



Republic of the Philippines
QUEZON CITY COUNCIL

Quezon City
22nd City Council

PO22CC-227/
PO22CC-227-A

113th Regular Session

ORDINANCE NO. SP- 3412, S-2025

AN ORDINANCE DEFINING THE RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN QUEZON CITY, DECLARING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE QUEZON CITY GOVERNMENT, INSTITUTING EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS FOR THEIR PROTECTION AND PROMOTION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Introduced by Councilor DOROTHY A DELARMENTE, M.D., WENCEROM BENEDICT C. LAGUMBAY, BERNARD R. HERRERA and TATAY RANNIE Z. LUDOVICA

Co-Introduced by Councilors Tany Joe "TJ" L. Calalay, Joseph P. Juico, Nikki V. Crisologo, Charm M. Ferrer, Candy A. Medina, Aly Medalla, Dave C. Valmocina, Godofredo T. Liban II, Kate Galang-Coseteng, Geleen "Dok G" G. Lumbad, Albert Alvin "Chuckie" L. Antonio III, Don S. De Leon, Atty. Anton L. Reyes, Imee A. Rillo, Raquel S. Malañgen, Irene R. Belmonte, Nanette Castelo-Daza, Marra C. Suntay, Joseph Joe Visaya, Alfred Vargas, MPA, Ram V. Medalla, Aiko S. Melendez, Maria Eleanor "Doc Ellie" R. Juan, O.D., Eric Z. Medina, Emmanuel Banjo A. Pilar, Vito Sotto Generoso, Victor "Vic" Bernardo

WHEREAS, the Quezon City Government has consistently demonstrated its commitment to good governance, transparency and the protection of human rights by proactively enacting progressive legislation even ahead of national mandates;

WHEREAS, the Quezon City Government upholds its duty to respect, promote and fulfill human rights as enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, recognizing that the protection of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) is integral to fostering a democratic and just society;

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WHEREAS, in line with international human rights standards, the Quezon City Government acknowledges the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on December 10, 1948, as well as the legally binding instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention Against Torture, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, to which the Philippines is a party;

WHEREAS, the Quezon City Government recognizes the significance of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), adopted on December 9, 1998, which affirms the crucial role of HRDs in advancing human rights, fostering accountability and ensuring just governance;

WHEREAS, the City has continuously taken the lead in safeguarding fundamental freedoms by establishing local mechanisms and policies that promote an enabling environment for HRDs to carry out their work free from intimidation, threats, and reprisals;

WHEREAS, the Quezon City Government acknowledges the indispensable role of HRDs in shaping public policy, educating communities, advocating for legislative reforms, monitoring human rights compliance and engaging in constructive dialogue with government institutions to enhance governance;

WHEREAS, as part of its ongoing commitment to being a trailblazer in human rights protection, the Quezon City Government seeks to institutionalize comprehensive safeguards for HRDs through local legislation that ensures their protection and upholds their rights in accordance with international and national human rights and laws.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF QUEZON CITY IN REGULAR SESSION ASSEMBLED:

CHAPTER I
PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE. – This Ordinance shall be known as the “Quezon City Human Rights Defenders Protection Ordinance of 2025” or the “QC-HRDP Ordinance.”

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SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY. – *The Quezon City Government acknowledges the vital role of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in the promotion and protection of human rights. It is the policy of the Quezon City Government to recognize, respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights and fundamental freedoms of HRDs, ensuring that they operate in a safe and enabling environment free from intimidation, threats and reprisals.*

The Quezon City Government adheres to the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998) and other international and national human rights instruments. The City shall adopt measures that strengthen the protection of HRDs and institutionalize mechanisms to facilitate their work.

