

Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines
Chairperson Jose Luis (Chito) Gascon
By email: chairgascon.chr@gmail.com

Subject
Letter of support

Date
25 September 2017
Our reference
2017/0088/AvD/JdV/IC

Dear Chairperson Gascon,

I address this letter to you in my capacity as Chairperson of the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (NIHR, the Institute). The Institute is a National Human Rights Institute (NHRI) with an A status accreditation at the United Nations, just like the Commission on Human Rights Philippines (the Commission) of which you are chairperson. We are colleagues.

On behalf of the Institute, I wish to commend you and your staff for your continuous work towards enhancing the respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights in The Philippines. You have done this work in line with your mandate and the A status accreditation as an independent human rights institute, “a watchdog and protector against human rights abuses”, as you yourself put it. Through your work, also in challenging circumstances, you have shown your true commitment to justice, rule of law and human rights for all.

As a colleague, I am gravely concerned about recent attacks by public officials on you and your organisation. In addition to this, the recent decision to allocate an extremely low budget for the Commission, severely puts at risk the mandate and independence of the Commission.

An NHRI should not be pressured, harassed or intimidated. The role of NHRIs is to protect and promote human rights. It falls upon their respective governments to create the necessary enabling environment, including by upholding the independence of an NHRI, respecting its mandate and providing it with the means to be able to fulfil its mandate.

Be assured we will do our utmost to support you and the Commission in these difficult circumstances from The Netherlands; in Europe through the European Network of National Human Rights Institutes (ENNHRI); and globally through the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutes (GANHRI).

We stand in solidarity with you!

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Adriana van Dooijeweert LL.M
President