

EN BANC

[G.R. No. 225973, November 08, 2016]

SATURNINO C. OCAMPO, TRINIDAD H. REPUNO, BIENVENIDO LUMBERA, BONIFACIO P. ILAGAN, NERI JAVIER COLMENARES, MARIA CAROLINA P. ARAULLO, M.D., SAMAHAN NG EXDETAINEES LABAN SA DETENSYON AT ARESTO (SELDA), REPRESENTED BY DIONITO CABILLAS, CARMENCITA M.

FLORENTINO, RODOLFO DEL ROSARIO, FELIX C. DALISAY, AND DANILO M. DELAFUENTE, * PETITIONERS, VS. REAR ADMIRAL ERNESTO C. ENRIQUEZ (IN HIS CAPACITY AS THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR RESERVIST AND RETIREE AFFAIRS, ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES), THE GRAVE SERVICES UNIT (PHILIPPINE ARMY), AND GENERAL RICARDO R. VISAYA (IN HIS CAPACITY AS THE CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES), DEFENSE SECRETARY DELFIN LORENZANA, AND HEIRS OF FERDINAND E. MARCOS, REPRESENTED BY HIS SURVIVING SPOUSE IMELDA ROMUALDEZ MARCOS, RESPONDENTS.

RENE A.V. SAGUISAG, SR., RENE A.Q. SAGUISAG, JR., RENE A.C. SAGUISAG III, INTERVENORS.

[G.R. No. 225984]

REP. EDCCEL C. LAGMAN, IN HIS PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL CAPACITIES AND AS A MEMBER OF CONGRESS AND AS THE HONORARY CHAIRPERSON OF THE FAMILIES OF VICTIMS OF INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCE (FIND); FAMILIES OF VICTIMS OF INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCE (FIND), REPRESENTED BY ITS COCHAIRPERSON, NILDA L. SEVILLA; REP. TEDDY BRAWNER BAGUILAT, JR.; REP. TOMASITO S. VILLARIN; REP. EDGAR R. ERICE; AND REP. EMMANUEL A. BILLONES, PETITIONERS, VS. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SALVADOR C. MEDIALDEA; DEFENSE SECRETARY DELFIN N. LORENZANA; AFP CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GEN. RICARDO R. VISAYA; AFP DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF REAR ADMIRAL ERNESTO C. ENRIQUEZ; AND HEIRS OF FERDINAND E. MARCOS, REPRESENTED BY HIS SURVIVING SPOUSE IMELDA ROMUALDEZ MARCOS, RESPONDENTS.

[G.R. No. 226097]

LORETTA ANN PARGAS-ROSALES, HILDA B. NARCISO, AIDA F. SANTOSMARANAN, JO-ANN Q. MAGLIPON, ZENaida S. MIQUE, FE B. MANGAHAS, MA. CRISTINA P. BAWAGAN, MILA D. AGUILAR, MINERVA G. GONZALES, MA. CRISTINA V. RODRIGUEZ, LOUIE G. CRISMO, FRANCISCO E. RODRIGO, JR., LIWAYWAY D. ARCE, AND ABDULMARI DE LEON IMAO, JR., PETITIONERS, VS. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SALVADOR C. MEDIALDEA, DEFENSE SECRETARY DELFIN LORENZANA, AFP DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF REAR ADMIRAL ERNESTO C. ENRIQUEZ, AFP CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GEN. RICARDO R. VISAYA, AND PHILIPPINE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE (PVAO) ADMINISTRATOR LT. GEN. ERNESTO G. CAROLINA (RET.), RESPONDENTS.

