

SC ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR NO. 09-94, June 14, 1994

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TO

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THE COURT OF APPEALS, SANDIGANBAYAN, REGIONAL TRIAL COURTS, METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURTS, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS, MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURTS, ALL MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT PROSECUTION SERVICE AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE INTEGRATED BAR OF THE PHILIPPINES.

SUBJECT

:

GUIDELINES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7691, ENTITLED "AN ACT EXPANDING THE JURISDICTION OF THE METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURTS, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURTS AND MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "JUDICIARY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980."

For the guidance of the Bench and the Bar, the following guidelines are to be followed in the implementation of Republic Act No. 7691, entitled "An Act Expanding the Jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts, Amending for the Purpose Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, Otherwise Known as the Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1960":

1. The new jurisdiction of the Regional Trial Courts, Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts in civil and criminal cases, and In cadastral and land registration cases, under Sections 19, 32, 33, and 34 of B.P. Big. 129, as amended by R.A. No. 7691, was effective on April 15, 1994, fifteen (15) days after publication in the Malaya and in the Times Journal on March 30, 1994, pursuant to Section 8 of R.A. No. 7691.
2. The exclusion of the term "damages of whatever kind" in determining the jurisdictional amount under Section 19 (8) and Section 33 (1) of B.P. Blg. 129, as amended by R.A. No. 7691, 'applies to cases where the damages are merely incidental to or a consequence of the main cause of action. However, in cases where the claim for damages is the main cause of action, or one of the. causes of action, the amount of-such claim shall be considered in determining the jurisdiction of the court.
3. The criminal jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal. Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts under Section 32 (2) of B.P. Big. 129, as amended by R.A. No. 7691, has been increased to cover offenses punishable with imprisonment not exceeding six (6) years irrespective of the amount of the fine. As a consequence, the Regional Trial Courts have no more original jurisdiction over offenses committed by public

officers and employees in relation "to their office, where the offense is punishable by more than ; four (4) years and two (2) months up to six (6) years.

4. The provisions of Section 32 (2) .of . B.P. Blg. 129, as amended by R.A. No. 7691, apply only to offenses punishable by imprisonment or fine, or both in which cases the amount of the fine is disregarded in determining the jurisdiction of the court. However, in cases where the only penalty provided by law is a fine, the amount thereof shall determine the jurisdiction of the court in accordance with the original provisions of Section 32 (2) of B.P. Blg. 129 which fixed the original exclusive jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts over offenses punishable with a fine of not more than four thousand pesos. If the amount of the fine exceeds four thousand pesos, the Regional Trial Courts shall have jurisdiction, including offenses committed by public officers and employees in relation to their office, where the amount of the fine does not exceed six thousand pesos.

However, this rule does not apply to offenses involving damage to property through criminal negligence which are under the exclusive original jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts, irrespective of the amount of the imposable fine.

Manila, June 14, 1994.

(Sgd.) ANDRES R. NARVASA

Chief Justice

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