SECOND DIVISION

[G.R. Nos. 254500 & 254503. January 29, 2026]

SPOUSES AMANCIO JUSTINIANA AND DAISY GARAY JUSTINIANA, PETITIONERS, VS. HEIRS OF FEDERICO AND FLORENTINO DOYOG, REPRESENTED BY LOURDES DENIEGA, RESPONDENTS.

[G.R. No. 254503]

HEIRS OF FEDERICO AND FLORENTINO DOYOG, REPRESENTED BY LOURDES DENIEGA, PETITIONERS, VS. ANA B. ZULUETA, RESPONDENT.

D E C I S I O N

KHO, JR., J.:

Assailed in these consolidated Petitions for Review on *Certiorari*[1] under Rule 45 of the Rules of Court are the Decision[2] dated October 28, 2019 and the Resolution[3] dated August 25, 2020 of the Court of Appeals (CA) in CA-G.R. CV No. 112097, which reversed and set aside the Decision[4] dated August 1, 2018 of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) of Sorsogon City, Branch 52, and consequently, dismissed the complaint of the Heirs of Federico and Florentino Doyog (Heirs of Doyog) for lack of legal personality and lack of jurisdiction over the subject matter of the case.

The Facts

On October 30, 2007, the Heirs of Doyog filed against Ana Beriña Zulueta (Zulueta) an action to surrender Transfer Certificate of Title (TCT) No. T-26644 with alternative remedy of cancellation of title and prayer for injunction and damages before the RTC, docketed as Civil Case No. 2007-7840. The Heirs of Doyog alleged that in 1919, their predecessor-in-interest, Romualdo Doyog (Romualdo), personally cultivated an agricultural land identified as Lot No. 2940 situated in Sorsogon City. Romualdo possessed the land in an open, continuous, adverse and public manner in the concept of an owner. In 1974, Salvacion Beriña (Salvacion) fraudulently secured a free patent and Original Certificate of Title (OCT) No. P-14846 without occupying or tilling Lot No. 2940. Zulueta then inherited Lot No. 2940 and registered it in her name under TCT No. T-26644. The Heirs of Doyog alternatively prayed for the RTC to direct Zulueta to

surrender TCT No. T-26644 or to cancel the free patent and its derivative titles and issue a new title in their names.[5]

In her Answer, Zulueta countered that the free patent, OCT No. P-14846, and TCT No. T-26644 are already incontrovertible and indefeasible since more than one year has lapsed from the issuance of the decree of registration. Zulueta traced her right over the land from her mother Luz Beriña who, in turn, inherited the lot from Salvacion.[6]

On August 17, 2010, Spouses Amancio and Daisy Justiniana (Spouses Justiniana) intervened in the case and claimed that they purchased a portion of Lot No. 2940 from the Heirs of Doyog. Spouses Justiniana argued that they are buyers in good faith and unaware of any defects in the title of the Heirs of Doyog.[7]

The RTC Ruling

In a Decision[8] dated August 1, 2018, the RTC ruled in favor of the Heirs of Doyog and Spouses Justiniana and against Zulueta, and consequently: (a) declared the Heirs of Doyog as the lawful owners of Lot No. 2940; (b) ordered Zulueta to execute a deed of conveyance in favor of the Heirs of Doyog and to surrender the owner's duplicate copy of TCT No. T-26644; (c) required Zulueta to deliver possession of Lot No. 2940 to the Heirs of Doyog who, in turn, were directed to give Spouses Justiniana the portion they purchased; and (d) ordered Zulueta to pay the Heirs of Doyog and Spouses Justiniana the amounts of PHP 25,000.00 and PHP 20,000.00 as attorney's fees, respectively, plus cost of suit.

