



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

OCA CIRCULAR NO. 71-2022

TO : ALL DESIGNATED REGIONAL TRIAL COURTS AS ANTI-TERRORISM COURTS

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER NO. 21-08-07-SC DATED 22 MARCH 2022 (*DESIGNATION OF SPECIAL COURTS TO HEAR, TRY, AND DECIDE TERRORISM CASES AND COUNTER-TERRORISM FINANCING CASES*)

Pursuant to **Administrative Matter No. 21-08-07-SC dated 22 March 2022** (*Designation of Special Courts to Hear, Try, and Decide Terrorism Cases and Counter-Terrorism Financing Cases*), the following Regional Trial Courts are hereby **DESIGNATED** to exclusively and speedily hear, try, and decided terrorism cases and counter-terrorism financing cases involving crimes punishable under Republic Act No. 11479 and Republic Act No. 10168, respectively, committed in their respective regions:

NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 77, RTC, Quezon City
Branch 266, RTC, Taguig City

FIRST JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 73, RTC, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan

SECOND JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 28, RTC, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya

THIRD JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 12, RTC, Malolos City, Bulacan

FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION

REGION 4-A

Branch 7, RTC, Batangas City, Batangas

REGION 4-B

Branch 44, RTC, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro

FIFTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 23, RTC, Naga City, Camarines Sur

SIXTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 31, RTC, Iloilo City, Iloilo

SEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 74, RTC, Cebu City, Cebu

EIGHTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 45, RTC, Tacloban City, Leyte

NINTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 33, RTC, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga Del Sur

TENTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 20, RTC, Cagayan De Oro City, Misamis Oriental

ELEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 58, RTC, General Santos City, South Cotabato

TWELFTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 1, RTC, Iligan City, Lanao Del Norte

A copy of the above-stated A.M. No. 21-08-07-SC is hereto attached as Annex "A" for reference.

Any prior circular from the Office of the Court Administrator on this matter which is contrary to the foregoing is hereby deemed superseded.

This Circular takes effect immediately.

For your information, guidance, and strict compliance.

28 March 2022


RAUL BALTIISTA VILLANUEVA
Court Administrator



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTER
NO. 21-08-07-SC**

**Re: DESIGNATION OF SPECIAL COURTS TO HEAR,
TRY AND DECIDE TERRORISM CASES AND
COUNTER-TERRORISM FINANCING CASES**

WHEREAS, Section 53, of Republic Act No. 11479, or the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020 provides that “[a]ny person charged for violations of Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12 of this ACT shall be tried in special courts created for this purpose. In this regard, the Supreme Court shall designate certain branches of the Regional Trial Courts as anti-terror courts whose jurisdiction is exclusively limited to try violations of the above mentioned provisions of this Act.”;

WHEREAS, in her letter dated 03 January 2022 to the Honorable Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo, Senior Associate Justice Estela M. Perlas-Bernabe, Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Commercial Courts, recommended that certain Regional Trial Courts (RTCs) be designated as Anti-Terrorism (AT) courts, which will be further entasked to handle Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF) cases under Republic Act No. 10168, or “The Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act of 2012.” Senior Associate Justice Perlas-Bernabe maintained that given the substantial interrelation of Republic Act No. 11479 and Republic Act No. 10168, and in the interest of judicial economy, it appears that the Court may entask the same RTCs designated as AT courts to handle CTF cases;

WHEREAS, the Court *En Banc*, in its Resolution dated 04 January 2022 in A.M. No. 21-08-07-SC, (a) approved the designation of certain RTCs as AT courts that will hear and decide terrorism cases, as well as CTF cases; and (b) directed the Office of the Court Administrator to identify and recommend the aforesaid RTCs to be designated as AT/CTF courts, and to draft the necessary resolution thereof, taking into account the letter/recommendation dated 03 January 2022 of Senior Associate Justice Perlas-Bernabe;

NOW, THEREFORE, in the interest of a speedy and efficient administration of justice, and pursuant to the Resolution dated 04 January 2022 of the Court *En Banc* in A.M. No. 21-08-07-SC, the following RTCs are hereby **DESIGNATED** to exclusively and speedily hear, try and decide terrorism cases and CTF cases involving crimes punishable under Republic Act No. 11479 and Republic Act No. 10168, respectively, committed in their respective regions:

NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 77, RTC, Quezon City
Branch 266, RTC, Taguig City

FIRST JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 73, RTC, Urdaneta City, Pangasinan

SECOND JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 28, RTC, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya

THIRD JUDICIAL REGION

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Branch 20, RTC, Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental

ELEVENTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 58, RTC, General Santos City, South Cotabato

TWELFTH JUDICIAL REGION

Branch 1, RTC, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte

The RTCs herein designated shall continue to be included in the raffle of cases, criminal and civil.