SECTION 3. CONSTRUCTION IN FAVOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS. – *All provisions of this Ordinance shall be construed to achieve its objectives. All doubts in the implementation and interpretation of these provisions shall be resolved in favor of the HRDs.*

SECTION 4. DEFINITION OF TERMS. – *For the purposes of this Ordinance, the following terms shall mean:*

a. *Barangay Human Rights Defenders Protection Committee (BHRDPC) – a committee established at the barangay level to oversee the implementation of this Ordinance and coordinate with the Quezon City Human Rights Defenders Protection Desk. It shall be composed of the Punong Barangay as the Chairperson, the Barangay Secretary as the Secretariat, and the following as Members:*

- (1) Kagawad on Human Rights;*
- (2) Lupon Chairperson;*
- (3) Barangay Tanod Executive Officer;*
- (4) Senior Citizen Organization;*
- (5) Persons with Disability (PWD) Organization;*
- (6) Women’s Organization;*
- (7) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and others (LGBTQIA+) Organization; and*

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- (8) *Other Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) or People's Organization (PO) or Civil Society Organization (CSO), as may be identified;*
- b. *Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms – rights or entitlements inherent in all human persons and freedoms recognized in or declared by international and regional human rights instruments and customary international law, as well as by national laws, that are consistent with the said instruments and law;*
- c. *Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) – persons who, individually or in association with others, act or seek to act to protect, promote, or strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Quezon City. They include the following:*
- (1) *a Human Rights Defender;*
 - (2) *associate/ s of the Human Rights Defender;*
 - (3) *a legal or other representative of the Human Rights Defender appointed to conduct the latter's affairs or to otherwise act on his or her behalf;*
 - (4) *a family member or relative of the Human Rights Defender up to the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, including common-law relations;*
 - (5) *a group, association, organization, community or network, whether formal or informal, registered or unregistered, with which the Human Rights Defender is associated;*
 - (6) *the home, property or possessions of the Human Rights Defender or any of the other persons or entities in items (2) to (5).*
- d. *Human Rights Organization – any accredited or registered group, association or organization operating in Quezon City that promotes and protects human rights;*

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- e. *Human Rights Violation* – any act by any government personnel and/or unit, military affiliate, paramilitary, police, and/or military asset, or any agent of the State or an individual acting on its behalf, private corporations, and non-State armed groups, in violation of any human rights of any individual, group or organization, registered or otherwise, as well as the rights identified in Article II of this Ordinance, from which injury and damage to any individual, mental or physical, or property or reputation or privacy of any individual or organization shall be occasioned;
- f. *Human Rights Violation/s Victim* – a person whose human rights were violated by person/s acting on an official capacity and/or agents of the State as defined herein;
- g. *Government Agency* – any department, bureau, office or unit of the National Government, or any of its branches and instrumentalities, or any political subdivision, as well as any government-owned or controlled corporation, including its subsidiaries, or other self-governing branch, commission or council of the Government;
- h. *Civil Society* – non-state and non-profit associations that work to improve society and the human condition;
- i. *Non-Governmental Organization* – a non-stock and non-profit organization that works with different sectors and communities promoting the general welfare and development, that provides a wide range of services for people’s organizations and that tends to operate with full-time staff;
- j. *Faith-Based Organization* – a non-stock and non-profit organization that is based on faith and faith-based values associated to or inspired by religious beliefs;
- k. *Act of Violence* – any form of threat, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure, judicial harassment, or any other arbitrary or abusive action or threat, including cyber attacks, hacking, defacement of websites, distributed denial-of-service attacks, and similar acts related to a person’s status, work or activity as a Human Rights Defender;
- l. *Private Establishment and Institutions* – any business entity, academic institution, media organization or civil society, operating within Quezon City that plays a role in recognizing, supporting and ensuring a safe environment for HRDs;

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- m. *Public Authority* – any individual or entity performing a function of a public nature conferred by law, including all elected and appointed officials in Quezon City;
- n. *Red-tagging* – publicly labeling, accusing or associating individuals, groups or organizations with communists, terrorists or subversives without substantial evidence, leading to threats, surveillance or harm (*Deduro v. Vinoya*, G.R. No. 254753 [2023]); and
- o. *Vilification* – a systematic defamation, maligning, or “guilt by association” tactics to discredit and endanger individuals based on their political beliefs or advocacy work (*Deduro v. Vinoya*, G.R. No. 254753 [2023]).

