

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Sixteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4938



Introduced by **Hon. Frederick F. Abueg**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to create a sixth (6th) Shari'a Judicial District comprising the Province of Palawan and City of Puerto Princesa, composed of one Shari'a District Court to be stationed at the City of Puerto Princesa and two Shari'a Circuit Courts to be stationed at the municipalities of Taytay in Northern Palawan and Brooke's Point in Southern Palawan.

The province is home to about 75,000 to 100,000 Filipino Muslims which is approximately 7.5% of the total provincial population of 994,340 persons, including the City of Puerto Princesa, according to the census conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO) in 2010. However, at present, it is estimated that about one million people reside in Palawan. The main Muslim ethnic groups found in Palawan which constitute said population are the Molbog, Jama Mapun, Tausug, Pangutaran, Maranao, and Yakan.

Shari'a courts are created specifically for the effective administration and enforcement of the Code of Muslim Personal Laws. Presidential Decree (P.D.) No. 1083 created five (5) Shari'a Judicial Districts that are now located in Sulu, Tawi-tawi, Zamboanga City, Marawi City, and Cotabato City. This proposed measure seeks to add another Shari'a Judicial District to cover the Province of Palawan and the City of Puerto Princesa.

Geographically speaking, the island province of Palawan is not attached to the island of Mindano where the presence of other Shari'a Judicial Districts can cater the populace thereat. Yet many of our Muslim brothers and sisters who reside in Palawan also need the judicial services of the Shari'a Courts. Traveling from Palawan to places where there exist Shari'a Courts is both uneconomical and impractical for the speedy disposition of cases as provided for in Section 16 of Article III of the 1987 Constitution, "All persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies."

The provision of one Shari'a District Court to be stationed at the City of Puerto Princesa is beneficial to all our Muslim brothers and sisters, given that Puerto Princesa City is at the heart of the province, geographically. It is within reach by both North and South residents. Moreover, the two Shari'a Circuit Courts to be stationed at the municipalities of Taytay in Northern Palawan and Brooke's Point in Southern Palawan are enablers for a more effective and efficient access to these courts.

Given that the Shari'a Courts embody the Islamic principle of justice where no person is allowed to place the law in his or her own hands, the approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



FREDERICK F. ABUEG
Representative, 2nd District of Palawan

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AN ACT

CREATING A SHARI'A JUDICIAL DISTRICT COMPRISING THE PROVINCE OF PALAWAN AND THE CITY OF PUERTO PRINCESA, FURTHER AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE ARTICLES 138, 147, AND 150 OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1083, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "CODE OF MUSLIM PERSONAL LAWS OF THE PHILIPPINES," AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 SECTION 1. There is hereby created a Sixth (6th) Shari'a Judicial District
2 comprising the Province of Palawan and the City of Puerto Princesa, composed of one
3 Shari'a District Court to be stationed at the City of Puerto Princesa and two Shari'a
4 Circuit Courts to be stationed at the municipalities of Taytay and Brooke's Point,
5 Palawan.

SECTION 2. The Supreme Court shall assign the branch numbers of the newly-created Shari'a District Court and Shari'a Circuit Courts in the 6th Shari'a Judicial District.

SECTION 3. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, in coordination with the Secretary of Justice, shall immediately include in the Court's program the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 4. The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be charged to the appropriations of the Supreme Court. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 5. Articles 138, 147, and 150 of Presidential Decree (P.D.) No. 1083, otherwise known as the "Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines," as amended, as well as other provisions that may be inconsistent herewith, are hereby deemed repealed, modified, and/or further amended accordingly.

SECTION 3. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,