The RTC ratiocinated that the Complaint filed by the Heirs of Doyog is in the nature of an action for reconveyance available to a lawful owner whose property was fraudulently registered in another's name. Anent the merits, the RTC adopted the findings of the Municipal Trial Court (MTC) in a previous ejectment case involving Lot No. 2940 docketed as Civil Case No. 1450. In that case, the MTC pronounced Federico and Florentino Doyog as lawful owners of Lot No. 2940 because their predecessor-in-interest, Romualdo, personally cultivated the land. The MTC likewise ruled that the free patent and OCT No. P-14846 of Salvacion are void for being products of illegal transaction. There was no instrument to prove transfer of Lot No. 2940 from Romualdo to Salvacion.

Aggrieved, Zulueta elevated the case to the Court of Appeals. Zulueta averred that a direct action is necessary to cancel OCT No. P-14846 and its derivative title TCT No. T-26644. Zulueta added that the MTC's findings in the summary ejectment case are inconclusive as to the issue of ownership.[9] Lastly, Zulueta argued that Civil Case No. 2007-7840 must be dismissed for lack of jurisdiction. Zulueta submitted Tax Declaration No. 2011-03-0013-06559 showing that Lot No. 2940 has an assessed value of PHP 14,060.00 which is outside the competence of the RTC.[10]

The CA Ruling

In a Decision[11] dated October 28, 2019, the CA reversed and set aside the RTC's judgment in Civil Case No. 2007-7840, and accordingly, dismissed the action for lack of legal personality of the Heirs of Doyog. The CA expounded that only the State, through the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), can bring an action for reversion to cancel free patent and its corresponding certificate of title. Here, the action filed by the Heirs of Doyog which seeks to surrender and cancel TCT No. T-26644 is in the nature of a reversion suit anchored on fraud in the issuance of free patent and OCT No. P-14846. As private persons, the Heirs of Doyog have no legal personality to question the free patent.

The CA explained that even assuming Civil Case No. 2007-7840 is an action for reconveyance, the Heirs of Doyog failed to allege in the complaint the assessed value of Lot No. 2940 as a jurisdictional fact. At any rate, Tax Declaration No. 2011-03-0013-06559 covering Lot No. 2940 revealed an assessed value of PHP 14,060.00 which placed the controversy within the jurisdiction of the first level courts and not the RTC.

Unsuccessful at a reconsideration,[12] Spouses Justiniana and the Heirs of Doyog filed separate Petitions for Review on *Certiorari*, respectively docketed as G.R. No. 254500 and G.R. No. 254503.

In a Resolution[13] dated December 7, 2022, this Court consolidated the Petitions in G.R. No. 254500 and G.R. No. 254503 given that they involved similar parties and common questions of law and fact; and that the consolidation will also settle the issues expeditiously and avoid multiplicity of suits and the possibility of conflicting decisions.

The Issue Before the Court

The issues for the Court's resolution are whether the CA properly characterized the complaint in Civil Case No. 2007-7840 as a reversion suit and dismissed it for lack of legal personality of the Heirs of Doyog and lack of jurisdiction over the subject matter of the case.

In their respective Petitions, the Heirs of Doyog insist that Lot No. 2940 has been removed from public domain after their predecessor Romualdo acquired the land through acquisitive prescription; while Spouses Justiniana maintain that they are buyers in good faith.[14]

In her Comment, Zulueta reiterates that the CA correctly dismissed the complaint in Civil Case No. 2007-7840 for lack of jurisdiction of the RTC and lack of legal personality of the Heirs of Doyog. The action for reversion is the proper remedy to ventilate the issue of ownership of Lot No. 2940.[15]

For its part, the OSG seeks to dismiss the consolidated Petitions because the issues raised by the Heirs of Doyog about the ownership of Lot No. 2940 and the fraudulent issuance of free patent as well as the good faith of Spouses Justiniana are questions of facts beyond the ambit of the Court's jurisdiction in a petition for review on *certiorari*. The OSG also argues that the CA correctly considered the complaint in Civil Case No.

