

[PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 722, June 03, 1975]

AMENDING THE JUDICIARY ACT BY INCLUDING NEWLY CREATED PROVINCES IN THE SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF THE COURTS OF FIRST INSTANCE, COMMISSIONING JUDGES THEREFOR AND FIXING THEIR PERMANENT STATIONS.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 302, dated September 27, 1973, the province of Tawi-Tawi was created out of certain municipalities which were removed from the territorial jurisdiction of the province of Sulu;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 341, dated November 22, 1973, the province of Cotabato was divided into three provinces known as North Cotabato, Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat;

WHEREAS, all the existing three branches of the Court of First Instance of the undivided province of Sulu are permanently stationed in the Municipality of Jolo, and none in any of the municipalities comprising the new province of Tawi-Tawi; and of the existing four organized branches of the Courts of First Instance of the undivided province of Cotabato and Cotabato City, three branches are permanently stationed in Cotabato City and one in the Municipality of Pagalungan, now within the territory of the new province of Maguindanao; so that, there is no branch of the Court of First Instance in any municipality of the new provinces of North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat;

WHEREAS, it is necessary that, in each of the aforesaid newly created provinces without a Court of First Instance, the same court be established therein for the effective administration of justice which is essential to the political, social and economic stability of the province.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution, do hereby decree and order the amendment of Republic Act No. 296, as amended, otherwise known as the Judiciary Act of 1948 as follows:

SECTION 1. The last paragraph of Section 49 of Republic Act No. 296, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 49. *Judicial Districts.*—Judicial districts for Court of First Instance in the Philippines are constituted as follows:

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"The Sixteenth Judicial District of the Provinces of Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental and Davao del Norte, the City of Davao, the Provinces of South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and the Cities of Cotabato and General Santos, the Province of Occidental Misamis, the Cities of Ozamis and Tangub, the Province of Zamboanga del Norte and the Cities of Dapitan and Dipolog and the Province of Zamboanga del Sur, the Cities of Zamboanga and Pagadian, the Province of Basilan and the City of Basilan, the Province of Sulu and the Province of Tawi-Tawi."