Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress

Second Regular Session

Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-fourth
day of July, two thousand twenty-three.

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[REPUBLIC ACT No. 12018]

AN ACT CREATING THREE (3) ADDITIONAL SHARI'A
JUDICIAL DISTRICTS AND TWELVE (12) SHARI'A
CIRCUIT COURTS THEREIN, AND APPROPRIATING
FUNDS THEREFOR, 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
THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF BATAS PAMBANSA
BLG. 129, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "THE JUDICIARY
REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1980", AS AMENDED

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

SECTION 1. Article 138 of Presidential Decree No. 1083,
otherwise known as the "Code of Muslim Personal Laws of
the Philippines", is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Article 138. *Shari'a judicial districts.* – Eight special judicial districts, each to have one Shari'a District Court presided over by one judge, are constituted as follows:

(a) The First Shari'a District shall comprise the Province of Sulu;

(b) The Second Shari'a District, the Province of Tawi-Tawi;

(c) The Third Shari'a District, the Provinces of Basilan, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur, and the Cities of Dipolog, Pagadian and Zamboanga;

(d) The Fourth Shari'a District, the Provinces of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur, and the Cities of Iligan and Marawi;

(e) The Fifth Shari'a District, the Provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat, and the City of Cotabato;

(f) The Sixth Shari'a District, the Provinces of Bukidnon, Camiguin, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, Davao de Oro, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Davao Occidental, Sarangani, South Cotabato, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Dinagat Islands, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao del Sur, and the City of Cagayan de Oro;

(g) The Seventh Shari'a District, the Provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental, Siquijor, Biliran, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar, Samar, and Southern Leyte, and the City of Tacloban; and

(h) The Eighth Shari'a District, the National Capital Region, the City of Baguio, the Provinces of Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Quezon, Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Palawan, Romblon, Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, and Sorsogon."

SEC. 2. Article 147 of Presidential Decree No. 1083 is hereby amended as follows:

"Article 147. *Permanent stations; offices.* – (1) The Shari'a District Courts shall have their respective permanent stations in the following places:

(a) First Shari'a District, Jolo, Sulu;

(b) Second Shari'a District, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi;

(c) Third Shari'a District, Zamboanga City;

(d) Fourth Shari'a District, Marawi City;

(e) Fifth Shari'a District, Cotabato City;

(f) Sixth Shari'a District, Davao City;

(g) Seventh Shari'a District, Cebu City; and

(h) Eighth Shari'a District, Manila City.

(2) The Shari'a District Courts may hold sessions anywhere within their respective districts.

(3) The provinces, cities or municipalities concerned shall provide such courts with adequate court office, supplies and equipment in accordance with the provisions of the Judiciary Law."

SEC. 3. Article 150 of Presidential Decree No. 1083 is hereby amended as follows:

"Article 150. *Where established.* – (1) Shari'a Circuit Courts shall be established as follows:

(a) Six such courts in the Province of Sulu;

(b) Eight in the Province of Tawi-Tawi;

(c) Ten in and for the Provinces of Basilan, Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur, and the Cities of Dipolog, Pagadian, and Zamboanga;

(d) Twelve in and for the Provinces of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur and the Cities of Iligan and Marawi;

(e) Fifteen in and for the Provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat and the City of Cotabato;

(f) Five in and for the Provinces of Bukidnon, Camiguin, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, Davao de Oro, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Davao Occidental, Sarangani, South Cotabato, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Dinagat Islands, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao del Sur, and the City of Cagayan de Oro;

(g) Three in and for the Provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental, Siquijor, Biliran, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar, Samar, and Southern Leyte, and the City of Tacloban;

(h) Four in and for the cities and municipality within the National Capital Region, the City of Baguio, Provinces of Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Quezon, Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Palawan, Romblon, Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, and Sorsogon.

(2) The territorial jurisdiction of each of the Shari'a Circuit Courts shall be fixed by the Supreme Court on the basis of geographical contiguity and accessibility of the municipalities and cities concerned and their Muslim population."

SEC. 4. The staffing pattern for each new Shari'a District Court shall be composed of twelve (12) personnel, specifically: one (1) Shari'a District Court judge, one (1) clerk of court, one (1) court legal researcher, one (1) interpreter, three (3) court stenographers, one (1) sheriff, two (2) clerks, one (1) process server, and one (1) utility worker.

Each Shari'a Circuit Court shall be composed of nine (9) personnel, specifically: one (1) Shari'a Circuit Court judge, one (1) clerk of court, one (1) interpreter, three (3) court stenographers, one (1) clerk, one (1) junior process server, and one (1) utility worker.

SEC. 5. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall immediately include in the Court's program the operationalization of the newly created Shari'a Judicial Districts, Shari'a District Courts, and Shari'a Circuit Courts.

SEC. 6. The funds necessary for the implementation of this Act, including appropriations for personnel services such as salaries, benefits and emoluments for judges and court personnel, court operations under Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), and provision for hall of justice or courtrooms to accommodate judges and court staff, shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – The relevant provisions of Batas Pambansa Blg. 129, otherwise known as "The Judiciary Reorganization Act of 1980", as amended, and Presidential Decree No. 1083, otherwise known as the "Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines", as amended, and all other laws, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby amended, repealed, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,

FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ
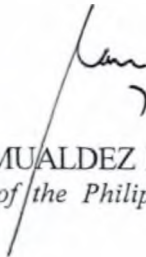*Speaker of the House
of Representatives*

FRANCIS "CHIZ" G. ESCUDERO
President of the Senate

This Act, which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 2594 and House Bill No. 8257, was passed by the Senate of the Philippines and the House of Representatives on May 21, 2024 and May 22, 2024, respectively.

REGINALD S. VELASCO
Secretary General
House of Representatives

RENATO N. BANTUG JR.
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: **AUG 1 2 2024**

FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
President of the Philippines

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