2007-7840 as an action for reversion. The cancellation of the free patent, OCT No. P-14846, and TCT No. T-26644 will result in the reversion of Lot No. 2940 to the mass of public domain. Hence, the Heirs of Doyog have no legal personality to institute the reversion suit which is reserved only to the State.

In any event, the OSG pointed out that there was no evidence to prove that the Heirs of Doyog or their predecessor Romualdo acquired Lot No. 2940 through acquisitive prescription. Spouses Justiniana likewise cannot conveniently claim that they are buyers in good faith since they purchased a portion of Lot No. 2940 from the Heirs of Doyog who are not the registered owners of the land.[16]

The Court's Ruling

The Petitions are partly meritorious.

The Heirs of Doyog have legal personality to file the complaint in Civil Case No. 2007-7840 because it sufficiently pleaded causes of action for cancellation of free patent and certificate of title, reconveyance, and quieting of title

The allegations and character of the reliefs sought in the complaint determine the nature and cause of an action.[17] The title, caption, or heading of the complaint is not controlling and is not even an indispensable part of a pleading.[18] On this point, it bears emphasis that a reversion suit is not the same as the ordinary civil actions for cancellation of free patent and certificate of title, reconveyance, and quieting of title. The difference between these actions lies in the allegations as to the character of ownership of the realty whose title is sought to be nullified.[19]

In an action for reversion, the pertinent allegations in the complaint would admit State ownership of the disputed land. A reversion proceeding is the manner through which the State seeks to revert land to the mass of public domain and is the proper remedy when public land is fraudulently awarded and disposed of in favor of private individuals or corporations.[20] The cancellation of the grantee's title is an incident necessary to revert the land to the public domain.[21] The reversion is not automatic as the government, through the OSG, must file an appropriate action.[22] Since the land originated from a grant by the government, its cancellation is thus a matter between the grantor and the grantee.[23] It is only the State which may institute reversion proceedings.[24]

In *Gabila v. Barriga*,[25] the plaintiff admitted in his complaint that he has no right to demand the cancellation of the defendant's title because the ownership of the disputed land would revert to the public domain even if the title were cancelled. The Court held that the action was for reversion and that the only person or entity entitled to relief

would be the government. In *Spouses Padilla v. Salovino*,[26] the respondents did not allege in the complaint that the disputed land had become private prior to the grant of the title to petitioners. The respondents did not in fact assert ownership but merely aver that they are the qualified applicants for a land grant from the government. The respondents even prayed that ownership over the land should first be reconveyed to the State before it is awarded to them. The Court ruled that the action is a reversion suit which may only be instituted by the government. The respondents are similar to applicants of free patent who do not claim that the disputed land is their private property but acknowledged that it is part of the public domain. The ownership of the disputed land reverts to the State and not to the respondents even if petitioners committed fraud or misrepresentation in their application.

In contrast, the plaintiff must allege prior ownership of the disputed land to pursue an action for cancellation of free patent and certificate of title. As the case may be, the defendant's fraud or mistake must also be alleged in obtaining the free patent and certificate of title. In such a case, the nullity arises strictly not from the fraud or deceit but from the fact that the land is beyond the jurisdiction of the State to bestow and whatever patent or certificate of title obtained is consequently void *ab initio*.[27] The real party in interest is not the State but the plaintiff who alleges a pre-existing right of ownership over the disputed land even before the grant of title to the defendant.

Whereas a complaint for reconveyance is an action which admits the registration of title of another party but claims that such registration was erroneous or wrongful.[28] The free patent and the certificate of title are respected as incontrovertible. What is sought instead is the transfer of the property to its rightful and legal owner, or to one with a better right.[29] In reconveyance, all that must be alleged in the complaint are facts which admitting them to be true would entitle the plaintiffs to recover title to the disputed land, namely: (1) that the plaintiffs were the owner of the land; and (2) that the defendants had illegally dispossessed them of the same.[30]