The RTCs thus designated as AT courts shall continue to perform as such even after the retirement, promotion, transfer or detail of the judges appointed/designated thereat. Terrorism cases and CTF cases filed after the AT court became vacant due to retirement, promotion, transfer or detail of the presiding/acting judge shall still be raffled/assigned to the said court. The judge designated to preside over the vacant AT court shall take cognizance of the cases unless the Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court, designates another judge.

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

- (1) where there is only one AT court in a multiple branch RTC,
 - 1.a the pairing system for multiple branch stations subject of Circular No. 7 dated September 23, 1974, as amended, shall apply;
 - 1.b. if the pairing judge is disqualified or inhibits himself/herself, the case shall be raffled to the other regular courts in the station. 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;

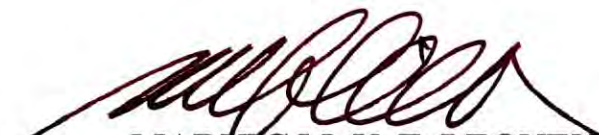
- 1.c. where all the judges in the multiple branch RTC are disqualified or voluntarily inhibit, the Clerk of Court of the branch of the judge disqualified or inhibited last, shall refer the order of inhibition to the Executive Judge of the nearest multiple branch RTC or to the nearest single branch RTC whichever is the nearest in terms of geographical location. In case the nearest court station is a multiple branch court, the Executive Judge shall raffle the case among the judges in the station. In both instances, the judge to whom the case is assigned shall try and decide the case in the court of origin;
 - 1.d. where all of the aforementioned judges of the nearest multiple branch RTC or nearest single branch RTC are disqualified or voluntarily inhibit, the Executive Judge of the said nearest multiple branch RTC or nearest single branch RTC shall inform the Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court, of the disqualification or inhibition for assignment of the case to another judge;
- (2) where there are two or more AT courts in a multiple-branch RTC,
- 2.a. the Executive Judge shall immediately assign the case by raffle to the other or another AT court;
 - 2.b. in case the Presiding Judge of the other AT court is also disqualified or inhibits himself/herself, the case shall be forwarded to the pairing judge of the AT court which originally handled the said case;
 - 2.c. if the pairing judge is also disqualified or inhibits himself/herself, the case shall be raffled to the other regular courts in the station. 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;
 - 2.d. where all the judges in the multiple branch RTC are disqualified or voluntarily inhibit, the Clerk of Court of the branch of the judge disqualified or inhibited last, shall refer the order of inhibition to the Executive Judge of the nearest multiple branch RTC or to the nearest single branch RTC whichever is the nearest in terms of geographical location. In case the nearest court station is a multiple branch court, the Executive Judge shall raffle the case among the judges in the station. In both instances, the judge to whom the case is assigned shall try and decide the case in the court of origin;

- 2.e. where all of the aforementioned judges of the nearest multiple branch RTC or nearest single branch RTC are disqualified or voluntarily inhibit, the Executive Judge of the said nearest multiple branch RTC or nearest single branch RTC shall inform the Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court, of the disqualification or inhibition for assignment of the case to another judge;
- (3) where the AT court is a single-branch RTC,
- 3.a. the Order of Inhibition shall be referred to the Executive Judge of the pairing multiple branch RTC or pairing single branch RTC. The determination of the pairing courts 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;
- 3.b. in case the pairing court is a multiple branch RTC, the Executive Judge shall raffle the case among the judges in the station. The judge of the court to which the case is assigned/raffled shall hear and decide the same in the court of the inhibiting judge; and
- 3.c. where all of the aforementioned judges of the pairing multiple branch RTC or pairing single branch RTC are disqualified or voluntarily inhibit, the Executive Judge of the said pairing multiple branch RTC or pairing single branch RTC shall inform the Office of the Court Administrator, Supreme Court, of the disqualification or inhibition for assignment of the case to another judge.


These designations shall take effect immediately and the number of designated AT courts may be increased should there be a rapid influx of terrorism cases and CTA cases, or other circumstances as determined by the Court may warrant.

22 March 2022


ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO
Chief Justice



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



ALFREDO BENJAMIN S. CAGUIOA
Associate Justice
*Acting Signatory Per SC No. 2885 dated
17 March 2022*

COPY FURNISHED:

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