

TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez and
Representative Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.*

House Bill No. 7045

EXPLANATORY NOTE

There are various indigenous groups in our country. The Cordillera peoples, also known as *Igorot*, are living in the highlands, foothills and river valleys of the Cordillera mountain ranges of Northern Luzon. *Tinguian*, *Isneg* and *Northern Kalinga* are found in the watershed areas of the Abulag, Tineg, and Chico rivers. These groups are largely swidden cultivators who depend on farming rice, root crops, and vegetables. Along the slopes of Mount Data and nearby areas are the *Bontoc*, *Sagada*, *Ifugao*, and *Southern Kalinga*. They are mainly wet-rice cultivators who grow their crops both on irrigated terraces and swidden fields. The Ibaloi and Kankanaey inhabit the southern region of the Cordillera and their subsistence economy is based on wet and dry agriculture.

The Negrito groups are the indigenous groups in Tagalog and Bikol region whose economies have depended on swidden agriculture, hunting and gathering, fishing, wage labour and trade. The Mangyans in Mindoro are clustered into the *Northern Mangyan* (*Tadyawan*, *Alangan* and *Iraya*) and the *Southern Mangyan* (*Buhid*, *Taobuid* and *Hanunuo*). A small group called *Bangon* is considered a branch of the *Taobuid*. Another small group, *Ratagnon* on Mindoro's southernmost tip, is closely related to the *Cuyonin* of Palawan. Generally, the *Mangyans* of Mindoro practice swidden agriculture combined with hunting, fishing, gathering and trade.

Mindanao is divided into *Moro* and *Lumad*. For the most part, the indigenous peoples in Mindanao basically subsist through swidden and wet rice cultivation, hunting, fishing, gathering and the trade in locally manufactured items.

Considering the distinct ways of life our indigenous groups have retained, there is a need to create courts specifically for indigenous peoples.

In view thereof, immediate approval of this Bill is sought.


RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ


MAXIMO B. RODRIGUEZ, JR.

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AN ACT
CREATING COURTS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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

Section 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared policy of the State to increase access to justice by the indigenous peoples by creating Regional Trial Courts for them.

Section 2. *Creation of Separate Courts for Indigenous Peoples.* – Regional Trial Courts for cases involving indigenous peoples are hereby created in provinces where there are some concentration of indigenous peoples.

Section 3. *Rules and Regulations.* The Supreme Court shall issue rules and regulations to implement this Act. Said rules shall be published in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Section 4. *Appropriation.* - The amount of One Billion Pesos (P1,000,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated out of any savings or unexpected balance in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated. Hereafter, it shall be included in the budget of the Judiciary in the General Appropriations Act for the corresponding fiscal year.

Section 5. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act or any part thereof be declared invalid, the other provisions, so far as they are separable from the invalid ones, shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 6. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 7. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,