



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

SECOND DIVISION

PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES, G.R. No. 264039
Plaintiff-appellee,

Present:

LEONEN, J., *Chairperson*,
LAZARO-JAVIER,
LOPEZ, M.,
LOPEZ, J., and
KHO, JR., *JJ.*

-versus-

CEFERINA MENDEZ a.k.a.
"SOPING/SOFIA",
Accused-appellant.

Promulgated:
MAY 27 2024

X-----X

DECISION

LEONEN, J.:

Individuals engaged in trafficking of persons may be validly arrested through a decoy solicitation from a law enforcement officer. It is a form of an entrapment operation conducted not only to catch offenders *in flagrante* but also to facilitate "the rescue of trafficked victims."¹

¹ *People v. Valencia*, 904 Phil. 518 (2021) [Per J. Leonen, Third Division]. See also *People v. Bayani*, 577 Phil. 607, 617–618 (2008) [Per J. Chico-Nazario, Third Division].

This Court resolves a Notice of Appeal² challenging the Court of Appeals Decision,³ affirming the Regional Trial Court's Decision⁴ finding Ceferina Mendez (Sofia) a.k.a. "Soping/Sofia" guilty of three counts of qualified trafficking in persons.

Three separate Informations were filed against Sofia charging her with qualified trafficking in persons and child abuse.⁵ They read:

CR FMY CASE NO. 2018-2578

....

That on or about September 13, 2018 at [REDACTED], Philippines, and within the Jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, taking advantage of the vulnerability by reason of poverty of the six (6) private offended parties namely, [CCC],⁶ [DDD], [EEE], [FFF], **"BBB" (14 years old) and "AAA" (17 years old)**, as well as the minority of the latter two minor offended parties, by offering them benefits in monetary form in order to achieve their consent, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and criminally harbor and offer said offended parties, for the purpose of sexual exploitation and prostitution, to their great damage and prejudice.

Contrary to law, qualified by the circumstance of minority of offended parties **"BBB" (14 years old)** and **"AAA" (17 years old)** and the same being committed in large scale for being committed against more than three (3) persons.

CR-FMY CASE NO. 2018-2579

....

That on or about July 2018, in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, taking advantage of the vulnerability by reason of poverty and minority of private offended party **"AAA" (17 years old)**, by offering her benefits in monetary form in order to achieve her consent, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and criminally harbor and offer said minor offended party to male customer for the purpose of sexual exploitation and prostitution, to their great damage and prejudice.

Contrary to law, qualified by the circumstance of minority of offended party **"AAA" (17 years old)**.

² Rollo, pp. 4-5.

³ *Id.* at 9-19. The February 10, 2022 Decision in CA-G.R. CR HC No. 02343 was penned by Associate Justice Alfonso C. Ruiz II and concurred in by Associate Justices Oscar V. Badelles and Lily V. Biton of the Twenty-Second Division, Court of Appeals, [REDACTED] City.

⁴ *Id.* at 22-34. The June 17, 2019 Decision in CR FMY Case No. 2018-2578 to 2018-2580 was penned by Presiding Judge Evelyn J. Gamotin-Nery of [REDACTED], Regional Trial Court, [REDACTED] City.

⁵ *Id.* at 22.

⁶ In line with Amended Administrative Circular No. 83-2015, as mandated by Republic Act No. 9262, the names of offended parties, along with all other personal circumstances that may tend to establish their identities, are made confidential to protect their privacy and dignity.

CR-FMY CASE NO. 2018-2580

That on or about September 12, 2018, in ██████████ City, Philippines, and within the jurisdiction of this Honorable Court, the above-named accused, taking advantage of the vulnerability by reason of poverty and minority of private offended party "AAA" (17 years old), by offering her benefits in monetary form in order to achieve her consent, did then and there willfully, unlawfully and criminally harbor and offer said minor offended party and transport her from ██████████ City (her place of residence) to ██████████ City, and offer her to a male customer for the purpose of sexual exploitation and prostitution, to their great damage and prejudice.

