



16 March 2022

**SENATOR CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE T. GO**

*Chairperson of the Committee on Sports*

Senate of the Philippines

TITLE: **IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMITTEE ON SPORTS  
JOINT WITH THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE'S  
PUBLIC HEARING ON THE CONTROVERSY  
INVOLVING FILIPINO POLE VAULTER ERNEST  
JOHN OBIENA AND THE PHILIPPINE ATHLETICS  
TRACK AND FIELD ASSOCIATION (PATAFA)**  
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SUBJECT: **Motion to Cite PATAFA's Board  
Members in Contempt**  
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Dear **Sen. Go**:

During the 07 February 2022 hearing, all parties were given the opportunity to present their sides.

- a. Mr. Obiena showed documents proving that he had transmitted payment to his Coach Vitaly Petrov,<sup>1</sup> who confirmed receiving it. Mr. Obiena admitted to the delays due to the difficulty of managing the funds, including having to convert Philippine peso to foreign currency. He presented proof that he had asked the Philippines Sports Commission (PSC) and PATAFA to directly pay his coaching fees and other expenses, as it posed quite a challenge to manage training, competing abroad, and handling administrative work at the same time.<sup>2</sup>
- b. PATAFA, on the other hand, claimed that they are doubting the authenticity of the liquidation reports submitted by Mr. Obiena covering the period of 2018 to 2021.<sup>3</sup>
- c. For its part, PSC confirmed that Mr. Obiena complied with PSC's liquidation requirements<sup>4</sup> and even offered to lead the mediation proceeding between Mr. Obiena and PATAFA.<sup>5</sup>

After more than five hours, this Honorable Committee and its members ordered that the matter at hand be settled through a mediation proceeding to be conducted by the PSC. PSC's Chairman Butch Ramirez also reiterated the assurance it had previously given to the Senate during the budget deliberations in December 2021 to resolve this issue amicably. As such, Mr. Obiena and PATAFA, through the commitment of its Chairman, Congressman Rufus B. Rodriguez,<sup>6</sup> and its President, Dr. Philip Ella Juico,<sup>7</sup> while being under oath, have agreed to participate in a mediation proceeding with the help of the PSC.

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<sup>1</sup> Transcript of Stenographic Notes (TSN) dated 7 February 2022, Committee on Sports joint with Committee on Finance Hearing, pp. 23-25. Mr. Obiena paid 90,767 euros to Coach Petrov from January 2019 to November 2021. The total amount due was only 85,000 euros, but Mr. Obiena overpaid 5,767 euros. See also Mangubat, L. (2022, January 6). A timeline of the EJ Obiena vs. Patafa rift. *Spin.ph*. <https://www.spin.ph/life/guide/a-timeline-of-the-ej-obiena-vs-patafa-rift-a1017-20220104-lfrm>

<sup>2</sup> Transcript of Stenographic Notes (TSN) dated 7 February 2022, Committee on Sports joint with Committee on Finance Hearing, pp. 47-48.

<sup>3</sup> Transcript of Stenographic Notes (TSN) dated 7 February 2022, Committee on Sports joint with Committee on Finance Hearing, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Transcript of Stenographic Notes (TSN) dated 7 February 2022, Committee on Sports joint with Committee on Finance Hearing, p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> Transcript of Stenographic Notes (TSN) dated 7 February 2022, Committee on Sports joint with Committee on Finance Hearing, pp. 136-137.

<sup>6</sup> Transcript of Stenographic Notes (TSN) dated 7 February 2022, Committee on Sports joint with Committee on Finance Hearing, pp. 175-176.

<sup>7</sup> Transcript of Stenographic Notes (TSN) dated 7 February 2022, Committee on Sports joint with Committee on Finance Hearing, p. 171.

While the mediation proceeding was set on 07 March 2022, we recently learned that on 11 February 2022, or just four (4) days after the above-captioned hearing, PATAFA filed an arbitration case against Mr. Obiena before the CAS in Switzerland.<sup>8</sup>

PATAFA's filing of the arbitration case violates this Honorable Committee's order to undergo mediation proceedings. Obviously, this Honorable Committee gave that order so that the parties can amicably settle their dispute. This Honorable Committee had intended to de-escalate the conflict so as not to prejudice the parties and Philippine sports. By filing the arbitration case, PATAFA practically and effectively closed any possibility of amicable settlement with Mr. Obiena. PATAFA escalated the conflict by giving Mr. Obiena another problem that will distract him from his training and consume his time, efforts, and resources. PATAFA even refused to endorse him, as our country's sole representative in pole vault, in the upcoming Southeast Asian Games, Asian Games, and other international athletics competitions.<sup>9</sup> This works not only against Mr. Obiena but also against Philippine sports.