[G.R. No. 226116]

HEHERSON T. ALVAREZ, JOEL C. LAMANGAN, FRANCIS X. MANGLAPUS, EDILBERTO C. DE JESUS, BELINDA O. CUNANAN, CECILIA GUIDOTE ALVAREZ, REX DEGRACIA LORES, SR., ARNOLD MARIE NOEL, CARLOS MANUEL, EDMUND S. TAYAO, DANILO P. OLIVARES, NOEL F. TRINIDAD, JESUS DELA FUENTE, REBECCA M. QUIJANO, FR. BENIGNO BELTRAN, SVD, ROBERTO S. VERZOLA, AUGUSTO A. LEGASTO, JR., AND JULIA KRISTINA P. LEGASTO, PETITIONERS, VS. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY SALVADOR C. MEDIALDEA, DEFENSE SECRETARY DELFIN LORENZANA, AFP CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GEN. RICARDO R. VISAYA, AFP DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF REAR ADMIRAL ERNESTO C. ENRIQUEZ, AND PHILIPPINE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE (PVAO) OF THE DND, RESPONDENTS.

[G.R. No. 226117]

ZAIRA PATRICIA B. BANIAGA, JOHN ARVIN BUENAAGUA, JOANNE ROSE SACE LIM, JUAN ANTONIO RAROGAL MAGALANG, PETITIONERS, VS. SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE DELFIN N. LORENZANA, AFP CHIEF OF STAFF RICARDO R. VISAYA, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE PHILIPPINE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE ERNESTO G. CAROLINA, RESPONDENTS.

[G.R. No. 226120]

ALGAMAR A. LATIPH, PETITIONER, VS. SECRETARY DELFIN N. LORENZANA, SUED IN HIS CAPACITY AS SECRETARY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, LT. GEN. RICARDO R. VISAYA, IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES AND LT. GEN. ERNESTO G. CAROLINA (RET.), IN HIS CAPACITY AS ADMINISTRATOR, PHILIPPINE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE (PVAO), RESPONDENTS.

[G.R. No. 226294]

LEILA M. DE LIMA, IN HER CAPACITY AS SENATOR OF THE REPUBLIC AND AS TAXPAYER, PETITIONER, VS. HON. SALVADOR C. MEDIALDEA, DEFENSE SECRETARY DELFIN LORENZANA, AFP CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GEN. RICARDO R. VISAYA, UNDERSECRETARY ERNESTO G. CAROLINA, IN HIS CAPACITY AS PHILIPPINE VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICE (PVAO) ADMINISTRATOR AND B/GEN. RESTITUTO L. AGUILAR, IN HIS CAPACITY AS SHRINE CURATOR AND CHIEF VETERANS MEMORIAL AND HISTORICAL DIVISION AND HEIRS OF FERDINAND EDRALIN MARCOS, RESPONDENTS.

DECISION

PERALTA, J.:

In law, as much as in life, there is need to find closure. Issues that have lingered and festered for so long and which unnecessarily divide the people and slow the path to the future have to be interred. To move on is not to forget the past. It is to focus on the present and the future, leaving behind what is better left for history to ultimately decide. The Court finds guidance from the Constitution and the applicable laws, and in the absence of clear prohibition against the exercise of discretion entrusted to the political branches of the Government, the Court must not overextend its readings of what may only be seen as providing tenuous connection to the issue before it.

Facts

During the campaign period for the 2016 Presidential Election, then candidate Rodrigo R. Duterte (*Duterte*) publicly announced that he would allow the burial of former President Ferdinand E. Marcos (*Marcos*) at the *Libingan Ng Mga Bayani (LNMB)*. He won the May 9, 2016 election, garnering 16,601,997 votes. At noon of June 30, 2016, he formally assumed his office at the Rizal Hall in the Malacañan Palace.

On August 7, 2016, public respondent Secretary of National Defense Delfin N. Lorenzana issued a Memorandum to the public respondent Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (*AFP*), General Ricardo R. Visaya, regarding the interment of Marcos at the LNMB, to wit:

Subject: **Interment of the late Former President Ferdinand Marcos at LNMB**

Reference: Verbal Order of President Rodrigo Duterte on July 11, 2016.

In compliance to (*sic*) the verbal order of the President to implement his election campaign promise to have the remains of the late former President Ferdinand E. Marcos be interred at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, kindly undertake all the necessary planning and preparations to facilitate the coordination of all agencies concerned specially the provisions for ceremonial and security requirements. Coordinate closely with the Marcos family regarding the date of interment and the transport of the late former President's remains from Ilocos Norte to the LNMB.