Contrary to law, qualified by the circumstance of minority of offended party "AAA" (17 years old).⁷

On arraignment, Sofia pleaded not guilty to the crimes filed against her. Thereafter, pre-trial and trial on the merits ensued.⁸

The prosecution presented Dr. Janice Joy Goboc Tan (Dr. Tan), AAA, BBB, FFF, and Senior Police Officer I Dennis O. Valdehueza (SPO1 Valdehueza) as its witnesses.⁹

Based on their collective testimonies, it was revealed that AAA was 17 years old and a Grade 9 student when she met Sofia. In June 2018, AAA was introduced to Sofia by an individual she met at ██████████ City. AAA asked the individual if they knew someone who was willing to pay for sex. The individual then accompanied AAA to meet Sofia, who asked for her number.¹⁰

In July 2018, Sofia gave AAA her first customer. AAA was brought to Cubicle's Inn where she had sex with the customer in exchange for money.¹¹

On September 11, 2018, Sofia contacted AAA to ask if she was available the next day. Sofia explained that they will go to ██████████ City as she had a customer for AAA. The following day, Sofia met with AAA and her 14-year-old friend, BBB. The two were then brought to an inn where they each had sex with a customer. Sofia gave AAA and BBB PHP 2,500.00 each as payment for their services.¹²

On September 12, 2018, a confidential informant messaged Sofia asking if she had six minors available. After confirming the availability of

⁷ *Id.* at 22-24.

⁸ *Id.* at 24-25.

⁹ *Id.* at 25-28.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 25.

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.* at 25-26.

the girls, Sofia and the confidential informant agreed on the rate and time of the meetup.¹³

Sofia then contacted AAA and asked if she was available on September 13, 2018 for another customer. She also asked AAA if she had friends and instructed her to bring them the following day. AAA informed Sofia that she was not available due to personal reasons but agreed to bring her two friends.¹⁴

The next day, AAA, together with her friends, BBB and FFF, went to [REDACTED] to meet with Sofia. Upon their arrival, Sofia instructed the girls that if they were asked about their age, they should tell the customers that they were already 19 years old. Later, the girls were brought to a room where they waited for their customers.¹⁵

Meanwhile, SPO1 Valdehueza and the confidential informant arrived at [REDACTED]. Sofia told the informant to proceed to her house so that they could hand over the payment. The informant obliged and went to her house. After giving Sofia the money, the informant executed a missed call to SPO1 Valdehueza to signify the consummation of the transaction. SPO1 Valdehueza proceeded to Sofia's house and arrested her. They took her to [REDACTED] and inspected her bag. The police officers then rescued three older women and three girls and gathered them in a room.¹⁶

Subsequently, the rescued girls were brought to [REDACTED] Medical Center for examination. The examining doctor found hymenal lacerations on both AAA and BBB.¹⁷

According to BBB, she agreed to have sex with customers since her friends told her that it was easy money. FFF, on the other hand, testified that she agreed to do the same since she had online debts to pay.¹⁸ On her part, AAA admitted that she was not forced to have sex with men, and that she personally asked Sofia for a customer.¹⁹

Sofia and her daughter, GGG, testified for the defense.

Sofia denied the accusations against her. She narrated that she used to work as a massage therapist. Days before her arrest, she received a message

¹³ *Id.* at 27–28. *See also* CA rollo, pp. 74–75.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 26.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 26–27.

