



Office of the President of the Philippines
MOVIE AND TELEVISION REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION BOARD

CONFIDENTIAL

11 July 2023

HON. FRANCIS N. TOLENTINO

Senator

SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Rooms 511 & 2, GSIS Bldg., Financial Center,

Diokno Blvd., Pasay City

tolsenate@gmail.com

Re : The MTRCB's decision regarding the alleged depiction of the "nine-dash line" in the movie "Barbie"

Dear **Senator Tolentino**:

We thank you for the trust and for extending patience to the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB or Board) regarding the film "**Barbie**."

We value the sentiments you have publicly addressed relating to this film. In view thereof, we respectfully inform your office of the actions taken by the MTRCB in coming up with a decision regarding the subject film.

Review and Consultations Conducted by the MTRCB

The film underwent two meticulous screenings with the MTRCB. The first screening involved a full review of the film including discussions and deliberations by the members of the Review Committee.

After thorough deliberations by the Review Committee, we immediately requested the film's distributors, Warner Bros., to blur the controversial lines in order to avoid further misinterpretations.

Due to the controversial nature of the film, we have also consulted with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) regarding the matter.

As such, a second screening was conducted by the Board along with the representatives from the DFA and the OSG in order to fully ascertain and determine if the said lines depict the “nine-dash line.”

We have similarly sought the opinion of a legal expert on the West Philippine Sea during the deliberations in order to gather as much resources to arrive with a fully informed decision regarding this matter.

The Controversial Scene in the Movie “Barbie”

Annex 1 shows the controversial scene in the subject film. In it, there are four dash lines on a map drawn in a child-like manner. The dashed lines appear in multiple locations within the map surrounding Europe, North America, South America, Africa and Asia.

Please note that the dash lines attached to a landmass labeled “Asia” is not U-shaped, and has eight (8) dots/dashes instead of nine (9). Moreover, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia are not visible on the map. This is in stark contrast to the maps found in the banned films “Abominable (2019)” and “Uncharted (2022)” attached to this letter as **Annex 2**.

According to Warner Bros. Film Group in an exclusive interview with *Variety* (**Annex 3**), they clarified that, “The map in Barbie Land is a child-like crayon drawing... The doodles depict Barbie’s make-believe journey from Barbie Land to the ‘real world.’” They further stated that the lines “was not intended to make any type of statement.”

We have attached Annexes 1, 2, and 3 to this letter for your perusal.

The Board’s Action

The MTRCB is firm, as per its mandate under *Presidential Decree No. 1986*, that when there is a clear portrayal in films/television of scenes injurious to the prestige of the Republic of the Philippines such as the “nine-dash line” we will not hesitate to ban said materials. Conversely, if the material does not pose such a threat, then, in the spirit of fairness and objectivity, we will not impose a ban on such materials.

The Board believes that, all things considered, it has no basis to ban the film “Barbie” as there is no clear nor outright depiction of the “nine-dash line” in the subject film, in comparison to films such as “Abominable” and “Uncharted.”

In view of the foregoing, the Review Committee has given the film a Parental Guidance (“PG”) rating which means that viewers below thirteen (13) years old must be accompanied by a parent or supervising adult.

Rest assured that the Board has exhausted all possible resources in arriving at this decision as we have not hesitated in the past to sanction filmmakers/producers/distributors for exhibiting the fictitious “nine-dash line” in their materials.

The MTRCB will continue to uphold the best interest of the Filipino people. To this end, we will issue a stern warning to all filmmakers/producers/distributors that the Board will continue to sanction, disallow, or ban films portraying any kind of depiction of the “nine-dash line.”

We would like to extend our gratitude and we hope for your continued support in our commitment to ensure quality contents that reflect Filipino values and address the ever-evolving needs of our people.

If you have any other concerns, please contact Executive Director Mamarico L. Sansarona at +639177160472, or Chief of Staff Bobby Diciembre at +639190034472.

Very truly yours,

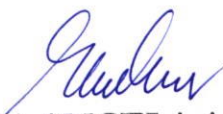


DIORELLA MARIA G. SOTTO-ANTONIO
Chairperson

REVIEW COMMITTEE



MARIA LOURDES CHOA-FAGAR,
Committee Chairperson



KATRINA ANGELA A. EBARLE,
Member



JENNIFER T. SEARES,
Member