PATAFA, of course, filed the arbitration case upon the approval of its Board of Directors whose members are charged with the knowledge of the letter and intent of this Honorable Committee's order. PATAFA's Board of Directors consists of the following:

- a. Philip Ella Juico;<sup>10</sup>
- b. Rommel Sytin;
- c. Agapito Capistrano;
- d. Melinda Diaz-Salcedo;
- e. Noel Silva;<sup>11</sup>
- f. Elmer Ngo,
- g. Benjamin Espiritu;
- h. Felix O. Tiukinhoy Jr.;<sup>12</sup>
- i. Josemarie Diaz;
- j. Rafaelito Villavicencio;
- k. Joseph Anton Bengzon;
- l. Jaime Villegas;
- m. Datu Yusoph Mama;
- n. Guillermo Torres Jr.;
- o. Roberto Uy; and
- p. Go Teng Kok.

Based on the foregoing, we respectfully move that this Honorable Committee cite PATAFA's Board Members in contempt<sup>13</sup> under Section 18 of the *Rules of the Senate*.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

  
**SENATOR PIA S. CAYETANO**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Finance  
and Member of the Committee on Sports*

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<sup>8</sup> Villar, J. (2022, March 2). No mediation between Obiena, PATAFA as battle shifts to arbitration court. *PhilStar*. <https://www.philstar.com/sports/2022/03/02/2164444/no-mediation-between-obiena-patafa-battle-shifts-arbitration-court>

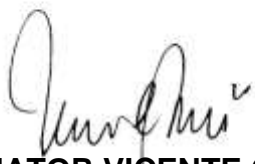
<sup>9</sup> Carandang, K. (2022, March 12). EJ Obiena to miss World Indoor Championships due to non-endorsement. *GMA News*. [https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/sports/othersports/824829/ej-obiena-to-miss-world-indoor-championships-due-to-non-endorsement/story/?just\\_in](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/sports/othersports/824829/ej-obiena-to-miss-world-indoor-championships-due-to-non-endorsement/story/?just_in)

<sup>10</sup> Attended the 07 February 2022 Senate Hearing.

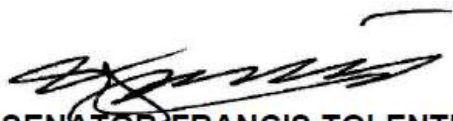
<sup>11</sup> Attended the 07 February 2022 Senate Hearing.

<sup>12</sup> Attended the 07 February 2022 Senate Hearing.

<sup>13</sup> PATAFA Chairman Rufus B. Rodriguez is not included as a matter of parliamentary courtesy since he is a member of the House of Representatives.



**SENATOR VICENTE C. SOTTO III**  
*Senate President*



**SENATOR FRANCIS TOLENTINO**  
*Member of the Committees on Sports and Finance*



**SENATOR PANFILO LACSON**  
*Member of the Committee Finance*

**Copy furnished:**

**SENATOR JUAN EDGARDO ANGARA**  
*Chairman*  
Senate Committee on Finance

**SENATOR MANNY PACQUIAO**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Sports*  
*Member of the Committee on Finance*

**SENATOR RONALD DELA ROSA**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Finance*  
*Member of the Committee on Sports*

**SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Finance*  
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**SENATOR RISA HONTIVEROS**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Finance*  
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**SENATOR BONG REVILLA**  
*Member of the Committees on Sports and Finance*

**SENATOR LEILA DE LIMA**  
*Member of the Committees on Sports and Finance*

**SENATOR CYNTHIA VILLAR**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Finance*

**SENATOR WIN GATCHALIAN**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Finance*

**SENATOR RICHARD GORDON**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Finance*

**SENATOR IMEE MARCOS**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Finance*

**SENATOR GRACE POE**  
*Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Finance*

**SENATOR NANCY BINAY**  
*Member of the Committee on Finance*

**SENATOR LITO LAPID**  
*Member of the Committee on Finance*

**SENATOR AQUILINO PIMENTEL III**  
*Member of the Committee on Finance*

**SENATOR FRANCIS PANGILINAN**  
*Member of the Committee on Finance*