAS, in the course of the generalized community lockdowns implemented nationwide due to COVID-19, several teachers have been subjected to illegal arrests and detention, cruel and inhumane treatment, and other violations of constitutional and legal rights;

WHEREAS, on March 27, Juliet Espinosa, 55 and suffering from hypertension, was arrested without warrant in General Santos City for alleged inciting to sedition in relation to cybercrime, for her post in Facebook expressing dismay over the distribution of relief goods. Her son Jyzhear Elijah, 33 and also a teacher, who tried to prevent the policemen from arresting his mother, asked them to let her change into more decent clothes, and insisted on contacting a lawyer first, was also arrested for alleged disobedience and resistance to authority;

WHEREAS, on April 15, Dale Gregory Medina, a public school teacher in Las Piñas City, was also arrested without warrant, for alleged violation of quarantine rules. Medina went to a drugstore to buy the maintenance medicines of his mother, a senior citizen, carrying the quarantine pass in her name following the advice of police just the week before, but the authorities still arrested him. The teacher, who is hypertensive, was detained with many

others apprehended for “quarantine violation,” all of them forced to sit under the noon sun and on scorching ground. He was released but only after five hours and not after the police confiscating his mother’s senior citizen ID and quarantine pass;

WHEREAS, on April 16, two public school teachers, Elizabeth Caraig, 39, and Roselle Jamee Yvonne Gonzalez, 25, were arrested at a checkpoint in Bicol for alleged resistance and disobedience while they were on board a tricycle. Police officials accused them of violating physical distancing protocols and ordered them to go back to their residence on the same tricycle one by one, but Caraig and Gonzalez insisted the contrary and refused the unreasonable order. Irrked with the teachers’ insistence, police arrested them without warrant and detained them for 19 hours, after which, they were released but not after they were made to sign a blank sheet of paper. They were not subjected to an inquest;

WHEREAS, on May 1, Lita Malundras and Ronel Artizuela, both teachers of the Batibot Early Learning Center, and eight other relief workers in Marikina were arrested, also without warrant, after cooking breakfast for a community of jeepney drivers while posting a placard asking for help from the government. The “Marikina 10,” members of the volunteer group *Bayanihang Marikeno at Marikena*, were charged with alleged illegal assembly, resistance and disobedience to persons in authority, and violation of RA 11332 or the *Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act*. Mayor Marcy Teodoro noted that “[t]he Philippine National Police overreacted. They should not have arrested [them] because they were not doing anything wrong,” adding that their carrying of the placard was “part of exercising their constitutional right to freedom of expression”;

WHEREAS, on the same day, some 50 elements of the Quezon City police, uniformed and in plainclothes, flagged and cordoned the vehicle of teachers along Visayas Avenue. The teachers and volunteers from the Alliance of Concerned Teachers were on their way to hand out food packs and face masks. The police agents ordered the members of the relief team to alight from the vehicle and confiscated the license of their driver whom they maliciously and falsely accused of “being seen at San Roque last night.” The police released them after 30 minutes, but the harassment was committed and the relief efforts were stalled;

WHEREAS, on May 12, Ronnel Mas, 25 and a public school teacher in Zambales, was arrested without warrant for alleged inciting to sedition, due to his obviously satirical post in Twitter (an expression of online support for ABS-CBN) on the “reward” for anyone who can kill President Duterte. Surrounded by police operatives and after being subjected to harsh treatment at their hands, he was forced to admit authoring the tweet and to apologize while under police detention, on the way to the NBI. He did so without competent and independent counsel of his choice. A person who was among the arresting officials took a video of this involuntary confession and posted it online;

WHEREAS, the above human rights violations against the teachers, courtesy of police elements, occurred in the general context of highly militarized response to the public health crisis. They also demonstrate the sheer abuse of power and impunity of law enforcement authorities enabled by, *first*, the overbroad and vague authority given by President Rodrigo Duterte to the police and military in implementing lockdown rules and, *second*, his



pronouncements to “shoot them dead”—referring to quarantine violators resisting arrest—and of a “martial-law like lockdown”;

WHEREAS, all throughout the lockdowns and continuing up to the present, it appears that the PNP is preoccupied with brandishing a heavy hand rather than aiding Filipinos prevent the spread of the coronavirus and cope with the medical and socioeconomic crisis. According to the PNP figures, 171,257 individuals were warned, fined, and arrested, and 11,722 PUVs were apprehended from March 17 to May 13—a rate of at least 3,154 individuals apprehended per day;

WHEREAS, not among these figures are instances which did not lead to an arrest but ended in either police excesses or a murder—such as the instances of enforced entry in private properties in at least two occasions and the killing of Winston Ragos, a war veteran suffering from PTSD;

WHEREAS, in stark contrast to these immediate, warrantless arrests and groundless apprehension and detention, accompanied with public shaming and other forms of cruel and inhuman treatment, is the double standards and kid-gloves treatment when it comes to ally-politicians, NCRPO chief Debold Sinas, and appointees of the President such as Deputy Administrator Margaux Uson, whose violations not just of quarantine rules, but also of the laws on and norms of decency and human relations are both apparent and brazen;

WHEREAS, these human rights violations degrade not just the person and reputation of the teacher-victims but also the teaching profession itself. These rights violations with impunity and violation of laws by officials supposed to enforce the laws demean the status of teachers in Philippine society as figures of authority;

WHEREAS, such grave violations of the rights of citizens under the 1987 Constitution, laws and jurisprudence must not be replicated, now at a time of a dire public health crisis or ever again.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the House of Representatives condemn in the strongest terms the illegal arrests, detention, and other violations of rights under the 1987 Constitution and laws against several teachers amidst the community lockdowns during the public health emergency due to COVID-19.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the House Committee on Human Rights be urged to conduct an immediate investigation in aid of legislation into the same.

Adopted,

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Rep. **FRANZE L. CASTRO**

*ACT Teachers Party-List*

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Rep. **CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**

*BAYAN MUNA Party-List*

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Rep. **FERDINAND GAITE**

*BAYAN MUNA Party-List*

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Rep. **EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT**


*BAYAN MUNA Party-List*

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Rep. **ARLENE D. BROSAS**

*GABRIELA Women's Party*

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Rep. **SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**

*KABATAAN Party-List*