

# **Presidential Candidate O4. GONZALES, NORBERTO**

PARTIDO DEMOKRATIKO SOSYALISTA NG PILIPINAS

Norberto B. Gonzales, 74, is an avowed democratic-socialist, whose long career spans activism and union organizing, peace talks negotiation and national security adviser, defense secretary and presidential chief of staff appointments under the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo administration. He chairs the Philippine Democratic Socialist Party, which has roots in the protest movement in the 1970s and participated in the mass campaigns against the Marcos dictatorship, peace talks with the Moro National Liberation Front and the ouster of President Joseph Ejercito Estrada.

During his tenure in the Arroyo administration, Gonzales was involved in the Venable contract controversy, concerning the eventually cancelled agreement with a United States-based consultancy firm engaged by Gonzales allegedly on behalf of Arroyo to manage the president's charter change plans. Critics assailed the contract for seeking US funding for efforts to shift the Philippines to a parliamentary system, a violation of Philippine sovereignty, and the exorbitant \$900,000 or P50.4 million contract price. The Senate blue ribbon committee later recommended the filing of charges against Gonzales for entering into the "illegal" contract and doing so without authority. However, no such charges were filed.

He was also among the heads of Oplan Bantay Laya, a wide-scale counter-insurgency program of the government, which received much criticism for alleged legal and human rights violations such as extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances and illegal detention by political activists as well as independent fact-finding bodies led by former Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo and United Nations special rapporteur for human rights Philip Alston.

Later, Gonzales became part of the National Transformation Council, a group of Arroyo allies among former government officials, politicians and catholic clergy that called for President Benigno Aquino III to resign and be replaced by an interim government. The group denied accusations that it was instigating a coup d' etat against Aquino.

As a surprise candidate for the 2022 presidential election, Gonzales frames many of the issues faced by the country as matters of national security, including food security and the COVID-19 pandemic. He vows to prioritize reform of the agricultural sector to boost food production and increase farmers' income.



## **Platform and Policy**

The candidate's top priorities if elected to office, tracked against previous promises and accomplishments, if any

### Agriculture

#### **Related Policy Proposal:**

1. Department of Agriculture to be first to be reformed to boost food production and increase farmers' income 2. Modernize rice production

**Previous Platform:** 

**Deviation from Previous Platform:** 

#### Track Record/Accomplishment:

### Health; COVID-19

#### **Related Policy Proposal:**

- 1. Treat the COVID-19 pandemic as a national security threat
- 2. Improve overall health conditions and provide protection against COVID-19, partly through a stable food supply
- 3. Strengthen the pharmaceutical and drug industry to address medical supply and vaccine issues

#### **Previous Platform:**

**Deviation from Previous Platform:** 

**Administrative priorities Previous Platform: Related Policy Proposal:** 1. Cleaning up urban areas **Deviation from Previous Platform:** 2. Decongesting crowded communities Track Record/Accomplishment: National security **Previous Platform: Related Policy Proposal:** National mobilization to increase reserve security forces to 10 to 2 million **Deviation from Previous Platform:** Filipinos amid sea dispute in the West Philippine Sea Track Record/Accomplishment: National Security Adviser and Defense secretary under the Arroyo administration

### **Major Accomplishments**

The candidate's top five accomplishments and contributions for the last 15 years or so

#### **Public Office**

Gonzales served several positions in the Arroyo administration, most notably as part of the primary advisory body on matters of national security and the Department of Defense. Partly due to his prior involvement in the peace negotiations with the Moro National Liberation Front in the 1990s under President Corazon Aquino's administration, he participated in back channel talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the National Democratic Front in the 2000s.

Gonzales featured prominently in the Venable LLP contract controversy in 2005, which he signed as national security adviser on behalf of Arroyo, hiring the US lobbying firm as a consultant to boost the administration's charter change plan for at least \$900,000 or about P50.4 million at the time of signing. The contract was widely assailed for allowing foreign interference in matters of national interests as well as the contract price. Arroyo announced that the contract was cancelled but Senate investigations began.

Gonzales initially refused to answer questions by senators during a blue ribbon committee hearings, was cited for contempt and placed in Senate custody. He was moved to the Philippine Heart Center after suffering a stroke. The Supreme Court later ordered his release after a petition for habeas corpus was granted. Despite the Senate blue ribbon committee recommending the filing of charges against Gonzales for entering into the "illegal" contract, no charges were filed.