The overall OPR for this activity will [be] the PVAO since the LNMB is under its supervision and administration. PVAO shall designate the focal person for this activity who shall be the overall overseer of the event.

Submit your Implementing Plan to my office as soon as possible.^[1]

On August 9, 2016, respondent AFP Rear Admiral Ernesto C. Enriquez issued the following directives to the Philippine Army (*PA*) Commanding General:

SUBJECT: **Funeral Honors and Service**

TO: Commanding General, Philippine Army
Headquarters, Philippine Army
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Attn: Assistant Chief of Staff for RRA, G9

1. Pursuant to paragraph 2b, SOP Number 8, GHQ, AFP dated 14 July 1992, provide services, honors and other courtesies for the late **Former President Ferdinand E. Marcos** as indicated:

- [x] Vigil - **Provide vigil**
- [x] Bugler/Drummer
- [x] Firing Party
- [x] Military Host/Pallbearers
- [x] Escort and Transportation
- [x] Arrival/Departure Honors

2. His remains lie in state at **Ilocos Norte**

3. **Interment** will take place at the **Libingan ng mga Bayani, Ft. Bonifacio, Taguig City. Date: TBAL.**

4. **Provide all necessary military honors accorded for a President**

5. POC: **Administrator, PVAO BY COMMAND OF GENERAL VISAYA**^[2]

Dissatisfied with the foregoing issuance, the following were filed by petitioners:

1. Petition for *Certiorari* and Prohibition^[3] filed by Saturnino Ocampo and several others,^[4] in their capacities as human rights advocates or human rights violations victims as defined under Section 3 (c) of Republic Act (*R.A.*) No. 10368 (*Human Rights Victims Reparation and Recognition Act of 2013*).

2. Petition for *Certiorari*-in-Intervention^[5] filed by Rene A.V. Saguisag, Sr. and his son,^[6] as members of the Bar and human rights lawyers, and his grandchild.^[7]

3. Petition for Prohibition^[8] filed by Representative Edcel C. Lagman, in his personal capacity, as member of the House of Representatives and as Honorary Chairperson of Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND), a duly-registered corporation and organization of victims and families of enforced disappearance, mostly during the martial law regime of the former

President Marcos, and several others,^[9] in their official capacities as duly-elected Congressmen of the House of Representatives of the Philippines.

4. Petition for Prohibition^[10] filed by Loretta Ann Pargas-Rosales, former Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights, and several others,^[11] suing as victims of State-sanctioned human rights violations during the martial law regime of Marcos.

5. Petition for Mandamus and Prohibition^[12] filed by Heherson T. Alvarez, former Senator of the Republic of the Philippines, who fought to oust the dictatorship of Marcos, and several others,^[13] as concerned Filipino citizens and taxpayers.

6. Petition for *Certiorari* and Prohibition^[14] filed by Zaira Patricia B. Baniaga and several others,^[15] as concerned Filipino citizens and taxpayers.

7. Petition for *Certiorari* and Prohibition^[16] filed by Algamar A. Latiph, former Chairperson of the Regional Human Rights Commission, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, by himself and on behalf of the *Moro*^[17] who are victims of human rights during the martial law regime of Marcos.

8. Petition for *Certiorari* and Prohibition^[18] filed by Leila M. De Lima as member of the Senate of the Republic of the Philippines, public official and concerned citizen.

Issues

Procedural

1. Whether President Duterte's determination to have the remains of Marcos interred at the LNMB poses a justiciable controversy.
2. Whether petitioners have *locus standi* to file the instant petitions.
3. Whether petitioners violated the doctrines of exhaustion of administrative remedies and hierarchy of courts.

Substantive

1. Whether the respondents Secretary of National Defense and AFP Rear Admiral committed grave abuse of discretion, amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction, when they issued the assailed memorandum and directive in compliance with the verbal order of President Duterte to implement his election campaign promise to have the remains of Marcos interred at the LNMB.