¹⁶ *Id.* at 27–28. *See also* CA rollo, p. 75.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 25, 27.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 27–28. *See also* CA rollo, p. 75.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 26.

from her live-in partner's friend asking for a therapist. She denied the request as she no longer knew anyone working as a massage therapist.²⁰

On September 13, 2018, several police officers arrived at her house and arrested her. They allegedly forced her to hold a bundle of money, but she refused. Following this, they brought her to [REDACTED] where the police officers took photos of her.²¹

Initially, Sofia denied knowing AAA and the other complainants. However, on cross-examination, she admitted that AAA was introduced to her sometime in July 2018.²²

GGG corroborated Sofia's testimony. She recounted that on the day of the incident, two individuals entered their house and compelled her mother to hold a bundle of money. When her mother refused, the individuals, who introduced themselves as police officers arrested her and brought her to [REDACTED].²³

On June 17, 2019, the Regional Trial Court rendered a Decision²⁴ convicting Sofia of three counts of qualified trafficking in persons:²⁵

ALL THE FOREGOING CONSIDERED, the Court finds accused CEFERINA MENDEZ a.k.a. "Soping/Sofia":

1. In **CR-FMY CASE NO. 2018-2578**

GUILTY of QUALIFIED TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS as defined under Section 3(a) in relation to Section 4(a) and 6 (a), R.A. No. 9208, as amended by R.A. No. 10364, the "Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012" and for which the Court hereby imposes upon her the penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of Two Million Pesos ([PHP] 2,000,000.00).

CEFERINA MENDEZ a.k.a. "Soping/Sofia" is further ordered to pay "AAA", "BBB", and [FFF] the sum of [PHP] 500,000.00 as moral damages and exemplary damages in the amount of [PHP] 100,000.00, with 6% interest thereon from the date of promulgation up to the time that these are fully paid.

2. In **CR-FMY CASE NO. 2018-2579**

GUILTY of QUALIFIED TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS as defined under Section 3(a) in relation to Section 4(a) and 6(a), R.A. No. 9208, as amended by R.A. No. 10364, the "Expanded Anti-

²⁰ *Id.* at 29.

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.* at 28-29.

²⁴ *Id.* at 22-34.

²⁵ *Id.* at 33-34.

Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012” and for which the Court hereby imposes upon her the penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of Two Million Pesos ([PHP] 2,000,000.00).

CEFERINA MENDEZ a.k.a. “Soping/Sofia” is further ordered to pay “AAA” the sum of [PHP] 500,000.00 as moral damages and exemplary damages in the amount of [PHP] 100,000.00, with 6% interest thereon from the date of promulgation up to the time that these are fully paid.

3. In ***CR-FMY CASE NO. 2018-2580***

GUILTY OF QUALIFIED TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS as defined under Section 3(a) in relation to Section 4(a) and 6(a), R.A. No. 9208 as amended by R.A. No. 10364, the “Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012” and for which the Court hereby imposes upon her the penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of Two Million Pesos ([PHP] 2,000,000.00).

CEFERINA MENDEZ a.k.a. “Soping/Sofia” is further ordered to pay “AAA” the sum of [PHP] 500,000.00 as moral damages and exemplary damages in the amount of [PHP] 100,000.00, with 6% interest thereon from the date of promulgation up to the time that these are fully paid.

IT IS SO ORDERED.²⁶

The Regional Trial Court rejected Sofia’s defense of denial and alibi, ruling that these cannot prevail over the positive identification and categorical testimony of the prosecution witnesses. It emphasized that absent any ill motive on the part of these witnesses, Sofia’s defenses cannot be given greater weight than the witnesses’ testimony.²⁷

Finally, it decreed that absent any clear and convincing evidence, Sofia’s claim of frame up cannot overcome the presumption of regularity enjoyed by the police officers.²⁸

Aggrieved, Sofia appealed to the Court of Appeals.²⁹

Sofia contended that the Regional Trial Court erred in convicting her considering that she was instigated into committing the offense. She claimed that she did not voluntarily offer her services and that it was the police officers who initiated the transaction.³⁰

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.* at 31–32.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *CA rollo*, p. 15.

³⁰ *Id.* at 40–41.

