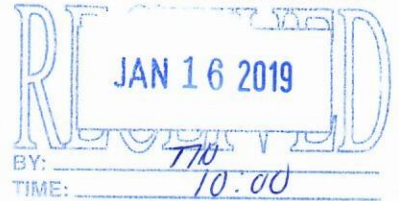




SUPREME COURT OF THE PHIL.
OFFICE OF THE COURT ADMINISTRATOR



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 07-2019

**Re: DESIGNATION OF SPECIAL COURTS TO HEAR,
TRY AND DECIDE ELECTION CONTESTS
INVOLVING ELECTIVE MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS**

WHEREAS, under Section 1, Rule 2, The 2010 Rules of Procedure for Municipal Election Contests (The 2010 Rules), Regional Trial Courts (RTCs) shall have exclusive original jurisdiction over all election contests involving elective municipal officials;

WHEREAS, under Section 11, Rule 2, The 2010 Rules, the Supreme Court shall designate the RTCs within a judicial region that shall take cognizance of election protests and petitions for *quo warranto*;

WHEREAS, under Section 13, Rule 14, The 2010 Rules, the designated election courts shall give preference to election contests over all other cases, except petitions for writs of *habeas corpus*, *amparo* and *habeas data*;

WHEREAS, pursuant to the pertinent provision of The 2010 Rules, Administrative Order No. 149-2015, dated 24 September 2015, designating Regional Trial Court branches as Special Courts to hear, try and decide election contests involving elective municipal officials was issued;

WHEREAS, Administrative Order No. 149-2015 has to be updated (a) to reflect the amendments made in the said issuance; and (b) because a number of municipalities have been upgraded to cities, while newly-created RTCs have been organized;

WHEREAS, it is expected that election cases will be filed in courts in view of the forthcoming 13 May 2019 local and national elections, and the other elections thereafter;

NOW, THEREFORE, in the interest of a speedy and efficient administration of justice and pursuant to Section 11, Rule 2, The 2010 Rules, the following branches of the RTCs are hereby designated to exclusively and speedily hear, try and decide election protests and petitions for *quo warranto* involving elective municipal officials within their respective territorial jurisdictions during local and national elections, until otherwise revoked by the Court:

STATION

BRANCH

NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION

PASIG CITY

Branch 262
(for cases originating from Pateros)

FIRST JUDICIAL REGION

BENGUET

LA TRINIDAD

Branch 62
Branch 63

ILOCOS NORTE

LAOAG CITY

Branch 14
Branch 65

LA UNION

SAN FERNANDO CITY

Branch 27
Branch 66

PANGASINAN

LINGAYEN

Branch 38
Branch 69

DAGUPAN CITY

Branch 40
Branch 41

URDANETA CITY

Branch 46
Branch 48

SECOND JUDICIAL REGION

CAGAYAN

TUGUEGARAO CITY
Branch 3
Branch 10

APARRI
Branch 7

ISABELA

CITY OF ILAGAN
Branch 18

CAUAYAN CITY
Branch 40

SANTIAGO CITY
Branch 36

NUEVA VIZCAYA

BAYOMBONG
Branch 27

THIRD JUDICIAL REGION

BATAAN

BALANGA CITY
Branch 3
Branch 92

MARIVELES
Branch 95

BULACAN

MALOLOS CITY
Branch 14
Branch 15
Branch 20
Branch 21
Branch 78
Branch 81

NUEVA ECIJA

CABANATUAN CITY
Branch 25
Branch 30

GUIMBA
Branch 31

GAPAN CITY	Branch 34 Branch 35
STO. DOMINGO	Branch 89
<u>PAMPANGA</u>	
CITY OF SAN FERNANDO	Branch 41 Branch 47
GUAGUA	Branch 49 Branch 52
ANGELES CITY	Branch 58 Branch 59
<u>TARLAC</u>	
TARLAC CITY	Branch 64
<u>ZAMBALES</u>	
IBA	Branch 71
OLONGAPO CITY	Branch 74

FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION

REGION 4-A

BATANGAS

BATANGAS CITY	Branch 3 Branch 8
TANAUAN CITY	Branch 66
BALAYAN	Branch 10
LIPA CITY	Branch 12

CAVITE

CAVITE CITY	Branch 16
TAGAYTAY CITY	Branch 134

IMUS CITY Branch 22

LAGUNA

STA. CRUZ Branch 91

SAN PABLO CITY Branch 29

CALAMBA CITY Branch 35
Branch 92

QUEZON

LUCENA CITY Branch 57
Branch 58

RIZAL

ANTIPOLO CITY Branch 97
Branch 100

SAN MATEO Branch 76

MORONG Branch 80

BINANGONAN Branch 67

REGION 4-B

PALAWAN

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY Branch 49
Branch 52

FIFTH JUDICIAL REGION

ALBAY

LEGASPI CITY Branch 2
Branch 6
Branch 10

LIGAO CITY Branch 11

TABACO CITY Branch 18

CAMARINES SUR

NAGA CITY
Branch 19
Branch 61
Branch 62

LIBMANAN
Branch 29

PILI
Branch 32

IRIGA CITY
Branch 37
Branch 60

CAMARINES NORTE

DAET
Branch 39

MASBATE

MASBATE CITY
Branch 45
Branch 47

SORSOGON

SORSOGON CITY
Branch 53

SIXTH JUDICIAL REGION

AKLAN

KALIBO
Branch 5
Branch 9

ANTIQUE

SAN JOSE
Branch 12

CAPIZ

ROXAS CITY
Branch 15
Branch 17

ILOILO

ILOILO CITY
Branch 22
Branch 24
Branch 29
Branch 35

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

BACOLOD CITY	Branch 42 Branch 49 Branch 50
SAN CARLOS CITY	Branch 59

SEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION

BOHOL

TAGBILARAN CITY	Branch 47 Branch 49
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CEBU