In an action for quieting of title, the competent court is tasked to determine the respective rights of the complainants and other claimants to settle things in their proper place and to make the one who has no right to the immovable respect and not disturb the other.[31] In order that an action for quieting of title may prosper, two requisites must concur: (1) the plaintiffs or complainants have a legal or equitable title or interest in the real property subject of the action; and (2) the deed, claim, encumbrance, or proceeding claimed to be casting cloud on their title must be shown to be in fact invalid or inoperative despite its *prima facie* appearance of validity or legal efficacy.[32] The action for reconveyance is deemed converted to an action for quieting of title which is imprescriptible if the plaintiffs were in actual possession of the disputed land.[33]

In *Heirs of Kionisala v. Heirs of Dacut*,[34] the Court held that the action was one for declaration of nullity of free patent and certificate of title and reconveyance. The private respondents sufficiently pleaded that they had long been the absolute and exclusive owners and in actual possession of the disputed land. The private respondents

alleged that they were deprived of ownership when the petitioners obtained free patents and certificates of title in their names. In *Heirs of Marciano Nagano v. Court of Appeals*,[35] the private respondents filed against the petitioners an action to nullify the free patent and original certificate of title. The private respondents claimed ownership of the disputed land since 1920 for having possessed it openly, peacefully, publicly, continuously, and adversely in the concept of an owner. The Court ruled that such claim is an assertion that the land is private and could not be the subject of a free patent. It would have been entirely different if the action were for reversion which must be instituted by the government. In *Banguilan v. Court of Appeals*,[36] the petitioners adequately alleged prior ownership by virtue of their predecessor-in-interest's actual, continuous, exclusive and notorious possession. The Court held that the disputed land had been segregated from the public domain and is beyond the authority of the government to dispose. Thus, the petitioners' filing of an action for declaration of nullity of free patents and certificates of title, instead of an action for reversion, was in order.

Here, the complaint in Civil Case No. 2007-7840 filed by the Heirs of Doyog was designated as an action for the *"Surrender of TCT No. T-26644; for Cancellation with Alternative Remedy, Injunction and Damages."* As gleaned from the complaint, the Heirs of Doyog alleged that their predecessor-in-interest, Romualdo, personally cultivated Lot No. 2940 starting 1919 and became its owner through acquisitive prescription after more than 30 years of open, continuous, adverse and public possession. As such, the Heirs of Doyog alleged that Lot No. 2940 had been segregated from the public domain and cannot be subject of free patent. The Heirs of Doyog also averred that TCT No. T-26644 of Zulueta was derived from her predecessor Salvacion who fraudulently secured in 1974 a free patent and OCT No. P-14846. The Heirs of Doyog alternatively prayed to surrender or cancel the free patent and its derivative titles. *Contrary to the CA's ruling, these allegations and reliefs demonstrate ordinary civil actions for reconveyance and cancellation of free patent and certificate of title and not a reversion suit*. Moreover, the claim of open, continuous, adverse and public possession of Lot No. 2940, and its illegal inclusion in the free patent and original certificate of title of Salvacion, gave the Heirs of Doyog a cause of action for quieting of title.[37] As such, the Heirs of Doyog are the real parties in interest who clearly asserted a pre-existing right of ownership over Lot No. 2940 even before the issuance of free patent and certificates of title in favor of Salvacion and Zulueta on account of fraud and misrepresentation.

Zulueta is already estopped from questioning the RTC's jurisdiction. The case must be remanded to the CA for complete resolution on the merits of the substantive issues in Civil Case No. 2007-7840

"Jurisdiction is defined as the power and authority to hear, try, and decide a case. In order for the court or an adjudicative body to have authority to dispose of the case on the merits, it must acquire jurisdiction over the subject matter. It is axiomatic that

jurisdiction over the subject matter is conferred by law and not by the consent or acquiescence of any or all of the parties or by erroneous belief of the court that it exists. Thus, when a court or tribunal has no jurisdiction over the subject matter, the only power it has is to dismiss the action."[38]