2. Whether the Issuance and implementation of the assailed memorandum and directive violate the Constitution, domestic and international laws, particularly:

(a) Sections 2, 11, 13, 23, 26, 27 and 28 of Article II, Section 1 of Article III, Section 17 of Article VII, Section 1 of Article XI, Section 3(2) of Article XIV, and Section 26 of Article XVIII of the 1987 Constitution;

(b) R.A. No. 289;

(c) R.A. No. 10368;

(d) AFP Regulation G 161-375 dated September 11, 2000;

(e) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

(f) The "Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law" of the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly; and

(g) The "Updated Set of Principles for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights through Action to Combat Impunity" of the U.N. Economic and Social Council;

3. Whether historical facts, laws enacted to recover ill-gotten wealth from the Marcoses and their cronies, and the pronouncements of the Court on the Marcos regime have nullified his entitlement as a soldier and former President to interment at the LNMB.

4. Whether the Marcos family is deemed to have waived the burial of the remains of former President Marcos at the LNMB after they entered into an agreement with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines as to the conditions and procedures by which his remains shall be brought back to and interred in the Philippines.

Opinion

The petitions must be dismissed.

Procedural Grounds

Justiciable controversy

It is well settled that no question involving the constitutionality or validity of a law or governmental act may be heard and decided by the Court unless the following requisites for judicial inquiry are present: (a) there must be an actual case or controversy calling for the exercise of judicial power; (b) the person challenging the act must have the standing to question the validity of the subject act or issuance; (c) the question of constitutionality must be raised at the earliest opportunity; and (d) the issue of constitutionality must be the very *lis mota* of the case.^[19] In this case, the absence of the first two requisites, which are the most essential, renders the discussion of the last two superfluous.^[20]

An "actual case or controversy" is one which involves a conflict of legal rights, an assertion of opposite legal claims, susceptible of judicial resolution as distinguished from a hypothetical or abstract difference or dispute.^[21] There must be a contrariety of legal rights that can be interpreted and enforced on the basis of existing law and jurisprudence.^[22] Related to the requisite of an actual case or controversy is the requisite of "ripeness," which means that something had then been accomplished or performed by either branch before a court may come into the picture, and the petitioner must allege the existence of an immediate or threatened injury to itself as a result of the challenged action.^[23] Moreover, the limitation on the power of judicial review to actual cases and controversies carries the assurance that the courts will not intrude into areas committed to the other branches of government.^[24] Those areas pertain to questions which, under the Constitution, are to be decided by the people in their sovereign capacity, or in regard to which full discretionary authority has been delegated to the legislative or executive branch of the government.^[25] As they are concerned with questions of policy and issues dependent upon the wisdom, not legality of a particular measure,^[26] political questions used to be beyond the ambit of judicial review. However, the scope of the political question doctrine has been limited by Section 1 of Article VIII of the 1987 Constitution when it vested in the judiciary the power to determine whether or not there has been grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality of the Government.

The Court agrees with the OSG that President Duterte's decision to have the remains of Marcos interred at the LNMB involves a political question that is not a justiciable controversy. In the exercise of his powers under the Constitution and the Executive Order (E.O.) No. 292 (otherwise known as the Administrative Code of 1987) to allow the interment of Marcos at the LNMB, which is a land of the public domain devoted for national military cemetery and military shrine purposes, President Duterte decided a question of policy based on his wisdom that it shall promote national healing and forgiveness. There being no taint of grave abuse in the exercise of such discretion, as discussed below, President Duterte's decision on that political question is outside the ambit of judicial review.

Locus standi

Defined as a right of appearance in a court of justice on a given question,^[27] *locus standi* requires that a party alleges such personal stake in the outcome of the controversy as to assure that concrete adverseness which sharpens the presentation of issues upon which the court depends for illumination of difficult constitutional questions.^[28] Unless a person has sustained or is in imminent danger of sustaining an injury as a result of an act complained of, such proper party has no standing.^[29] Petitioners, who filed their respective petitions for *certiorari*, prohibition and mandamus, in their capacities as citizens, human rights violations victims, legislators, members of the Bar and taxpayers, have no legal standing to file such petitions because they failed to show that they have suffered or will suffer direct and personal injury as a result of the interment of Marcos at the LNMB.