In addition, she argued that the prosecution failed to prove all the elements of the crime charged. She maintained that no evidence was presented to prove that she obtained the consent of the victims by taking advantage of their vulnerability. She stressed that the victims admitted that they were the ones who reached out to her and asked for her help.³¹ She also averred that since it was not proven that she received the buy-bust money, the crime cannot be considered as consummated.³²

The Office of the Solicitor General countered that Sofia's guilt was proven beyond reasonable doubt. It insisted that the testimony of the prosecution witnesses proved that Sofia committed the crime charged.³³

Finally, it denied that Sofia was instigated to commit the offense, given that the criminal intent to perform the acts originated from Sofia herself. It maintained that even prior to the entrapment operation, Sofia had already been pimping minors and was the subject of several complaints.³⁴

In the assailed Decision, the Court of Appeals sustained Sofia's conviction.³⁵ It affirmed the Regional Trial Court's finding that all elements of the crime trafficking in persons were established by the prosecution.³⁶ It also found unmeritorious Sofia's claim of instigation and stressed that similar to a buy-bust operation in drugs cases, the decoy solicitation of the police officers cannot be considered as a means to induce or instigate the perpetrator.³⁷

As to the alleged nonreceipt of payment, the Court of Appeals emphasized that "the act of receiving the money as payment is not an element of the crime."³⁸

Dissatisfied with its Decision, Sofia filed a Notice of Appeal with the Court of Appeals.³⁹

On March 22, 2023, this Court resolved to note the records of this case forwarded by the Court of Appeals and to require the parties to submit their supplemental briefs.⁴⁰

³¹ *Id.* at 41–42.

³² *Id.* at 42.

³³ *Id.* at 76–79.

³⁴ *Id.* at 79–80.

³⁵ *Rollo*, p. 18.

³⁶ *Id.* at 16–18.

³⁷ *Id.* at 15–16.

³⁸ *Id.* at 18.

³⁹ *Id.* at 4–5.

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 35–36.

The People of the Philippines, through the Office of the Solicitor General,⁴¹ and Sofia⁴² respectively manifested that they would no longer file supplemental briefs.

The issues for this Court's resolution are:

Whether accused-appellant Ceferina Mendez a.k.a. "Soping/Sofia" is guilty beyond reasonable doubt of three counts of qualified trafficking in persons; and

Whether there was a valid entrapment operation.

We find the appeal unmeritorious.

I

Section 3(a) of Republic Act No. 9208,⁴³ as amended by Republic Act No. 10364,⁴⁴ provides the definition of the term trafficking in persons. It states:

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. — As used in this Act:

(a) *Trafficking in Persons*. — refers to the recruitment, obtaining, hiring, providing, offering, transportation, transfer, maintaining, harboring, or receipt of persons with or without the victim's consent or knowledge, within or across national borders by means of threat, or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or, the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation which includes at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude or the removal or sale of organs.

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, adoption or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation or when the adoption is induced by any form of consideration for exploitative purposes shall also be considered as 'trafficking in persons' even if it does not involve any of the means set forth in the preceding paragraph.

There are several ways to commit the crime of trafficking in persons, among which include the recruitment, obtaining, hiring, providing, offering, transporting, transferring, maintaining, harboring, or receiving "a person by

⁴¹ *Id.* at 37–38.

⁴² Manifestation attached to the *rollo* but is unpaginated.

⁴³ Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003.

⁴⁴ Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012.

any means. . . for the purpose of prostitution, pornography, [or] sexual exploitation[.]”⁴⁵

When any of these acts are “committed against three (3) or more persons[.]”⁴⁶ or “when the trafficked person is a child”⁴⁷ the crime is considered qualified.

To sustain a conviction for this crime, the prosecution must establish the existence of the following elements:

(1) The act of “recruitment, *obtaining, hiring, providing, offering, transportation, transfer, maintaining,* harboring, or receipt of persons with or without the victim’s consent or knowledge, within or across national borders;”

(2) The means used include “by means of threat, or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or, the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person[;]”

(3) The purpose of trafficking includes “the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude or the removal or sale of organs[.]”⁴⁸

Here, it was proven that accused-appellant peddled the victims’ services to various individuals. AAA admitted that on different occasions, accused-appellant offered AAA’s services to male customers in exchange for money. In addition to AAA, accused-appellant also offered the services of three women and two more girls to the police officers on the day of her arrest.⁴⁹

As to the second element, accused-appellant argued in her Appellant’s

⁴⁵ Republic Act No. 9208, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, sec. 4(a), as amended.

