



**Condolence Note**  
**The Passing of Jose Louis Martin Gascon**

(15 October 2021)—The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) and the Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI) express deep sorrow on the passing of Jose Louis Martin C. Gascon, or ‘Chito’, the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHRP) on 9 October 2021.’

“Chito Gascon was a cherished human rights defender who worked fearlessly to defend human rights in the Philippines, and who has contributed greatly to the improvement of human rights protection in Asia through his work in the CHRP. He was a shining example of how national human rights institutions can work for the protection and promotion of human rights of everyone, especially in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. We will feel his loss greatly”, said Shamini Darshni Kaliemuthu, Executive Director of FORUM-ASIA.

A courageous human rights lawyer and political activist, Gascon was renowned for his valiant leadership in the CHRP, defending human rights in the Philippines, and tirelessly raising his voice against human rights violations and abuses. Amidst the continuing attacks directed against him and the CHRP, he showed compassion, opened the Commission to the public, and boldly continued his work in upholding the mandate of the Commission to fight for human rights, the rule of law, and democracy. He became an inspiring light amidst the dark under an authoritarian government that has repressed fundamental freedoms of the people in the Philippines.

FORUM-ASIA, as the Secretariat of the ANNI, shares its deepest condolences with his loved ones, colleagues and friends at the CHRP. Gascon’s fearless leadership, as well as his tireless efforts in strengthening the protection of human rights, equality, peace and justice in Asia, will serve as a strength for all of us in continuing to persevere to defend human rights for all in the region.

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