Around that time, Arroyo issued Executive Order 464, essentially prohibiting government officials from testifying in congressional hearings unless cleared by the president. The order was revoked in March 2008.

He was also among the heads of Oplan Bantay Laya, a wide-scale counter-insurgency program of the government, which has been described as brutal combat strategy and accused of perpetuating numerous legal and human rights violations including extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances and illegal detention against human rights and political activists as well as suspected members or supporters of communist rebels.

Title	Description	Position / Date	Status
Part of the formulation and execution of Oplan Bantay Laya		National Security Adviser and and Director General of the National Security Council, February 2005 - Jun 2010	
Final Peace Agreement between the Philippine government and the MNLF		Peace Panel member, 1996	

### Actions and / or Proceedings

Actions and/or proceedings pending against or resolved in courts or tribunals involving the candidate, based on publicly available information

Pending Actions and/or Proceedings

Subject Matter

**Potential Liability** 

	<b>1993 and 1994 -</b> DAR lent money to KMI to facilitate credit development		
In 2016, the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 96 found Gonzales, 10 other fellow trustees and non-government organization Kaunlaran ng Magsasaka, Inc. liable for misuse of P96.11 million to KMI through the Peasant Development Project fund by the Department of Agrarian Reform on July 22,1993. Gonzales and another defendant brought the case to the Court of Appeals.	Oct. 9, 2009 - complaint against KMI Dec. 29, 2016 - RTC judgment finding defendants liable Gonzales (and Asis) filed an appeal with the Court of Appeals	RTC judgment - payment of P96,113,238.62, plus 1% annual interest, 10% of total amount due as attorney's fees and collection charges, and costs of suit	Jan. 7, 2021 - CA sets aside RTC judgment and remands the case to the RTC for rendition of judgment in accordance with law
	<b>Jan. 7, 2021 -</b> CA sets aside the RTC judgment for failure to cite factual or legal basis for finding defendants liable		

#### **Resolved Actions and/or Proceedings**

Subject Matter	Relevant Dates	Accrued Liability	Status
In 2007, several petitions were filed in the SC challenging the constitutionality of Republic Act 9372, or the Human Security Act of 2007; Gonzales was Impleaded among the respondents as part of the National Security Council	SC decision dated Oct. 5, 2010	No personal liability	Petition denied

### **Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth**

Also known as SALN, this document is a declaration of one's personal finances. Philippine Law requires the SALN to be submitted by all public officials and employees to the Ombudsman. Public officials and employees may opt to voluntarily disclose their SALN to the public.

There is no publicly available information on this matter at this time. Requested information from the candidate was not provided.

### **Campaign Details**

Key details about the candidate's campaign

**Campaign Manager: Alliances and Endorsements: Party History:** 

> Philippine Democratic Socialist Party, chairman (since 1973) and current standard bearer

### **Major Advocacies**

The candidate's top advocacies in the last 15 years or so



**Status:** Current chairman, PDSP

Position/Date: Member, National Transformation Council

**Status:** The Department of Justice warned NTC against unlawful instigations of coup d'etat, which the group denied.

### **Major Donors**

Candidate's major donors and campaign funding sources

There is no publicly available information on this matter at this time. Requested information from the candidate was not provided.

### **Personal Details**

Basic information on the candidate's family, background and work experience



Name to appear on the ballot: GONZALES, NORBERTO Full Name: Norberto Borja Gonzales Birthdate: Apr. 17, 1947 (75 years old on election day) Birthplace: Balanga, Bataan Residence:

#### **Religion:**

Languages Spoken: Filipino, English

Parents: Jose Dizon Gonzales Jr., father Aurora Alonza Borja, mother

#### Siblings:

**Marital Status: Children:** 

#### **Education:**

- Bachelor of Science in Pre-Medicine, Ateneo de Davao University, 1968
- Master in National Security Administration, National Defense College of the Philippines, 2006

#### Work Experience:

- Secretary of the Department of National Defense, Nov. 2009 Jun 2010
- Acting Secretary of the DND, July Aug. 2007
- National Security Adviser and Director General of the National Security Council, Feb. 2005 - June 2017
- Political adviser, officer-in-charge of the Office of Political Coalition Affairs
- Presidential chief of staff, Aug. 2004 Feb. 2005
- Presidential adviser for special concerns, Arroyo administration, Feb. 2001 Jan. 2004
- Principal senior official in back-channel efforts in talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the National Democratic Front
- Peace Panel member, Final Peace Agreement between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front, 1996

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