SECTION 4. *Acts of Trafficking in Persons.* — It shall be unlawful for any person, natural or juridical, to commit any of the following acts:

“(a) To recruit, obtain, hire, provide, offer, transport, transfer, maintain, harbor, or receive a person by any means, including those done under the pretext of domestic or overseas employment or training or apprenticeship, for the purpose of prostitution, pornography, or sexual exploitation[.]”

⁴⁶ Republic Act No. 9208, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, sec. 6(c), as amended.

SECTION 6. *Qualified Trafficking in Persons.* — The following are considered as qualified trafficking:

....
(c) When the crime is committed by a syndicate, or in large scale. Trafficking is deemed committed by a syndicate if carried out by a group of three (3) or more persons conspiring or confederating with one another. It is deemed committed in large scale if committed against three (3) or more persons, individually or as a group[.]

⁴⁷ Republic Act No. 9208, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, sec. 6(a), as amended.

SECTION 6. *Qualified Trafficking in Persons.* — The following are considered as qualified trafficking:

(a) When the trafficked person is a child[.]

⁴⁸ *People v. Casio*, 749 Phil. 458, 474 (2014) [Per J. Leonen, Second Division].

⁴⁹ *Rollo*, pp. 25–28.

Brief⁵⁰ that no evidence was presented to prove that she took advantage of the victims' vulnerability. She stressed that the victims admitted that they were the ones who reached out to accused-appellant and asked for customers.

Contrary to accused-appellant's argument, it was proven that she took advantage of the victims' vulnerability. AAA and BBB were minors at the time they were peddled by accused-appellant. Meanwhile, FFF testified that she gave her consent since she needed the money.⁵¹

In any case, it has been held that "[t]rafficking in persons can still be committed even if the victim gives consent."⁵² *People v. Casio*⁵³ emphasized that "[t]he victim's consent is rendered meaningless due to the coercive, abusive, or deceptive means employed by perpetrators of human trafficking. Even without the use of coercive, abusive, or deceptive means . . . a minor's consent is not given out of his or her own free will."⁵⁴

Having established the guilt of accused-appellant for the crime of qualified trafficking in persons, this Court shall determine next whether there was a valid entrapment operation.

II

In many cases, this Court has outlined the difference between instigation and entrapment. In *People v. Bayani*⁵⁵ we explained:

Instigation is the means by which the accused is lured into the commission of the offense charged in order to prosecute him. On the other hand, entrapment is the employment of such ways and means for the purpose of trapping or capturing a lawbreaker. Thus, in instigation, officers of the law or their agents incite, induce, instigate or lure an accused into committing an offense which he or she would otherwise not commit and has no intention of committing. But in entrapment, the criminal intent or design to commit the offense charged originates in the mind of the accused, and law enforcement officials merely facilitate the apprehension of the criminal by employing ruses and schemes; thus, the accused cannot justify his or her conduct. In instigation, where law enforcers act as co-principals, the accused will have to be acquitted. But entrapment cannot bar prosecution and conviction. As has been said, instigation is a "trap for the unwary innocent," while entrapment is a "trap for the unwary criminal."

As a general rule, a buy-bust operation, considered as a form of entrapment, is a valid means of arresting violators of Republic Act No. 9165. It is an effective way of apprehending law offenders in the act of

⁵⁰ CA rollo, pp. 36–46.

⁵¹ Rollo, p. 27.

⁵² *People v. Leocadio*, 877 Phil. 819, 837 (2020) [Per C.J. Peralta, Second Division].

⁵³ 749 Phil. 458 (2014) [Per J. Leonen, Second Division].

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 475–476.