CHAPTER II
RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

SECTION 5. RIGHTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS. – HRDs in Quezon City shall have the following rights and freedoms:

- a. *Right to Promote and Protect Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* – HRDs have the right to advocate for human rights at the local, national and international levels;
- b. *Right to Form Organizations* – HRDs may establish and participate in groups, associations and organizations dedicated to the promotion of human rights;
- c. *Right to Seek, Receive and Disseminate Information* – HRDs shall have access to public information relevant to human rights advocacy, subject to existing laws and policies on data privacy and national security;
- d. *Right to Freedom of Assembly and Peaceful Protest* – HRDs shall have the right to organize, participate in and conduct peaceful demonstrations, protests and public gatherings in pursuit of human rights advocacy, subject to existing laws and policies on peaceful assemblies;
- e. *Right to Legal Assistance and Remedy* – HRDs shall have the right to seek and obtain effective legal protection and remedies in cases of human rights violations;

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- f. *Right to Communicate with International and Regional Human Rights Bodies – HRDs shall have the right to communicate, cooperate and seek support from international and regional human rights organizations without fear of retaliation;*
- g. *Right to Privacy and Security – HRDs shall have the right to protect their personal and professional data from unlawful surveillance, interference and attacks, in accordance with applicable laws on data privacy;*
- h. *Right to be Free from Intimidation and Reprisal – HRDs shall be protected from threats, harassment, vilification, red-tagging and violence resulting from their legitimate human rights work;*
- i. *Right to Develop and Advocate for Human Rights-Based Policies – HRDs shall have the right to propose and engage in policymaking processes concerning human rights legislation and initiatives at the local level;*
- j. *Right to Freedom of Movement – HRDs shall have the right to travel freely within and outside Quezon City in relation to their human rights work without undue restrictions;*
- k. *Right to Access and Use Resources for Human Rights Advocacy – HRDs shall have the right to solicit, receive and utilize financial, material and logistical resources necessary for their work, subject to existing regulations.*
- l. *Right to Recognition and Public Support – HRDs’ vital role shall be acknowledged and publicly recognized by the Quezon City Government to ensure that their contributions to human rights advocacy are valued and supported;*
- m. *Right to Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination – HRDs shall have the right to be free from discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, pursuant to the Quezon City Gender and Development (GAD) Code, as amended, and the Quezon City Gender Fair Ordinance, as amended. They shall have equal access to protection, participation in decision-making and opportunities to advocate for gender rights; and*

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- n. *Right to Advocate for LGBTQIA+ and Women’s Rights – HRDs working on gender rights shall have the right to conduct campaigns, raise awareness and push for legislative reforms aimed at ensuring gender equality, safety and inclusivity.*

**CHAPTER III
PROTECTION AGAINST VILIFICATION AND RED-TAGGING**

SECTION 6. PROHIBITION ON VILIFICATION AND RED-TAGGING. – *No person, whether public official or private individual, shall engage in any act of vilification, red-tagging, false labeling, name-calling or fabricated accusations against HRDs. This includes any attempt to associate HRDs with terrorism, criminal activities or other false narratives meant to discredit or endanger them.*

SECTION 7. PROTECTION AGAINST DEFAMATION AND/OR STIGMATIZATION. – *HRDs shall not be subject to any form of defamation, stigmatization or harassment, whether online or offline, by public authorities or private actors, in connection with their human rights work.*

**CHAPTER IV
OBLIGATIONS OF QUEZON CITY**

SECTION 8. DUTY TO PROTECT HRDs. – *The Quezon City Government shall:*

- a. *ensure that HRDs are able to work freely and safely without undue restrictions, threats or reprisals;*
- b. *provide immediate and appropriate response to threats, violence, or harassment committed against HRDs within the jurisdiction of Quezon City; and*
- c. *establish a Quezon City Human Rights Defenders Protection Desk that will monitor cases of human rights violations against HRDs and coordinate with law enforcement agencies for immediate response and protection measures.*