MANDAUE CITY	Branch 55
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NEGROS ORIENTAL

DUMAGUETE CITY	Branch 33 Branch 39 Branch 42
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EIGHTH JUDICIAL REGION

LEYTE

TACLOBAN CITY	Branch 6 Branch 34
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ORMOC CITY	Branch 47
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SAMAR

CATBALOGAN CITY	Branch 29
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NINTH JUDICIAL REGION

ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE

DIPOLOG CITY	Branch 6 Branch 9
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ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR

PAGADIAN CITY

Branch 19
Branch 21

TENTH JUDICIAL REGION

AGUSAN DEL NORTE

BUTUAN CITY

Branch 2
Branch 3

BUKIDNON

MALAYBALAY CITY

Branch 8

MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL

OROQUIETA CITY

Branch 13

MISAMIS ORIENTAL

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY

Branch 17
Branch 21
Branch 41

ELEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION

DAVAO DEL NORTE

TAGUM CITY

Branch 30

DAVAO DEL SUR

DIGOS CITY

Branch 19

SOUTH COTABATO

KORONADAL CITY

Branch 43

SURALLAH

Branch 44

SARANGGANI

ALABEL

Branch 47
Branch 50

TWELFTH JUDICIAL REGION

LANAO DEL NORTE

ILIGAN CITY
Branch 3
Branch 6

LANAO DEL SUR

MARAWI CITY
Branch 10

MAGUINDANAO

COTABATO CITY
Branch 27

NORTH COTABATO

KIDAPAWAN CITY
Branch 61

MIDSAYAP
Branch 28

For purposes of this Administrative Order, the cases referred herein shall be limited to election protests and petitions for *quo warranto* involving elective municipal officials. All other election-related cases shall be raffled among the regular courts in the station.

In stations where there is only one (1) branch designated as Special Court, the election contest shall be automatically assigned to the said branch. If there are two (2) or more branches designated as Special Courts in a station, the election contest/s shall be raffled among the designated branches. All single-sala courts are considered Special Courts for the above purpose and for this reason shall give priority to these cases in their trial calendars. In multiple-sala stations where there are no Special Courts designated for the purpose, the cases shall be raffled among the regular courts therein.

The Special Courts herein designated, all single-sala courts, and the branches where the election contests are raffled in case of multiple-sala stations where there is no designated special court, shall try and decide the election contests in accordance with The 2010 Rules.

The Special Courts herein designated shall continue to be included in the raffle of cases, criminal and civil, provided that the Executive Judges of the RTCs concerned shall exclude the designated Special Courts from such raffle whenever in their judgment the caseload of these courts will prevent them from conducting the continuous trial of the election contests.

The Branches thus designated as Special Courts shall continue to perform the functions as such within the purview of this Administrative Order even after the retirement, promotion, transfer or detail of the judges appointed/designated thereat. Election contests filed after the Special Courts became vacant due to retirement, promotion, transfer or detail of the presiding/acting judge shall still be raffled/assigned to the said Special Courts. The judge designated to preside over the vacant Special Court shall take cognizance of the cases unless the Supreme Court designates another judge.


In the event of disqualification and voluntary inhibition of the judge of the designated Special Court, the following guidelines shall be observed:

- (1) Where there is only one Special Court in the station, the pairing system for multiple-sala stations subject of Circular No. 7 dated September 23, 1974, as amended, shall apply; and
- (2) Where there are more than two Special Courts in the station, the Executive Judge shall immediately assign the case by raffle to the other or another Special Court. In case the Presiding Judge of the other special court is also disqualified or inhibits himself/herself, the case shall be forwarded to the pairing judge of the Special Court which originally handled the said case. If the pairing judge is also disqualified or inhibits himself/herself, the case shall be raffled to the other regular courts. At the next raffle, an additional case shall be assigned to the disqualified or inhibiting judge/s to replace the case so removed from his/her/their court.


If the judge in a single-branch court voluntarily inhibits himself/herself, the Order of Inhibition shall be transmitted to the pairing judge who shall then hear and decide the case in the court of origin. The determination of the pairing judge shall be in accordance with Annex "A" of A.M. No. 03-8-02-SC dated February 15, 2004 (*Guidelines on the Selection and Appointment of Executive Judges and Defining their Powers, Prerogatives and Duties*). Where the pairing judge who sits in a single-branch RTC is also disqualified or voluntarily inhibits himself/herself, the matter shall be referred by the Clerk of Court to the Executive Judge of the nearest multiple-branch RTC also in accordance with Annex "A", or in his/her absence, to the Vice Executive Judge thereof for assignment by raffle among the judges in the station. However, the case shall remain in the court of origin.


This Administrative Order supersedes Administrative Order No. 149-2015, dated 24 September 2015, and shall take effect immediately.

15 January 2019


LUCAS P. BERSAMIN
Chief Justice of the Republic of the Philippines

JAN 14 2019


ANTONIO T. CARPIO
Senior Associate Justice
Chairperson, Second Division


DIOSDADO M. PERALTA
Associate Justice
Chairperson, Third Division

JAN 15 2019

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