Taxpayers have been allowed to sue where there is a claim that public funds are illegally disbursed or that public money is being deflected to any improper purpose, or that public funds are wasted through the enforcement of an invalid or unconstitutional law.^[30] In this case, what is essentially being assailed is the wisdom behind the decision of the President to proceed with the interment of Marcos at the LNMB. As taxpayers, petitioners merely claim illegal disbursement of public funds, without showing that Marcos is disqualified to be interred at the LNMB by either express or implied provision of the Constitution, the laws or jurisprudence.

Petitioners Saguisag, *et al.*,^[31] as members of the Bar, are required to allege any direct or potential injury which the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, as an institution, or its members may suffer as a consequence of the act complained of.^[32] Suffice it to state that the averments in their petition-in-intervention failed to disclose such injury, and that their interest in this case is too general and shared by other groups, such that their duty to uphold the rule of law, without more, is inadequate to clothe them with requisite legal standing.^[33]

As concerned citizens, petitioners are also required to substantiate that the issues raised are of transcendental importance, of overreaching significance to society, or of paramount public interest.^[34] In cases involving such issues, the imminence and clarity of the threat to fundamental constitutional rights outweigh the necessity for prudence.^[35] In *Marcos v. Manglapus*,^[36] the majority opinion observed that the subject controversy was of grave national importance, and that the Court's decision would have a profound effect on the political, economic, and other aspects of national life. The *ponencia* explained that the case was in a class by itself, unique and could not create precedent because it involved a dictator forced out of office and into exile after causing twenty years of political, economic and social havoc in the country and who, within the short space of three years (from 1986), sought to return to the Philippines to die.

At this point in time, the interment of Marcos at a cemetery originally established as a national military cemetery and declared a national shrine would have no profound effect on the political, economic, and other aspects of our national life considering that more than twenty-seven (27) years since his death and thirty (30) years after his ouster have already passed. Significantly, petitioners failed to demonstrate a clear and imminent threat to their fundamental constitutional rights.

As human rights violations victims during the Martial Law regime, some of petitioners decry re-traumatization, historical revisionism, and disregard of their state recognition as heroes. Petitioners' argument is founded on the wrong premise that the LNMB is the National Pantheon intended by law to perpetuate the memory of all Presidents, national heroes and patriots. The history of the LNMB, as will be discussed further, reveals its nature and purpose as a national military cemetery and national shrine, under the administration of the AFP.

Apart from being concerned citizens and taxpayers, petitioners Senator De Lima, and Congressman Lagman, *et al.*,^[37] come before the Court as legislators suing to defend the Constitution and to protect appropriated public funds from being used unlawfully. In the absence of a clear showing of any direct injury to their person or the institution to which they belong, their standing as members of the Congress cannot be upheld.^[38] They do not specifically claim that the official actions complained of, *i.e.*, the memorandum of the Secretary of National Defense and the directive of the AFP Chief of Staff regarding the interment of Marcos at the LNMB, encroach on their prerogatives as legislators.^[39]

Exhaustion of Administrative Remedies

Petitioners violated the doctrines of exhaustion of administrative remedies and hierarchy of courts. Under the doctrine of exhaustion of administrative remedies, before a party is allowed to seek the intervention of the court, one should have availed first of all the means of administrative processes available.^[40] If resort to a remedy within the administrative machinery can still be made by giving the administrative officer concerned every opportunity to decide on a matter that comes within his jurisdiction, then such remedy should be exhausted first before the court's judicial power can be sought.^[41] For reasons of comity and convenience, courts of justice shy away from a dispute until the system of administrative redress has been completed and complied with, so as to give the administrative agency concerned every opportunity to correct its error and dispose of the case.^[42] While there are exceptions^[43] to the doctrine of exhaustion of administrative remedies, petitioners failed to prove the presence of any of those exceptions.