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SECTION 9. ADMINISTRATIVE DUTY OF THE QUEZON CITY GOVERNMENT. – The Quezon City Government shall:

- a. *develop and implement policies that promote the safety, security and protection of HRDs, ensuring an enabling environment for human rights advocacy;*
- b. *provide immediate and appropriate response to threats, violence, or harassment committed against HRDs within the jurisdiction of Quezon City;*
- c. *conduct capacity-building programs for law enforcement officers, barangay officials and other local government personnel on the rights and protection of HRDs;*
- d. *establish an inter-agency coordination mechanism to ensure the proper enforcement of this Ordinance and to facilitate communication between and among the City Government, barangays, national government institutions and private entities; and*
- e. *ensure that all departments, agencies and barangays within Quezon City fully comply with this Ordinance and integrate human rights protection into their operations.*

SECTION 10. DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF BARANGAYS. – All barangays in Quezon City shall:

- a. *create a Barangay Human Rights Defenders Protection Committee (BHRDPC) to oversee the implementation of this Ordinance at the barangay level and coordinate with the Quezon City Human Rights Defenders Protection Desk;*
- b. *ensure that HRDs within their jurisdiction can operate without intimidation, threats or violence;*
- c. *immediately act on complaints and reports regarding human rights violations against HRDs and refer such cases to the proper authorities for further action;*
- d. *implement barangay-level initiatives such as information campaigns and training programs, that promote human rights advocacies and protect HRDs; and*

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- e. *provide temporary sanctuary and support for HRDs who are facing threats or harassment.*

SECTION 11. ROLE OF OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. –
Local government agencies operating within Quezon City shall:

- a. *assist in the enforcement of this Ordinance and support efforts to protect HRDs;*
- b. *ensure that complaints involving violations against HRDs are properly recorded, investigated and acted upon in a timely and transparent manner;*
- c. *provide technical assistance to HRDs and human rights organizations in their advocacy efforts; and*
- d. *ensure the dissemination of information regarding HRD protection laws and mechanisms to relevant stakeholders.*

CHAPTER V
ROLE OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS

SECTION 12. ROLE OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS WITHIN QUEZON CITY. – *National government agencies with offices or operations in Quezon City shall:*

- a. *cooperate with the Quezon City Government in ensuring the effective enforcement of this Ordinance;*
- b. *provide assistance in the investigation and prosecution of human rights violations committed against HRDs;*
- c. *conduct regular dialogues and consultations with HRDs and civil society organizations to assess their concerns and needs; and*
- d. *support Quezon City's efforts in training and capacity-building programs for local authorities on human rights protection.*

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SECTION 13. ROLE OF PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS. – *Private entities, including businesses, academic institutions, media organizations and civil society groups shall:*

- a. recognize and respect the rights of HRDs and refrain from any actions that may lead to harassment, discrimination, or violence against them;*
- b. provide safe spaces for HRDs to conduct advocacy works and public discussions on human rights issues;*
- c. support human rights programs and initiatives through partnerships, sponsorships or other forms of assistance;*
- d. ensure compliance with all applicable human rights laws and policies, particularly those protecting HRDs; and*
- e. encourage Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives that promote human rights and the protection of HRDs.*

CHAPTER VI
ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF QUEZON CITY

SECTION 14. HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS PROTECTION COMMITTEE. – *The Quezon City Government shall establish a Human Rights Defenders Protection Committee (HRDPC) under the Office of the City Mayor through the issuance of an Executive Order. This Committee shall:*

- a. develop and implement policies to protect HRDs from threats and violence;*
- b. monitor and document cases of human rights violations against HRDs; and*
- c. coordinate with law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations to provide legal and security assistance to HRDs.*

Provided, that the committee shall be composed of equal members from the City Government and from the duly-registered and accredited POs, NGOs, CSOs, in Quezon City.