On this score, it is settled that the remedies of cancellation of title, reconveyance, and quieting of title are real actions that involve "*title to, or possession of, real property, or any interest therein*" on which jurisdiction depends on the assessed value of the real property.[39]

The original text of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129[40] or the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980 gave the RTCs exclusive original jurisdiction *"[i]n all civil actions which involve the title to, or possession of, real property, or any interest therein, except actions for forcible entry into and unlawful detainer of lands or buildings, original jurisdiction over which is conferred upon Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts."* In 1994, Republic Act No. 7691[41] expanded the exclusive original jurisdiction of the first level courts to include *"all civil actions which involve title to, or possession of, real property, or any interest therein where the assessed value of the property or interest therein does not exceed Twenty thousand pesos (P20,000.00) or, in civil actions in Metro Manila, where such assessed value does not exceed Fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) exclusive of interest, damages of whatever kind, attorney's fees, litigation expenses and costs."* This amendment was introduced to unclog the overloaded dockets of the RTCs which would result in the speedier administration of justice. In 2021, Republic Act No. 11576[42] further expanded the exclusive original jurisdiction of the first level courts to include *"all civil actions which involve title to, or possession of, real property, or any interest therein where the assessed value of the property or any interest therein does not exceed Four hundred thousand pesos (P400,000.00) exclusive on interest, damages of whatever kind, attorneys fees, litigation expenses and costs."*

It is crucial to note that the Heirs of Doyog's complaint in Civil Case No. 2007-7840 did not contain any averment of the assessed value of Lot No. 2940. Corollarily, the silence of the complaint on such value is a ground to dismiss the action for lack of jurisdiction.[43] This omission left the RTC bereft of any basis to validly take cognizance of the case. A trial court cannot simply take judicial notice of the assessed value of a land. This proceeds from the legal dictum that jurisdiction is a matter of substantive law. It cannot be presumed or conferred on the trial court's erroneous belief that it had jurisdiction over a case.[44]

Also, the established rule is that the statute in force at the time of the commencement of the action determines the jurisdiction of the court.[45] The Heirs of Doyog filed in 2007 their complaint in Civil Case No. 2007-7840 when the prevailing law is B.P. 129 as amended by R.A. No. 7691. As discussed above, the first level courts have jurisdiction over real actions where the assessed value of the real property situated outside Metro Manila does not exceed PHP 20,000.00. In support of the dismissal of the complaint, Zulueta submitted Tax Declaration No. 2011-03-0013-06559 before the CA showing

that Lot No. 2940 has an assessed value of PHP 14,060.00. Thus, it is the first level courts and not the RTC that should hear and decide the case.

Nevertheless, Zulueta is already estopped from questioning the RTC's jurisdiction. As a general rule, estoppel does not apply to confer jurisdiction to a tribunal that has none over a cause of action. Lack of jurisdiction over the subject matter can be raised at any time.[46] Objections to jurisdiction cannot be waived and may be brought at any stage of the proceedings, even on appeal. When a case is filed with a court which has no jurisdiction over the action, the court shall *motu proprio* dismiss the case.[47] The notion that the defense of lack of jurisdiction may be waived by estoppel most prominently emerged in *Tijam v. Sibonghanoy*[48] where the Court held that parties cannot invoke the jurisdiction of a court to secure affirmative relief against their opponent and, after obtaining or failing to obtain such relief, repudiate or question that same jurisdiction, to wit:

> The facts of this case show that from the time the Surety became a quasi-party on July 31, 1948, it could have raised the question of the lack of jurisdiction of the Court of First Instance of Cebu to take cognizance of the present action by reason of the sum of money involved which, according to the law then in force, was within the original exclusive jurisdiction of inferior courts. It failed to do so. Instead, at several stages of the proceedings in the court a quo as well as in the Court of Appeals, *it invoked the jurisdiction of said courts to obtain affirmative relief and submitted its case for a final adjudication on the merits. It was only after an adverse decision was rendered by the Court of Appeals that it finally woke up to raise the question of jurisdiction*. Were we to sanction such conduct on its part, We would in effect be declaring as useless all the proceedings had in the present case since it was commenced on July 19, 1948 and compel the judgment creditors to go up their Calvary once more. *The inequity and unfairness of this is not only patent but revolting*.[49] (Emphasis supplied)

