

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8249

AN ACT FURTHER DEFINING THE JURISDICTION OF THE SANDIGANBAYAN, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1606, AS AMENDED, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. The first paragraph of Section 1 of Presidential Decree No. 1606, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SECTION 1. *Sandiganbayan; Composition; Qualifications; Tenure; Removal and Compensation.* – A special court, of the same level as the Court of Appeals and possessing all the inherent powers of a court of justice, to be known as the Sandiganbayan is hereby created composed of a presiding justice and fourteen associate justices who shall be appointed by the President."

SEC. 2. Section 2 of the same decree is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 2. *Official Station; Place of Holding Sessions.* – The Sandiganbayan shall have its principal office in the Metro Manila area and shall hold sessions thereat for the trial and determination of cases filed with it: *Provided, however,* That cases originating from the principal geographical regions of the country, that is, from Luzon, Visayas or Mindanao, shall be heard in their respective regions of origin except only when the greater convenience of the accused and of the witnesses, or other compelling considerations require the contrary, in which instance a case originating from one geographical region may be heard in another geographical region: *Provided, further,* That for this purpose

the presiding justice shall authorize any division or divisions of the court to hold sessions at any time and place outside Metro Manila and, where the interest of justice so requires, outside the territorial boundaries of the Philippines. The Sandiganbayan may require the services of the personnel and the use of facilities of the courts or other government offices where any of the divisions is holding sessions and the personnel of such courts or offices shall be subject to the orders of the Sandiganbayan."

SEC. 3. The second paragraph of Section 3 of the same decree is hereby deleted.

SEC. 4. Section 4 of the same decree is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 4. *Jurisdiction.* – The Sandiganbayan shall exercise exclusive original jurisdiction in all cases involving:

"a. Violations of Republic Act No. 3019, as amended, otherwise known as the Anti-graft and Corrupt Practices Act, Republic Act No. 1379, and Chapter II, Section 2, Title VII, Book II of the Revised Penal Code, where one or more of the accused are officials occupying the following positions in the government, whether in a permanent, acting or interim capacity, at the time of the commission of the offense:

"(1) Officials of the executive branch occupying the positions of regional director and higher, otherwise classified as Grade '27' and higher, of the Compensation and Position Classification Act of 1989 (Republic Act No. 6758), specifically including:

"(a) Provincial governors, vice-governors, members of the sangguniang panlalawigan, and provincial treasurers, assessors, engineers, and other provincial department heads;

"(b) City mayors, vice-mayors, members of the sangguniang panlungsod, city treasurers, assessors, engineers, and other city department heads;

"(c) Officials of the diplomatic service occupying the position of consul and higher;

"(d) Philippine army and air force colonels, naval captains, and all officers of higher rank;

"(e) Officers of the Philippine National Police while occupying the position of provincial director and those holding the rank of senior superintendent or higher;

"(f) City and provincial prosecutors and their assistants, and officials and prosecutors in the Office of the Ombudsman and special prosecutor;

"(g) Presidents, directors or trustees, or managers of government-owned or -controlled corporations, state universities or educational institutions or foundations.

"(2) Members of Congress and officials thereof classified as Grade '27' and up under the Compensation and Position Classification Act of 1989;

"(3) Members of the judiciary without prejudice to the provisions of the Constitution;

"(4) Chairmen and members of Constitutional Commissions, without prejudice to the provisions of the Constitution; and

"(5) All other national and local officials classified as Grade '27' and higher under the Compensation and Position Classification Act of 1989.

"b. Other offenses or felonies whether simple or complexed with other crimes committed by the public officials and employees mentioned in subsection a of this section in relation to their office.

"c. Civil and criminal cases filed pursuant to and in connection with Executive Order Nos. 1, 2, 14 and 14-A, issued in 1986.

"In cases where none of the accused are occupying positions corresponding to Salary Grade '27' or higher, as prescribed in the said Republic Act No. 6758, or military and PNP officers mentioned above, exclusive original jurisdiction thereof shall be vested in the proper regional trial court, metropolitan trial court, municipal trial court, and municipal circuit trial court, as the case may be, pursuant to their respective jurisdictions as provided in Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as amended.

