



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 252-2021

**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. 07-2019, dated 15 January 2019, designating Regional Trial Court branches as Special Courts to hear, try and decide election contests involving elective municipal officials was issued;

WHEREAS, the list in Administrative Order No. 07-2019 has to be updated because a number of municipalities have been upgraded to cities and newly-created RTCs have been organized;

WHEREAS, it is expected that election cases will be filed in courts in view of the forthcoming 09 May 2022 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

GAPAN CITY	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 Branch 117
<u>TARLAC</u>	
TARLAC CITY	Branch 64 Branch 110
PANIQUI	Branch 106
<u>ZAMBALES</u>	
IBA	Branch 71
OLONGAPO CITY	Branch 74 Branch 97

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 Branch 121
TRECE MARTIRES CITY	Branch 131

LAGUNA

STA. CRUZ	Branch 91 Branch 176
SAN PABLO CITY	Branch 29
CALAMBA CITY	Branch 35 Branch 92

QUEZON

LUCENA CITY	Branch 57 Branch 58
GUMACA	Branch 173

RIZAL

ANTIPOLO CITY	Branch 97 Branch 100 Branch 138
SAN MATEO	Branch 76 Branch 175
MORONG	Branch 80 Branch 159
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

BAROTAC VIEJO Branch 66

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

CEBU

ARGAO Branch 93

MANDAUE CITY Branch 55
Branch 84
Branch 86

BARILI Branch 96

BOGO CITY Branch 79
Branch 80

NEGROS ORIENTAL

DUMAGUETE CITY

Branch 33
Branch 39
Branch 42

EIGHTH JUDICIAL REGION

LEYTE

TACLOBAN CITY

Branch 6
Branch 34

ORMOC CITY

Branch 47

SAMAR

CATBALOGAN CITY

Branch 29

NINTH JUDICIAL REGION

ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE

DIPOLOG CITY

Branch 6
Branch 9

ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR

PAGADIAN CITY

Branch 19
Branch 21

ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY

IPIL

Branch 37

TENTH JUDICIAL REGION

AGUSAN DEL NORTE

BUTUAN CITY

Branch 2
Branch 3

BUKIDNON

Branch 8

MALAYBALAY CITY

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

POLOMOLOK

Branch 63

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 of Procedure for Municipal Election Contests.

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:

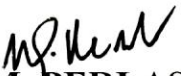
- (1) Where there is only one Special Court in the station, the pairing system for multiple-sala stations subject of Circular No. 7 dated September 23, 1974, as amended, shall apply; and
- (2) Where there are two or more Special Courts in the station, the Executive Judge shall immediately assign the 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 voluntary 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*), as amended. 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 next nearest single-branch or multiple-branch RTC of the single-branch Special Court which originally handled the inhibited case for assignment by raffle, in case of multiple-branch RTC, among the judges in the station. However, the case shall remain in the court of origin.

This Administrative Order supersedes Administrative Order No. 07-2019 dated 15 January 2019, and shall take effect immediately.

20 December 2021


ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO
Chief Justice


ESTELA M. PERLAS-BERNABE
Senior Associate Justice
Chairperson, Second Division


MARVIC M. V. F. LEONEN
Associate Justice
Chairperson, Third Division

COPY FURNISHED:

The Office of the Chief Justice, Supreme Court, Manila
The Offices of the Associate Justices, Supreme Court, Manila
The Judicial and Bar Council, Supreme Court, Manila
The Philippine Judicial Academy, Supreme Court, Manila
The Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court, Manila
The Deputy Court Administrators, Supreme Court, Manila
The Clerk of Court, Supreme Court, Manila
The Assistant Court Administrators, Supreme Court, Manila
The Legal Office, OCA, Manila
The Court Management Office, OCA, Manila
The Office of Administrative Services, OCA, Manila
The Financial Management Office, OCA, Manila
The Chief, Library, Supreme Court, Manila
The Officer-In-Charge, Official Gazette, National Printing Office, Quezon City
The Chief, EDP, Supreme Court, Manila
All Executive Judges concerned
All Judges concerned
All Clerks of Courts concerned