In *Martinez v. Merced*,[50] *Marquez v. Secretary of Labor*,[51] and *Centeno v. Centeno*,[52] the Court adhered to the doctrine that the parties' active participation in the actual proceedings before a court without jurisdiction will bar them from assailing such lack of jurisdiction. In *Ducat v. Court of Appeals*,[53] the Court explained that if the parties acquiesced in submitting an issue for determination by the trial court, they are estopped from questioning the jurisdiction of the same court to pass upon the issue. In *Bayoca v. Nogales*,[54] the petitioners raised the issue of lack of jurisdiction only before this Court and are now estopped considering that they actively participated in the proceedings before the trial and appellate court. In *Jimenez v. Patricia*,[55] the Court ruled that the petitioners cannot now be allowed belatedly to adopt an inconsistent posture by attacking the jurisdiction of the court to which they had submitted themselves voluntarily.

In *Cudiamat v. Batangas Savings and Loan Bank, Inc*.,[56] the Court similarly refused to apply the general rule that estoppel does not confer authority upon a court or tribunal and that lack of jurisdiction over the subject matter can be raised at any time. It established an exception when to compel the aggrieved party to refile the case would be an exercise in futility or superfluous, *viz*.:

> *While it is well-settled that lack of jurisdiction on the subject matter can be raised at any time and is not lost by estoppel by laches, the present case is an exception. To compel petitioners to re-file and relitigate their claims before the Nasugbu RTC when the parties had already been given the opportunity to present their respective evidence in a full-blown trial before the Balayan RTC which had, in fact, decided petitioners' complaint (about two years before the appellate court rendered the assailed decision) would be an exercise in futility and would unjustly burden petitioners.*
>
> The Court, in *Valenzuela v. Court of Appeals*, held that as a general rule, if there is a judicial liquidation of an insolvent bank, all claims against the bank should be filed in the liquidation proceeding. The Court in *Valenzuela*, however, after considering the circumstances attendant to the case, held that the general rule should not be applied if to order the aggrieved party to refile or relitigate its case before the litigation court would be "an exercise in futility." Among the circumstances the Court considered in that case is the fact that the claimants were poor and the disputed parcel of land was their only property, and the parties' claims and defenses were properly ventilated in and considered by the judicial court.
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> In the present case, the Court finds that analogous considerations exist to warrant the application of *Valenzuela*. Petitioner Restituto was 78 years old at the time the petition was filed in this Court, and his co-petitioner-wife Erlinda died during the pendency of the case. And, except for co-petitioner Corazon, Restituto is a resident of Ozamis City. *To compel him to appear and relitigate the case in the liquidation court-Nasugbu RTC when the issues to be raised before it are the same as those already exhaustively passed upon and decided by the Balayan RTC will be superfluous*.[57] (Emphasis supplied)

Considering the above pronouncements, we rule that the present case calls for the application of jurisdiction by estoppel. Here, Zulueta had several opportunities to question the authority of the RTC to decide the complaint, but she did not hint or even object to its competence. Zulueta actively participated in the proceedings before the RTC, tantamount to an invocation of its jurisdiction and a willingness to abide by the resolution of the case. We are mindful that *Tijam* presented extraordinary circumstances because the party invoking lack of jurisdiction did so only after 15 years and at a stage when the proceedings had already been elevated to the appellate court. This case is likewise exceptional since almost 11 years had lapsed from 2007 when the Heirs of Doyog filed their complaint in the RTC until 2018 when the adverse decision against Zuluela was rendered. Like in *Tijam*, it is now too late for Zulueta to raise the issue of

