

### Title: Ganal, Jr. v. People of the Philippines

### Facts:

On May 20, 2013, in Baggao, Cagayan, Prudencio Ganal, Jr. was involved in a shooting incident resulting in the death of Julwin Alvarez. Ganal fired multiple shots that caused Alvarez's death. He was charged with homicide. The incident was precipitated by a confrontation wherein Julwin, armed with stones and a knife, threatened Ganal and his family's safety. Julwin had thrown stones at the houses of Ganal and his father, attacked Ganal's father causing unconsciousness, and continued aggressive behavior despite Ganal's warning shots. Ganal subsequently surrendered to the police and was charged with homicide.

At the Regional Trial Court, Ganal admitted the killing but claimed self-defense and defense of a relative. The trial court found him guilty of homicide but acknowledged mitigating circumstances of passion, obfuscation, and voluntary surrender. Ganal appealed to the Court of Appeals, arguing self-defense and defense of a relative. The Court of Appeals upheld the trial court's decision. Ganal then filed a Petition for Review before the Supreme Court.

### Issues:

1. Whether the acts committed by Julwin constituted unlawful aggression warranting self-defense by Ganal.
2. Whether there was reasonable necessity for the means employed by Ganal.
3. Whether there was sufficient lack of provocation on Ganal's part.

### Court's Decision:

**\*\*Unlawful Aggression\*\***: The Supreme Court found that Julwin's actions indeed constituted unlawful aggression. Julwin had assaulted Ganal's father and exhibited continued aggressive behavior toward Ganal despite warning shots, establishing a real and imminent threat to Ganal and his family's safety.

**\*\*Reasonableness of Means Employed\*\***: The high court disagreed with the lower courts, finding that the means used by Ganal were reasonable given the situation. Ganal acted in immediate response to a perceived life-threatening situation, and the number of shots fired, despite being multiple, was considered as a proportionate reaction under the circumstances characterized by fear and urgency.

**\*\*Lack of Sufficient Provocation\*\***: The Court found no provocation from Ganal that

warranted Julwin's aggression. The encounter at Ganal's residence was initiated by Julwin, justifying Ganal's defensive actions.

### ### Doctrine:

The ruling reiterates the criteria for self-defense: the presence of unlawful aggression, reasonable necessity of the means employed, and lack of sufficient provocation. The reasonable necessity does not imply exact proportion but rational equivalence in the face of imminent danger judged from the standpoint of the defender at the time of the incident.

### ### Class Notes:

#### 1. **Self-Defense** (Article 11, Revised Penal Code):

- **Unlawful Aggression**: Actual or imminent and unlawful attack.
- **Reasonable Necessity**: Rational equivalence, not material commensurability.
- **Lack of Provocation**: The defender should not have provoked the aggressor.

2. **Defense of Relatives** requires the first two elements of self-defense and that the defender had no part in provoking the aggressor.

#### **Legal Provisions**:

- **Article 11, Revised Penal Code**: Defense Justifications.

#### 3. **Case Application**:

- The Supreme Court applied these elements affirming that fear assessment must be taken from the accused's perspective.

### ### Historical Background:

In recent years, the assessment of self-defense claims has been scrutinized to ensure that genuine threats to safety are catered to justifiably. This ruling comes as part of ongoing jurisprudence ensuring fair treatment under the law, emphasizing the subjective nature of self-defense evaluation in life-threatening situations.