

****Title:**** Judge Adoracion G. Angeles v. Judge Maria Elisa Sempio Diy, Administrative Matter

****Facts:****

Judge Angeles filed an administrative complaint against Judge Sempio Diy for alleged delays and misconduct in Criminal Case Nos. Q-95-61294 and Q-95-62690. The cases were submitted for decision on June 20, 2008, with initial promulgation set for September 11, 2008, and subsequently rescheduled multiple times due to purported health issues and docket volume. The final promulgation occurred on December 12, 2008, where all accused, except one, were acquitted. Angeles alleged that no proper extensions for these delays were on record.

Additionally, the delay in resolving accused SPO1 Roberto Carino's Urgent Motion for Reconsideration was questioned, as it took over six months to receive a resolution. Angeles filed a complaint asserting delays exceeded judicial timelines and alleged document falsification.

Judge Sempio Diy, in defense, provided evidence of requests for extensions granted by the Supreme Court, citing health issues and case volume as reasons for delays. She acknowledged late resolution of the motion attributed to good faith mismanagement and personal crises including threats to her safety. Judge Angeles and others exchanged subsequent motions of comment, reply, and rejoinder. The Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) recommended an administrative case re-docket and fine against Judge Sempio Diy for the delay in resolving Carino's motion.

****Issues:****

1. Did Judge Sempio Diy incur undue delay in deciding the consolidated criminal cases?
2. Was there unwarranted delay in resolving the Urgent Motion for Reconsideration?
3. Were there ethical violations or falsification of documents committed by Judge Sempio Diy?
4. What should be the appropriate sanction for any proven delays or misconduct?

****Court's Decision:****

1. ****Consolidated Cases Delay:****

- The Court found no evidence of unreasonable delay in the judgment of the consolidated cases as extensions were proven to be granted by the Supreme Court. The extension period granted extended to December 18, 2008, covering the final decision date of December 12,

2008.

2. **Motion for Reconsideration Delay:**

- The Court determined there was unreasonable delay in resolving the Urgent Motion for Reconsideration filed in January, resolved only in August 2009. The decision to await further defense pleadings was unnecessary as respondent had not properly ordered them. The death threats cited appeared irrelevant to the period of delay.

3. **Document Falsification and Ethical Breach:**

- The complaint of falsification was unsupported in Judge Sempio Diy's request for extensions. However, the delay characterized negligence, not malice, recognized as due to inadvertent management of her docket.

4. **Sanction:**

- The Court admonished Judge Sempio Diy, citing the infraction as her first due to oversight, imposing an admonishment rather than a heavier penalty.

Doctrine:

The case reaffirms the judiciary's obligation to resolve cases promptly, adhering to prescribed periods per the Constitution and judicial codes. It emphasizes the duty of judges to maintain efficient case management systems to prevent undue delays (Section 15, Article VIII, Constitution; Rule 3.05 Canon 3, Code of Judicial Conduct).

Class Notes:

- **Judicial Conduct:** Judges must decide cases within the prescribed period; efficient management is crucial (Rule 3.05, Canon 3).
- **Extensions:** Judges can request extensions but must record them diligently.
- **Doctrine Applied:** "Justice delayed is justice denied"; responsibility to reconcile procedural efficiency with rights to fair adjudication.
- **Legal Sanctions:** First-time, inadvertent infractions garner lenient measures but emphasize improved practices.

Historical Background:

This case arose during efforts to improve Philippine judiciary efficiency, reinforcing disciplinary measures and ethical adherence for judiciary officers. It illustrates endeavors to uphold public trust and accountability within the Philippine legal system.