⁵⁵ 577 Phil. 607 (2008) [Per J. Chico-Nazario, Third Division].

committing a crime. In a buy-bust operation, the idea to commit a crime originates from the offender, without anybody inducing or prodding him to commit the offense.⁵⁶

Contrary to the arguments of accused-appellant, her arrest was pursuant to a valid entrapment operation and was not done through instigation.

In this case, the police officers organized the entrapment operation after confirming, through surveillance and monitoring, that accused-appellant was pimping minors. A confidential informant was tasked to contact accused-appellant and ask for girls willing to have sex for money. After some haggling over the price, the confidential informant and accused-appellant finalized the agreement.⁵⁷ That accused-appellant immediately agreed to provide the confidential informant with girls clearly shows “that the idea to commit the crime originated from the mind of the accused.”⁵⁸

The arrest of accused-appellant remains valid notwithstanding that the transaction was initiated by the confidential informant. Like drugs cases, the prosecution’s decoy solicitation does not constitute illicit inducement but a means that “merely furnishes evidence of [the criminal’s] course of conduct[.]”⁵⁹ *Bayani* clarified:

A police officer’s act of soliciting drugs from the accused during a buy-bust operation, or what is known as a “decoy solicitation”, is not prohibited by law and does not render invalid the buy-bust operations. The sale of contraband is a kind of offense habitually committed, and the solicitation simply furnishes evidence of the criminal’s course of conduct. In *People v. Sta. Maria*, the Court clarified that a “decoy solicitation” is not tantamount to inducement or instigation:

It is no defense to the perpetrator of a crime that facilities for its commission were purposely placed in his way, or that the criminal act was done at the “decoy solicitation” of persons seeking to expose the criminal, or that detectives feigning complicity in the act were present and apparently assisting its commission. Especially is this true in that class of cases where the offense is one habitually committed, and the solicitation merely furnishes evidence of a course of conduct.

As here, the solicitation of drugs from appellant by the informant utilized by the police merely furnishes evidence of a course of conduct. The police received an intelligence report that appellant has been habitually dealing in illegal drugs. They duly acted on it by utilizing an informant to effect a drug transaction with appellant. There was no showing that the informant induced the appellant to

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 616–617.

⁵⁷ *Rollo*, pp. 12, 27–28.

⁵⁸ See *People v. Bartolome*, 703 Phil. 148, 164 (2013) [Per J. Bersamin, First Division].

⁵⁹ *People v. Bayani*, 577 Phil. 607, 617 (2008) [Per J. Chico-Nazario, Third Division].

sell illegal drugs to him.

Conversely, the law deplors instigation or inducement, which occurs when the police or its agent devises the idea of committing the crime and lures the accused into executing the offense. Instigation absolves the accused of any guilt, given the spontaneous moral revulsion from using the powers of government to beguile innocent but ductile persons into lapses that they might otherwise resist.⁶⁰ (Citations omitted)

Finally, we agree with the Court of Appeals that it is irrelevant whether accused-appellant received the money, considering that it is not an element of the crime.⁶¹

ACCORDINGLY, the Appeal is **DISMISSED**. The February 10, 2022 Decision of the Court of Appeals in CA-G.R. CR HC No. 02343 is **AFFIRMED**. Accused-appellant Ceferina Mendez a.k.a. "Soping/Sofia" is found **GUILTY** of the following:

1. In CR FMY Case No. 2018-2578, **QUALIFIED TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS** as defined under Section 3(a) in relation to Sections 4(a) and 6(a) of Republic Act No. 9208, as amended by Republic Act No. 10364. She is sentenced to suffer the penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of PHP 2,000,000.00.

She is ordered to **PAY** AAA, BBB, and FFF the sum of PHP 500,000.00 as moral damages and exemplary damages in the amount of PHP 100,000.00.

2. In CR FMY Case No. 2018-2579, **QUALIFIED TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS** as defined under Section 3(a) in relation to Sections 4(a) and 6(a) of Republic Act No. 9208, as amended by Republic Act No. 10364. She is sentenced to suffer the penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of PHP 2,000,000.00.