lack of jurisdiction before the CA after the parties presented their respective evidence in a full-blown trial. It would be an exercise of futility to compel the Heirs of Doyog to refile the complaint before the first level courts and relitigate their claims. Zulueta cannot now abandon the theory behind her arguments in Civil Case No. 2007-7840 and attack the authority of the RTC after receiving an adverse decision. Otherwise, the consequence is revolting as Zulueta would be allowed to make a complete mockery of the judicial system. The prudent course of action is to remand the case to the CA for complete resolution on the merits of the substantive issues in the complaint and complaint-in-intervention in Civil Case No. 2007-7840.

ACCORDINGLY, the consolidated Petitions are **GRANTED**. The Decision dated October 28, 2019 and the Resolution dated August 25, 2020 of the Court of Appeals in CA-G.R. CV No. 112097 are **SET ASIDE**. The case is **REMANDED** to the Court of Appeals for decision on the merits of the substantive issues that the parties raised in their pleadings in Civil Case No. 2007-7840.

SO ORDERED.

Leonen, SAJ. (Chairperson), Lazaro-Javier, J. Lopez, and *Villanueva, JJ*., concur.

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[1] *Rollo* (**G.R. No. 254500**), pp. 11-23; *rollo* (**G.R. No. 254503**), pp. 17-20.

[2] *Rollo* (**G.R. No. 254500**), pp. 51-60. Penned by Associate Justice Manuel M. Barrios and concurred in by Associate Justices Ronaldo Roberto B. Martin and Louis P. Acosta of the Special Seventeenth Division, Court of Appeals, Manila.

[3] *Id.* at 25-26. Penned by Associate Justice Manuel M. Barrios and concurred in by Associate Justices Ronaldo Roberto B. Martin and Louis P. Acosta of the Former Special Seventeenth Division, Court of Appeals, Manila.

[4] *Id.* at 31-49.

[5] *Id.* at 31-35.

[6] *Id.* at 36.

[7] *Id.* at 14, 37.

[8] *Id.* at 31-49.

[9] *Id.* at 84-102.

[10] *Id.* at 113-119.

[11] *Id.* at 51-60.

[12] *Rollo* (**G.R. No. 254503**), pp. 17-20.

[13] *Rollo* (**G.R. No. 254500**), pp. 163-164.

[14] *Id.* at 11-23.

[15] *Rollo* (**G.R. No. 254503**), pp. 90-91.

[16] *Rollo* (**G.R. No. 254500**), pp. 170-187; and *rollo* (**G.R. No. 254503**), pp. 101-115.

[17] **Sps. Munsalud v. National Housing Authority**, 595 Phil. 750, 765 (2008) [Per J. R.T. Reyes, Third Division].

[18] **Hernudd v. Lofgren**, 560 Phil. 477, 485 (2007) [Per J. Sandoval-Gutierrez, First Division].

[19] **Heirs of Marciano Nagano v. Court of Appeals**, 346 Phil. 724, 729-732 (1997) [Per J. Davide, Jr., First Division].

[20] **Republic v. Heirs of Meynardo Cabrera**, 820 Phil. 771, 784 (2017) [Per J. Caguioa, Second Division].

[21] **Republic v. Development Resources Corp.**, 623 Phil. 490, 493 (2009) [Per J. Abad, Second Division].

[22] **Sps. Maltos v. Heirs of Eusebio Borromeo**, 169 Phil. 598, 624 (2015) [Per J. Leonen, Second Division].

[23] **Republic v. Hachero**, 785 Phil. 784, 795 (2016) [Per J. Mendoza, Second Division].

[24] **Urquiaga v. Court of Appeals**, 361 Phil. 660, 669 (1999) [Per J. Bellosillo, Second Division].

[25] 148-B Phil. 620 (1971) [Per J. Villamor, *En Banc*].

[26] 860 Phil. 994 (2019) [Per J. J. Reyes, Jr., Second Division].

