

Title: Saturnino C. Ocampo, et al. vs. Rear Admiral Ernesto C. Enriquez, et al. (G.R. No. 225973)

Facts:

Saturnino Ocampo and several other petitioners, including recognized human rights advocates, authors, and organizations representing victims of the Martial Law regime under former President Ferdinand E. Marcos, sought to prohibit the burial of Marcos' remains at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (LNMB). They argued that such burial was contrary to Philippine laws, including Republic Act No. 10368, which recognized the human rights abuses committed during his regime, and against the public policy encapsulated in the 1987 Constitution, which repudiates dictatorship and values human dignity, fairness, and social justice.

A series of motions were filed, with petitions asserting the Duterte administration's actions to proceed with Marcos' burial at the LNMB were in violation of various legal and constitutional barriers. The Supreme Court dismissed the petitions, and President Duterte's verbal directive was carried out with Marcos interred at the LNMB on November 18, 2016—prior to the resolution of the petitioners' motions for reconsideration.

Issues:

1. Whether the various motions for reconsideration challenging the legality of the former president Marcos' burial at the LNMB have merit.
2. Whether the petitions for indirect contempt linked to the burial have merit.
3. The appropriateness of the government's response concerning the memorandums associated with the burial.
4. The application of the political question doctrine and the doctrine of separation of powers in the context of presidential decisions and acts.

Court's Decision:

The Court denied all motions for reconsideration, upholding its initial decision.

Doctrine:

The Supreme Court recognizes the principle of separation of powers, which suggests the non-justiciability of certain questions, especially those linked to acts considered within the discretionary power of the President. Unless proven otherwise, acts of the President are presumed valid unless there is a clear violation of the Constitution, law, or jurisprudence. Administrative regulations issued by executive agencies, like military regulations on burials,

are also presumptively valid, having the force of law unless set aside by the court.

Class Notes:

- The Court follows the doctrine that presidential discretion in the execution of laws is presumed valid and only subject to review in cases of grave abuse of discretion.
- The principle of locus standi requiring that a party has suffered some actual or threatened injury as a result of the government act being challenged.
- The doctrines of mootness (where a case becomes academic if no practical relief can be granted) and ripeness (where a case must present an actual, immediate threat of harm).
- The political question doctrine, which prescribes limits to judicial review based on the separation of powers principle.

Historical Background:

The case is set within the context of ongoing controversies about the Martial Law period under President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. It showcases the continuing divide between the victims of human rights abuses during this period and supporters who view Marcos as a deserving former soldier and president. The judiciary's role in addressing these divisive historical issues is part of the broader national conversation on how to remember and reconcile with the past.