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The Office of the Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlungsod (OSSP) shall be the Secretariat of the HRDPC.

SECTION 15. ACCESS TO LEGAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HIGH-RISK DEFENDERS, HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES. – The Quezon City Government, in coordination with the Commission on Human Rights-National Capital Region Field Office and relevant line agencies of the government and/or civil society organizations within its territorial jurisdiction, shall facilitate any legal and psychosocial assistance to high risk HRDs, human rights violation victims and their families, including those who have not sought the protection of a sanctuary, as may be reasonably necessary and at no cost to the victim/s; unless the victim/s prefer to seek legal and psychosocial assistance directly from the said Regional Field Office or any human rights organization, faith-based organization or legal or medical assistance group, the same, at no cost to the victims.

SECTION 16. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION OF HRD INFORMATION. – All information pertaining to HRDs at risk, including personal data and testimonies, shall be kept strictly confidential. Unauthorized disclosure of such information shall be penalized under applicable laws.

SECTION 17. PROTECTION AGAINST RETALIATION. – The Quezon City Government shall ensure that HRDs do not suffer retaliation from public or private entities due to their human rights works. Any act of retaliation shall be met with administrative, civil and criminal penalties.

**CHAPTER VII
PENALTIES AND SANCTIONS**

SECTION 18. PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THIS ORDINANCE. – Any public official, private individual or organization found guilty of violating the rights and protections granted under this Ordinance shall be subject to the following penalties:

- a. A fine of Php5,000.00 for acts of harassment, intimidation, or reprisal against HRDs;*
- b. Imprisonment of six (6) months to one (1) year for acts of violence against HRDs; and*

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- c. *Administrative sanctions, including suspension or dismissal from office for public officials complicit in violations of this Ordinance.*

SECTION 19. INDEPENDENT REVIEW MECHANISM. – A special review board under the HRDPC, composed of representatives from the Human Rights Defenders Protection Committee, the Commission on Human Rights, and civil society organizations shall oversee the enforcement of penalties and ensure accountability.

**CHAPTER VIII
FINAL PROVISIONS**

SECTION 20. IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS. – Within 90 days from the effectivity of this Ordinance, the Human Rights Defenders Protection Committee, in consultation with civil society organizations and legal experts, shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) necessary for the proper enforcement of this Ordinance.

SECTION 21. APPROPRIATIONS. – For the initial year of implementation, the Quezon City Government shall allocate the amount of Five Million Pesos (Php5,000,000.00) for the implementation of this Ordinance, including, but not limited to, the establishment of the Quezon City Human Rights Defenders Protection Desk, the conduct of training and information dissemination, meetings and organizational development needed and support for the Human Rights Defenders Protection Committee, legal aid program, and other protection mechanisms.

For the succeeding years, the Quezon City Government shall allocate funds necessary for the full implementation of this Ordinance through the regular inclusion in its Annual Budget.

SECTION 22. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE. – If any provision of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 23. REPEALING CLAUSE. – All other ordinances, executive orders, and rules inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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SECTION 24. EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE. – This Ordinance shall take effect 15 days after its posting and publication in compliance with Article 114 (Rule XVII) of the Rules and Regulations Implementing the Local Government Code of 1991.

ENACTED: March 25, 2025.


GIAN G. SOTTO
City Vice Mayor
Presiding Officer

ATTESTED:


MARILYN JANET B. BUL-LALAYAO
Legislative Staff Officer VI
(OIC, City Council Secretary)

APPROVED: APR 30 2025


MA. JOSEFINA G. BELMONTE
City Mayor

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this Ordinance was APPROVED by the City Council on Second Reading on March 25, 2025 and was PASSED on Third/Final Reading under Suspended Rules on the same date.


MARILYN JANET B. BUL-LALAYAO
Legislative Staff Officer VI
(OIC, City Council Secretary)