"The Sandiganbayan shall exercise exclusive appellate jurisdiction over final judgments, resolutions or orders of regional trial courts whether in the exercise of their own original jurisdiction or of their appellate jurisdiction as herein provided.

"The Sandiganbayan shall have exclusive original jurisdiction over petitions for the issuance of the writs of *mandamus*, prohibition, *certiorari*, *habeas corpus*, injunctions, and other ancillary writs and processes in aid of its appellate jurisdiction and over petitions of similar nature, including *quo warranto*, arising or that may arise in cases filed or which may be filed under Executive Order Nos. 1, 2, 14 and 14-A, issued in 1986: *Provided*, That the jurisdiction over these petitions shall not be exclusive of the Supreme Court.

"The procedure prescribed in Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, as well as the implementing rules that the Supreme Court has promulgated and may hereafter promulgate, relative to appeals/petitions for review to the Court of Appeals, shall apply to appeals and petitions for review filed with the Sandiganbayan. In all cases elevated to the Sandiganbayan and from the Sandiganbayan to the Supreme Court, the Office of the Ombudsman, through its special prosecutor, shall represent the People of the Philippines, except in cases filed pursuant to Executive Order Nos. 1, 2, 14 and 14-A, issued in 1986.

"In case private individuals are charged as co-principals, accomplices or accessories with the public officers or employees, including those employed in government-owned or -controlled corporations, they shall be tried jointly with said public officers and employees in the proper courts which shall exercise exclusive jurisdiction over them.

"Any provisions of law or Rules of Court to the contrary notwithstanding, the criminal action and the corresponding civil action for the recovery of civil liability shall at all times be simultaneously instituted with, and jointly determined in, the same proceeding by the Sandiganbayan or the appropriate courts, the filing of the criminal action being deemed to necessarily carry with it the filing of the civil action, and no right to reserve the filing of such civil action separately from the criminal action shall be recognized: *Provided, however,* That where the civil action had heretofore been filed separately but judgment therein has not yet been rendered, and the criminal case is hereafter filed with the Sandiganbayan or the appropriate court, said civil action shall be transferred to the Sandiganbayan or the appropriate court, as the case may be, for consolidation and joint determination with the criminal action, otherwise the separate civil action shall be deemed abandoned."

SEC. 5. Section 7 of the same decree is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 7. *Form, Finality and Enforcement of Decisions.* – All decisions and final orders determining the merits of a case or finally disposing of the action or proceedings of the Sandiganbayan shall contain complete findings of the facts and the law on which they are based, on all issues properly raised before it and necessary in deciding the case.

"A petition for reconsideration of any final order or decision may be filed within fifteen (15) days from promulgation or notice of the final order or judgment, and such motion for reconsideration shall be decided within thirty (30) days from submission thereon.

"Decisions and final orders of the Sandiganbayan shall be appealable to the Supreme Court by petition for review on *certiorari* raising pure questions of law in accordance with Rule 45 of the Rules of Court. Whenever, in any case decided by the Sandiganbayan, the penalty of *reclusion perpetua*, life imprisonment or death is imposed, the decision shall be appealable to the Supreme Court in the manner prescribed in the Rules of Court.

"Judgments and orders of the Sandiganbayan shall be executed and enforced in the manner provided by law.

"Decisions and final orders of other courts in cases cognizable by said courts under this decree as well as those rendered by them in the exercise of their appellate jurisdiction shall be appealable to, or be reviewable by, the Sandiganbayan in the manner provided by Rule 122 of the Rules of Court.

"In case, however, the imposed penalty by the Sandiganbayan or the regional trial court in the proper exercise of their respective jurisdiction, is death, review by the Supreme Court shall be automatic, whether or not the accused files an appeal."

SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current fiscal year appropriations of the Sandiganbayan. Thereafter, such sums as may be needed for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Transitory Provision.* – This Act shall apply to all cases pending in any court over which trial has not begun as of the approval hereof.

SEC. 8. *Separability of Provisions.* – If for any reason any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such parts or portions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All acts, decrees, general orders and circulars, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved, February 5, 1997.