

HUMAN RIGHTS

Sec. 17. (1) There is hereby created an independent office called the Commission on Human Rights.

(2) The Commission shall be composed of a Chairman and four Members who must be a natural-born citizens of the Philippines and a majority of whom shall be members of the Bar. The term of office and other qualifications and disabilities of the Members of the Commission shall be provided by law.

(3) Until this Commission is constituted, the existing Presidential Committee on Human Rights shall continue to exercise its present functions and powers.

(4) The approved annual appropriations of the Commission shall be automatically and regularly released.

Sec. 18. The Commission of Human Rights shall have the following powers and functions:

(1) Investigate, on its own or on complaint by any party, all forms of human rights violations involving civil and political rights.

(2) Adopt its operational guidelines and rules of procedure, and cite for contempt for violations thereof in accordance with the Rules of Court;

(3) Provide appropriate legal measures and legal aid services to the underprivileged whose human rights have been violated or need protection.

(4) Exercise visitatorial power over jails, prisons or detention facilities;

(5) Establish a continuing program of research, education and information to enhance respect for the primacy of human rights;

(6) Recommend to the Congress effective measures to promote human rights and to provide for compensation to victims of violations of human rights, or their families;

(7) Monitor the Philippine Government's compliance with international treaty obligations on human rights;

(8) Grant immunity from prosecution to any person whose testimony or whose possession of documents or other evidence is necessary or convenient to determine the truth in any investigation conducted by it or under its authority.

(9) Request the assistance of any department, bureau, office, or agency in the performance of its functions;

(10) Appoint its officers and employees in accordance with law; and

(11) Perform such other duties and functions as may be provided by law.

Sec. 19 The Congress may provide for other cases of violations of human rights that should fall within the authority of the Commission, taking into account its recommendations.