Contrary to their claim of lack of plain, speedy, adequate remedy in the ordinary course of law, petitioners should be faulted for failing to seek reconsideration of the assailed memorandum and directive before the Secretary of National Defense. The Secretary of National Defense should be given opportunity to correct himself, if warranted, considering that AFP Regulations G 161-375 was issued upon his order. Questions on the implementation and interpretation thereof demand the exercise of sound administrative discretion, requiring the special knowledge, experience and services of his office to determine technical and intricate matters of fact. If petitioners would still be dissatisfied with the decision of the Secretary, they could elevate the matter before the Office of the President which has control and supervision over the Department of National Defense (DND).^[44]

Hierarchy of Courts

In the same vein, while direct resort to the Court through petitions for the extraordinary writs of *certiorari*, prohibition and mandamus are allowed under exceptional cases,^[45] which are lacking in this case, petitioners cannot simply brush aside the doctrine of hierarchy of courts that requires such petitions to be filed first with the proper Regional Trial Court (RTC). The RTC is not just a trier of facts, but can also resolve questions of law in the exercise of its original and concurrent jurisdiction over petitions for *certiorari*, prohibition and mandamus, and has the power to issue restraining order and injunction when proven necessary.

In fine, the petitions at bar should be dismissed on procedural grounds alone. Even if We decide the case based on the merits, the petitions should still be denied.

Substantive Grounds

There is grave abuse of discretion when an act is (1) done contrary to the Constitution, the law or jurisprudence or (2) executed whimsically, capriciously or arbitrarily, out of malice, ill will or personal bias.^[46] None is present in this case.

I

The President's decision to bury Marcos at the LNMB is in accordance with the Constitution, the law or jurisprudence

Petitioners argue that the burial of Marcos at the LNMB should not be allowed because it has the effect of not just rewriting history as to the Filipino people's act of revolting against an authoritarian ruler but also condoning the abuses committed during the Martial Law, thereby violating the letter and spirit of the 1987 Constitution, which is a "post-dictatorship charter" and a "human rights constitution." For them, the ratification of the Constitution serves as a clear condemnation of Marcos' alleged "heroism." To support their case, petitioners invoke Sections 2,^[47] 11,^[48] 13,^[49] 23,^[50] 26,^[51] 27^[52] and 28^[53] of Article II, Sec. 17 of Art. VII,^[54] Sec. 3(2) of Art. XIV,^[55] Sec. 1 of Art. XI,^[56] and Sec. 26 of Art. XVIII^[57] of the Constitution.

There is no merit to the contention.

As the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) logically reasoned out, while the Constitution is a product of our collective history as a people, its entirety should not be interpreted as providing guiding principles to just about anything remotely related to the Martial Law period such as the proposed Marcos burial at the LNMB.

Tañada v. Angara^[58] already ruled that the provisions in Article II of the Constitution are not self-executing. Thus:

By its very title, Article II of the Constitution is a "declaration of principles and state policies." The counterpart of this article in the 1935 Constitution is called the "basic political creed of the nation" by Dean Vicente Sinco. These principles in Article II are not intended to be self executing principles ready for enforcement through the courts. They are used by the judiciary as aids or as guides in the exercise of its power of judicial review, and by the legislature in its enactment of laws. As held in the leading case of *Kilosbayan, Incorporated vs. Morato*, the principles and state policies enumerated in Article II x x x are not "self-executing provisions, the disregard of which can give rise to a cause of action in the courts. They do not embody judicially enforceable constitutional rights but guidelines for legislation."

In the same light, we held in *Basco vs. Pagcor* that broad constitutional principles need legislative enactments to implement them x x x.

x x x

The reasons for denying a cause of action to an alleged infringement of broad constitutional principles are sourced from basic considerations of due process and the lack of judicial authority to wade "into the uncharted ocean of social and economic policy making."^[59]

In the same vein, Sec. 1 of Art. XI of the Constitution is not a self-executing provision considering that a law should be passed by the Congress to clearly define and effectuate the principle embodied therein. As a matter of fact, pursuant thereto, Congress enacted R.A. No. 6713 ("*Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees*"), R.A. No. 6770 ("*The Ombudsman Act of 1989*"), R.A. No. 7080 ("*An Act Defining and Penalizing the Crime of Plunder*"), and Republic Act No. 9485 ("*Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007*"). To complement these statutes, the Executive Branch has issued various orders, memoranda, and instructions relative to the norms of behavior/code of conduct/ethical standards of officials and employees; workflow charts/public transactions; rules and policies on gifts and benefits; whistle blowing and reporting; and client feedback program.