WHEREAS, on March 12, 2021, Calbayog City Police Intelligence Chief Lieutenant Fernando G. Calabria Jr. wrote a letter requiring the Clerk of Court of Calbayog City to submit the names of lawyers who represent individuals facing trumped-up charges of being communist rebels. Calabria claimed the list is in "compliance from higher PNP offices". His letter is accompanied by a table of the lawyer's name, affiliation, client, case filed, status and "mode of neutralization;"

WHEREAS, such a list or table presents a clear and present danger to the legal profession and such an apparent hitlist for targeting lawyers seems to be being prepared by the national PNP down to its lower levels, even if the PNP top brass are now denying such a policy when the letter was exposed;

WHEREAS, clearly, it can be inferred there is indeed an ongoing profiling and categorizing of lawyers being done by the PNP, given the structure of the table template attached with the letter;

WHEREAS, the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL) has already recorded at least 54 killings of lawyers and judges since June 2016. Last December, various legal groups, including the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), have already raised serious concerns before the Supreme Court the increasing and alarming incidents of attacks on lawyers;

WHEREAS, on November 6, 2018, Human Rights lawyer Benjamin Ramos was shot by motorcycle-riding gunmen in front of a store in Barangay 5, Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental Province. His body sustained at least three gunshot wounds. He was brought to the Holy Mercy Hospital in Kabankalan City, where he was pronounced dead on arrival;

WHEREAS, Atty. Ramos was a well-known human rights defender who provided pro-bono legal aid to victims of human rights abuses, representing the most marginalized people in the Philippines, including peasants, political prisoners, and victims of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Most recently, Atty. Ramos was representing the families of nine farmers
who were killed after joining a protest on a sugarcane plantation in Sagay City, Negros Occidental Province, on October 20, 2018;

WHEREAS, on March 3, 2021, at around 9:15 PM, NUPL Panay Secretary-General Angelo Karlo “AK” Guillen was brutally stabbed on the back and in the face with a screwdriver by two (2) unidentified men along Gen. Luna St., Iloilo City. He was found lying on the road, bloodied, with the screwdriver still plunged to his left cheek. The attackers were described to be wearing face masks and caps and were reportedly seen approaching Atty. Guillen. CCTV footages showed the masked attackers, who took Atty. Guillen’s bag and a laptop containing files of the cases he is currently handling, immediately ploed the place of the incident together with two (2) others who drove their get-away motorcycles;

WHEREAS, the local PNP has quickly dismissed the stabbing incident as a mere robbery hold-up, and despite such report, there was no follow-up operations from the PNP to attempt to arrest the suspects. However, Public Attorney’s Office Region VI Chief, Atty. Jose Edmund Guillen, who is also AK’s uncle, protested the robbery angle, saying: “You want to make it appear as a robbery? The CCTV footage says otherwise. It was a kill operation. Right on the dot, after the stabbing, two motorcycles arrived to pick up the masked killers and they disappear[ed] in the dark”;

WHEREAS, Atty. Guillen is the legal counsel for several public interest and human rights cases, the latest of which includes the cases of nine (9) Tumandok indigenous leaders killed during simultaneous police and military operations in Panay on December 30, 2020. He is also the lawyer for other human rights cases in Panay and also co-counsel for one of the thirty-seven (37) petitions filed before the Supreme Court against the Anti-Terror Law;

WHEREAS, prior to these attacks, both Atty. Guillen and Atty. Ramos were victims of intense red-tagging because of their work and advocacies;

WHEREAS, the legal community is threatened considering the current dismal human rights situation in the country and the recent attacks on lawyers. These brutal attacks and killings of lawyers, prosecutors and judges, are attacks also to all rights defenders and to the legal profession, which demand a thorough and impartial investigation that should be conducted posthaste;

WHEREAS, members of Congress, as representatives of the people, are duty-bound to ensure that laws that protects the people’s Constitutional rights, including lawyers, who are also defenders of the people, are respected and duly implemented. When members of the legal profession, especially those rendering pro bono services and public interest lawyers who counsel for the marginalized and underprivileged sectors in society, are red tagged and under attack, Congress should be there, too, to also lend its legislative hands and deflect the assault coming from the undemocratic elements of our society;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the House of Representatives, through the Committee on Human Rights, condemn and conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the Philippine National Police’s profiling of lawyers of red-tagged individuals.
Adopted,

REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. EDCEL C. LAGMAN
Albay, 1st District

REP. JOSÉ CHRISTOPHER V. BELMONTE
Quezon City, 6th District

REP. BUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist

REP. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women’s Party

REP. FRANCISCO L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Partylist

REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Kabataan Partylist