She is ordered to **PAY** AAA the sum of PHP 500,000.00 as moral damages and exemplary damages in the amount of PHP 100,000.00.

3. In CR FMY Case No. 2018-2580, **QUALIFIED TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS** as defined under Section 3(a) in relation to Sections 4(a) and 6(a) of Republic Act No. 9208, as amended by Republic Act No. 10364. She is sentenced to suffer the penalty of life imprisonment and a fine of PHP 2,000,000.00.

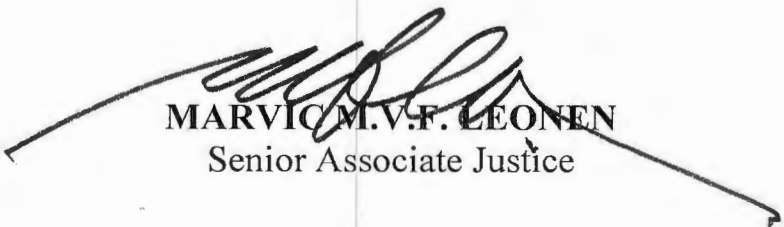
She is ordered to **PAY** AAA the sum of PHP 500,000.00 as moral damages and exemplary damages in the amount of PHP 100,000.00.

⁶⁰ *Id.* at 617-618.

⁶¹ *Rollo*, p. 18.

All damages awarded shall be subject to the rate of 6% per annum from the finality of this Decision until their full satisfaction.

SO ORDERED.

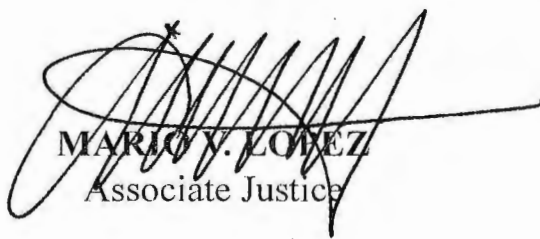


MARVIC M.V.F. LEONEN
Senior Associate Justice


WE CONCUR:



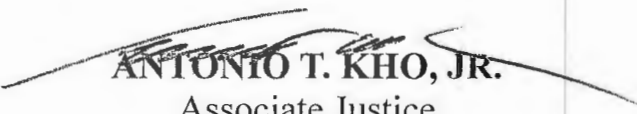
AMY C. LAZARO-JAVIER
Associate Justice



MARIO V. LOPEZ
Associate Justice



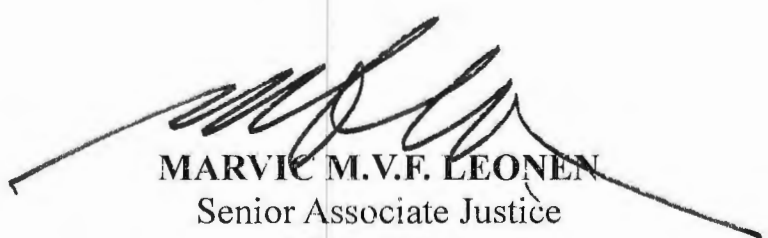
JHOSEP V. LOPEZ
Associate Justice



ANTONIO T. KHO, JR.
Associate Justice

ATTESTATION

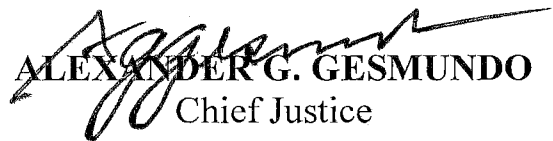
I attest that the conclusions in the above Decision had been reached in consultation before the case was assigned to the writer of the opinion of the Court's Division.



MARVIC M.V.F. LEONEN
Senior Associate Justice
Chairperson

CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 13 of the Constitution and the Division Chairperson's Attestation, I certify that the conclusions in the above Decision had been reached in consultation before the case was assigned to the writer of the opinion of the Court's Division.


ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO
Chief Justice