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2 Republic of the Philippines  
3 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
4 Quezon City

5 **EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS**  
6 Second Regular Session

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8 **HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 1762**  
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10 **Introduced by**

11 **BAYAN MUNA Representatives EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,**  
12 **CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE and FERDINAND R. GAITE,**  
13 **GABRIELA Women's Party Representative ARLENE D. BROSAS,**  
14 **ACT TEACHERS Party-List Representative FRANCE L. CASTRO,**  
15 **and KABATAAN Party-List Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**  
16

17 **RESOLUTION**

18 **URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THROUGH THE COMMITTEE**  
19 **ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO CONDEMN AND INVESTIGATE,**  
20 **IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE DEATH OF PEASANT LEADER JOSEPH**  
21 **CANLAS IN CENTRAL LUZON**  
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24 **WHEREAS**, on March 30, 2021, elements of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Criminal  
25 Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) conducted an operation that led to the arrest of  
26 peasant leader Joseph Canlas;  
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28 **WHEREAS**, at around 6:40 AM on March 30, 2020, joint operatives of PNP and CIDG-  
29 Pampanga raided the office of peasant organization Alyansa ng mga Magbubukid ng Gitnang  
30 Luzon (AMGL) in Sapang Maisac, Mexico, Pampanga. Following the raid, police arrested peasant  
31 leader Joseph Canlas who serves as the Chairperson of AMGL and Vice-chairperson of Kilusang  
32 Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP). Police allegedly found a .45 caliber pistol, ammunition, and a  
33 grenade in his house. KMP strongly believes that these weapons were planted to justify the arrest  
34 of Canlas;  
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36 **WHEREAS**, on April 1, 2021, according to Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Canlas was  
37 transferred and put under quarantine to CIDG Region 3. While under quarantine, he was not  
38 allowed to receive visitors even from family members and counsel. After 14 days, Canlas was  
39 transferred to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) Detention Center in Angeles  
40 City after an x-ray examination. He was listed to be put under quarantine as BJMP's facility was  
41 full. On April 22, 2021, he was put in BJMP's quarantine facility, along with 100 more detainees;  
42

43 **WHEREAS**, on May 7, Canlas exhibited physical weakness, needing help in eating and walking.  
44 In a call with relatives, Canlas exhibited stuttering in speech and by night time he had difficulties  
45 in breathing. It was only on May 8 in the evening when Canlas was rushed to the hospital in  
46 Angeles City due to a possible stroke and low oxygen level. Early morning the next day on May 9,  
47 he was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit due to acute respiratory failure. Canlas also tested  
48 positive for Covid-19. On May 10, he slipped into a coma and was intubated and connected to a  
49 mechanical ventilator. Before his arrest, Canlas had comorbidities such as hypertension and  
50 diabetes. Peasant organization KMP believes that Canlas was likely infected with the Covid-19  
51 virus while in jail and under the custody of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

1 KMP has demanded his immediate release and the immediate dismissal of the trumped-up charges  
2 against him;

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4 **WHEREAS**, on May 11, peasant leader and land defender Joseph Canlas passed away due to the  
5 complications brought about by COVID-19 which he acquired because of unjust and prolonged  
6 detention;

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8 **WHEREAS**, the Philippines has one of the most congested jails in the world with a congestion  
9 rate of 534 percent according to the BJMP. Poor jail conditions put detainees at great risk of  
10 contracting different illnesses. The congestion especially makes them highly vulnerable to the  
11 spread of the Covid-19 virus. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has previously implemented  
12 measures to reduce congestion and prevent the spread of the virus in detention facilities, such as  
13 the proposal to release 10,000 inmates;

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15 **WHEREAS**, before his arrest, Joseph Canlas was repeatedly red-tagged and vilified by the  
16 National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC). Along with other  
17 activists he was named in posters and tarpaulins falsely tagging them as recruiters of the New  
18 People's Army;

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20 **WHEREAS**, the NTF-ELCAC, created through Executive Order 70 by the Duterte  
21 administration, has been condemned by rights groups and by the people for its vilification and  
22 red-tagging campaigns against activists, critics, and even celebrities who were merely airing out  
23 their political opinions. The extremely well-funded task force has also been called out for spreading  
24 fake quote cards online and false allegations against media outlets. Various complaints have already  
25 been filed against the Executives of the NTF-ELCAC. Red-tagging often lays the ground for  
26 further human rights violations such as illegal detention and extrajudicial killings against activists  
27 and critics;

28  
29 **WHEREAS**, as Chairperson of AMGL, Joseph Canlas led campaigns to improve the situation of  
30 agricultural workers in Central Luzon. He was also active in campaigns against mining in Zambales.  
31 In Pampanga, he was active in the resistance against the Clark Green City project, the Airforce  
32 Military Complex, and the geothermal power plant project of the Aboitiz Power Plant Corporation  
33 that threatened to displace farmers and Aetas from their land and destroy the remaining forests in  
34 Tarlac. He was also active in the campaign for the access of indigenous people in the Pantabangan  
35 and Casecnan Watershed in Nueva Ecija. He also worked to protect the coasts of Manila Bay in  
36 Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, and Zambales against land reclamation projects;

37  
38 **WHEREAS**, the arrest of Joseph Canlas by the police based questionable warrants, his unjust  
39 detention in congested facilities, lack of testing, and the delayed medical attention from BJMP  
40 authorities despite his complaints of symptoms and his pre-existing comorbidities, all contributed  
41 to his untimely passing. Under the Duterte administration, at least 400 political prisoners jailed on  
42 trumped-up charges face the same prison conditions amid the pandemic;

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44 **WHEREAS**, it is imperative for members of Congress, as representatives of our people, to defend  
45 the rights of our people and check on excesses and violations, especially in this time of crisis. It  
46 must bring perpetrators to account to put a stop to the killings and rights violations against its  
47 people. Laws and rules should serve the interest of our people, and should not be weaponized to  
48 suppress their rights and oppress them;

49  
50 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the  
51 House of Representatives, through the Committee on Human Rights, issue condemnation and

1 conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the death in Central Luzon of the peasant leader  
2 and land defender Joseph Canlas.

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5 *Adopted,*

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9 **REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT**  
10 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

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14 **REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**  
15 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

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17 **REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE**  
18 *Bayan Muna Partylist*

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21 **REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS**  
22 *GABRIELA Women's Party*

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24 **REP. FRANCE L. CASTRO**  
25 *ACT Teachers Partylist*

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28 **REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**  
*Kabataan Partylist*