

S. No. 2613
H. No. 9045

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress

Third Regular Session

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



[REPUBLIC ACT NO. 12304]

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS TO
SHARIAH COURTS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9997, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS
THE "NATIONAL COMMISSION ON MUSLIM
FILIPINOS ACT OF 2009"

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

SECTION 1. Section 8 of Republic Act No. 9997 is hereby
amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 8. *Powers and Functions.* – To
accomplish its mandate, the Commission shall have
the following powers and functions:

X X X

(p) Assist the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in conducting census on the actual population of Muslim Filipinos in the country;

x x x

(z) x x x

(aa) Facilitate the filing or submission of legal documents for cases filed in the Shari'ah Courts;

(bb) Promulgate such rules and regulations and exercise such powers and functions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes and objectives outlined in this Act; and

(cc) Perform such other functions as may be necessary for its effective operations and continued enhancement as a government entity."

SEC. 2. Section 11 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 11. *Bureaus.* – x x x

(g) Bureau of Legal Affairs. – The Legal Affairs Bureau shall be responsible for providing Muslim Filipinos with legal education and assistance in case of litigation involving their persons or interests; act as the legal counsel of the Commission; and investigate cases involving its personnel and submit appropriate recommendations pertaining thereto. The Bureau shall also investigate valid complaints brought before the Commission.

The Bureau shall also ensure equitable access to Shari'ah Courts. It shall, upon request, facilitate the filing or submission of pleadings and other court submissions with the proper Shari'ah Court for litigants who reside in a region where there is no existing Shari'ah Court.

The Commission shall, in coordination with the Supreme Court, establish a mechanism for the filing or submission of legal documents within the jurisdiction of the Shari'ah Circuit and District Courts, including those provided under Title VI, Chapter One of Presidential Decree No. 1083,

otherwise known as the 'Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines'. The mechanism shall be facilitated and administered by the Commission through the Bureau of Legal Affairs.

The number of personnel and legal officers necessary for the effective implementation of this subsection shall be determined by the Commission."

SEC. 3. A new section designated as Section 11-A is hereby inserted after Section 11 of the same Act to read as follows:

"SEC. 11-A. *Digital Transformation for Shari'ah Court Services.* – The Commission and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) shall, in coordination with the Supreme Court, create a digital platform that allows paperless filing of pleadings and other court submissions.

The Commission shall facilitate the paperless filing of pleadings and other court submissions. The Commission shall respect the right to privacy of the parties concerned and shall not retain any copy of the digital documents referred to herein."

SEC. 4. A new section designated as Section 17-A is hereby inserted after Section 17 of the same Act to read as follows:

"SEC. 17-A. *Statistical Data on Muslim Filipinos.* – The Commission and the PSA shall coordinate on the proper collection of statistical data for Muslim Filipinos at the national, regional, provincial, city, and municipal levels. The Commission and the PSA shall prepare an annual report which shall include the data on Muslim births, marriages, and deaths for the year based on the transmitted registered civil registry documents from local civil registry offices, Shari'ah Circuit Registrars, and the Philippine Foreign Service Posts abroad."

SEC. 5. A new section designated as Section 23-A is hereby inserted after Section 23 of the same Act to read as follows:

“SEC. 23-A. *Reportorial Requirements.* – The Secretary shall submit an annual report on the implementation of this Act to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Cultural Communities and Muslim Affairs, and the Chairperson of the House Committee on Muslim Affairs.”

SEC. 6. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Commission, in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management, the Supreme Court of the Philippines, and the PSA, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All existing laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

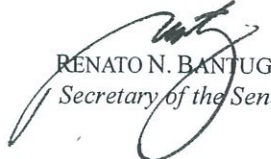
Approved,


FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ
Speaker of the House
of Representatives


FRANCIS “CHIZ” G. ESCUDERO
President of the Senate

This Act was passed by the Senate of the Philippines as Senate Bill No. 2613 on June 9, 2025 and adopted by the House of Representatives as an amendment to House Bill No. 9045 on June 10, 2025.

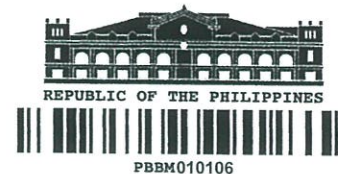

REGINALD S. VELASCO
Secretary General
House of Representatives


RENATO N. BANTUG JR.
Secretary of the Senate

Approved: **SEP 18 2025**




FERDINAND ROMUALDEZ MARCOS JR.
President of the Philippines



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