[27] **Ramirez v. Court of Appeals**, 140 Phil. 657 (1969) [Per C.J. Concepcion, *En Banc*].

[28] **Toledo v. Court of Appeals**, 165 Phil. 649, 658-659 (2015) [Per J. Jardeleza, Third Division].

[29] **Gatmaytan v. Misibis Land, Inc.**, 873 Phil. 791, 804 (2020) [Per J. Caguioa, First Division].

[30] **Zobel v. Abreu**, 98 Phil. 343, 345-346 (1956) [Per J. Labrador].

[31] **Mananquil v. Moico**, 699 Phil. 120, 122, 126-127 (2012) [Per J. Del Castillo, Second Division], *citing* **Eland Philippines, Inc. v. Garcia**, 626 Phil. 735, 758 (2010) [Per J. Peralta, Third Division]. (Further citation omitted)

[32] **Phil-Ville Development and Housing Corp. v. Bonifacio**, 666 Phil. 325, 340 (2011) [Per J. Villarama, Third Division].

[33] **Sps. Pontigon v. Heirs of Meliton Sanchez**, 801 Phil. 1042, 1063 (2016) [Per J. Perez, Third Division].

[34] 428 Phil. 249 (2002) [Per J. Bellosillo, Second Division].

[35] 346 Phil. 724 (1997) [Per J. Davide, Jr. First Division].

[36] 550 Phil. 739 (2007) [Per J. Carpio-Morales, Second Division].

[37] *See* **Mendoza v. Navarette**, 288 Phil. 1122, 1142-1143 (1992) [Per J. Davide, Jr., Third Division], *citing* **Caragay-Layno v. Court of Appeals**, 218 Phil. 685, 690-691 (1984) [Per J. Melencio-Herrera, First Division].

[38] **Velasquez, Jr. v. Lisondra Land Incorporated**, 880 Phil. 184, 192-193 (2020) [Per J. Lopez, First Division].

[39] **Heirs of Valeriano Concha, Sr. v. Sps. Lumocso**, 564 Phil. 580, 595-599 (2007) [Per C.J. Puno, First Division]. *See also* **Bank of Commerce v. Spouses San Pablo, Jr.**, 550 Phil. 805 (2007) [Per J. Chico-Nazario, Third Division].

[40] Approved on August 14, 1981.

[41] Approved on March 25, 1994.

[42] Approved on July 30, 2021.

[43] *Salvador v. Patricia, Inc.*, 799 Phil. 116, 121 (2016) [Per J. Bersamin, First Division].

[44] *Lagundi v. Bautista*, 908 Phil. 494, 505 (2021) [Per J. Leonen, Third Division]. (Citation omitted)

[45] **Anama v. Citibank, N.A.**, 822 Phil. 630, 640 (2017) [Per J. Jardeleza, First Division].

[46] **Spouses Erorita v. Spouses Dumlao**, 779 Phil. 23, 29-30 (2016) [Per J. Brion, Second Division].

[47] **Non v. Office of the Ombudsman**, 882 Phil. 962, 980 (2020) [Per J. J. Reyes, Jr., *En Banc*].

[48] 131 Phil. 556 (1968) [Per J. Dizon, *En Banc*].

[49] *Id.*

[50] 255 Phil. 871 (1989) [Per J. Gancayco, First Division].

[51] 253 Phil. 329 (1989) [Per J. Cortes, Third Division].

[52] 397 Phil. 170 (2000) [Per J. Kapunan, First Division].

[53] 379 Phil. 753, 769 (2000) [Per J. Purisima, Third Division].

[54] 394 Phil. 465 (2000) [Per J. Gonzaga-Reyes, Third Division].

[55] 394 Phil. 877, 885 (2000) [Per J. Bellosillo, Second Division].

[56] 628 Phil. 641 (2010) [Per J. Carpio Morales, First Division].

[57] *Id.* at 646-647. (Citations omitted)

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