



Republic of the Philippines  
Supreme Court  
Office of the Court Administrator  
Manila

**OCA CIRCULAR NO. 158-2018**

**TO : THE JUDGES AND CLERKS OF COURT OF THE FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS, THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF STATE PROSECUTOR, THE PUBLIC ATTORNEY'S OFFICE AND THE INTEGRATED BAR OF THE PHILIPPINES**

**SUBJECT : NON-SUSPENSION OF THE CONTINUOUS TRIAL SYSTEM IN ALL COURTS PURSUANT TO THE RESOLUTION DATED 26 JUNE 2018 IN A.M. NO. 18-03-09-SC (RE: LETTER OF SECRETARY VITALIANO N. AGUIRRE II, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RELATIVE TO THE REQUEST OF THE PROSECUTORS LEAGUE OF THE PHILIPPINES [PLP] AND THE CHIEF PROSECUTORS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES [CIPROSA])**

Pursuant to the 26 June 2018 Resolution in A.M. No. 18-03-09-SC (*Re: Letter of Secretary Vitaliano N. Aguirre II, Department of Justice Relative to the Request of the Prosecutors League of the Philippines [PLP] and the Chief Prosecutors Association of the Philippines [CIPROSA]*), the Court *En Banc* NOTED the letter of Secretary Aguirre II, but DENIED the request of the concerned PLP and CIPROSA for the suspension of the continuous trial system in all courts, the relevant portions of which are quoted hereunder as follows:

In fine, the request of the CIPROSA and the PLP to suspend the full implementation of the continuous trial system cannot be granted because the Supreme Court has no power to suspend the effectivity of the substantive law on continuous trial, which upholds the constitutional right of all persons to speedy disposition of their cases. Shortage of competent and efficient lawyers, court officers and employees in urban areas,

more so in rural areas, has been a problem since time immemorial. It is a sad commentary that the two-decade old Speedy Trial Act of 1998, which was envisioned to uphold the right of all persons to speedy, impartial and public trial, has been honored in breach more than in practice. To accept lack of prosecutors and heavy pressure of work as justification to suspend the full implementation of the continuous trial system, which has been in effect since 1990, will inevitably worsen the problems of delay in the administration of justice and court docket congestion. After all, regarded as mandatory by their very nature, "rules prescribing the time within which certain acts must be done, or certain proceedings taken, are considered absolutely indispensable to the prevention of needless delays and the orderly and speedy discharge of judicial business."

**WHEREFORE**, the Letter of Department of Justice Secretary Vitaliano N. Aguirre II relative to the request of the Prosecutors League of the Philippines and the Chief Prosecutors Association of the Philippines is duly **NOTED** and will be taken into account in the amendment or revision of Rules of Procedure, but the request for the suspension of the continuous trial system in all courts is **DENIED**. (Emphasis underlined)

For your information, guidance and strict compliance.

20 July 2018

  
**JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ**  
Court Administrator

*M. Pass.*

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