

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

EN BANC

IN RE: PETITION FOR ACCREDITATION
AS COMELEC'S CITIZEN ARM FOR THE
AUGUST 11, 2008 AUTONOMOUS
REGION FOR MUSLIM MINDANAO
(ARMM) ELECTIONS

SPP No. 08-004

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL FOR
RESPONSIBLE VOTING (PPCRV)

Promulgated: 25 June 2008

Petitioner.

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R E S O L U T I O N

Before Us is a petition filed by PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE VOTING (PPCRV for brevity) on May 20, 2008 seeking for accreditation as citizen's arm of the Commission in connection with the August 11, 2008 Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Elections.

Petitioner alleges:

- "1. Petitioner is a bona fide national parish-based, non partisan citizens' movement duly organized by and composed of civic-minded citizens drawn from the various sectors of the Philippines society mandated to help form the civic conscience of the Filipino voters and campaign for honest, meaningful and peaceful elections. It holds its office at Room 301, Pius XII Catholic Center, 1175 United Nations Avenue, Manila, where it may be served with summons and other processes of this Honorable Commission.*

BASIS OF PETITION

- 2. This petition is being filed before this Honorable Commission pursuant to Article 9 (C), Section 2 of the 1987 Constitution where it states that the Commission on Elections has the following powers:*

'(5) Register, after sufficient publication, political parties, organizations, or coalitions which, in addition to other requirements, must present their platform or program of government; and accredit citizen's arms of the Commission on Elections.' (emphasis and underscoring supplied)

- 3. The PPCRV has a mass-based constituency composed of individuals of voting age and registered voters with operating chapters based in the various parishes in provinces, cities and municipalities throughout the country, which carry out all orders, instructions and/or directives*

issued/promulgated by the PPCRV's National Executive Board (NEB). The Council's membership has grown in number as evidence by the May 2004 elections where almost 500,000 PPCRV members and volunteers from 2,670 parishes participated in poll watching and election related activities.

4. *Over the years, PPCRV has played a major role during and in-between election time by mobilizing its volunteers to man polling precincts in the country, helping safeguard the integrity of the ballot, ensuring a meaningful electoral process, and campaigning non-stop for voters' education and information on key issues.*
5. *The PPCRV was formed in October 1991 as program of the Archdiocese of Manila in preparation for the 1992 elections. From then on, Petitioner has grown to become a national movement grounded on faith, values, and authentic democracy. In subsequent elections, Petitioner has likewise managed to be accredited as a national citizen's arm. More specifically, Petitioner has been granted due accreditation in the following electoral exercises:*
 - (a) *1993, 1994, 1997 and 2002 Barangay Elections;*
 - (b) *1993 Special Elections for Governor of Bataan;*
 - (c) *1994 Special Elections for Congressman of the Second District of Rizal;*
 - (d) *1992, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004 National and Local Elections;*
 - (e) *1996 and 2002 Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Election;*
 - (f) *1997 Recall Election in Kalookan City;*
 - (g) *1999 Regional Election in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM);*
 - (h) *1999 October plebiscite on the creation of the City of Novaliches; and*
 - (i) *2000 April Recall Elections for the City Mayor of Pasay City.*
6. *Petitioner was likewise accredited as citizen's arm in connection with the General Registration and Continuing Registration, and other related activities under Republic Act. No. 8189.*
7. *For the past 16 years, the PPCRV has consistently worked and aspired for honest, clean, credible, and peaceful elections. Its unparalleled performance over the years as an accredited national citizen's arm from the above-listed electoral exercises has undoubtedly showed the strength of its mandate and its relevance in electoral exercises. It is with this view that the Petitioner seeks to be accredited anew as a national citizen's arm for purposes of the forthcoming ARMM elections on August 11, 2008 to perform, among others, voter's education, voter's assistance and poll-watching functions, and such other related activities that the Honorable Commission may direct.*
8. *Should Petitioner be accredited again as a citizen's arm, Petitioner reiterates and makes of record the following commitments:*

- a) *It is not supporting any candidate, political party, organization or coalition of political parties involved on the August 11, 2008 ARMM elections;*
 - b) *It shall remain strictly non-partisan and impartial during the entire electoral exercise;*
 - c) *It is not supported by or under the influence of any foreign government or any of its agencies or instrumentalities, or of any foreign, whether natural or juridical;*
 - d) *It shall not solicit any contribution from any foreign government or any of its agencies or instrumentalities, or from any foreign, whether natural or juridical.*
 - e) *It does not seek to achieve its objectives, goals or programs through violence or other unlawful means, nor aim to propagate any ideology opposed to the principles of the republican and democratic government, and that it will undertake to police its ranks and prevent in filtration by persons or groups of persons who may, directly or indirectly, destroy its character of non-partisanship and impartially.*
9. *In view of the foregoing, Petitioner, respectfully prays for its accreditation as a national citizen's arm in the upcoming August 11, 2008 ARMM elections."*

and prayed, to wit:

"(a) Accreditation of Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) as a national citizens arm for purposes of the forthcoming ARMM elections set on August 11, 2008;

(a) Furnish Petitioner free of charge with the Computerized Voter's List (CVLs) for the effective discharge of its responsibility particularly on the aspect of Voter's Assistance;

(b) That the copy of the Election Return (ER), Municipal Certificate of Canvass and Provincial Certificate of Canvass for the accredited citizens arm be given to Petitioner.

(c) Issuance of the necessary orders to all concerned election officers nationwide to implement the foregoing orders."

On 27 May 2008, the Commission en banc issued an Order directing, PPCRV to cause the publication of the petition in a newspaper of general circulation which reads:

“ORDER

Acting on the petition of “PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL FOR RESPONSIBLE VOTING (PPCRV)” filed on May 20, 2008 for accreditation as citizens' arm of the Commission on Elections in connection with the August 11, 2008 Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Elections, pursuant to Section 4, Rule 33 of the Comelec Rules of

Procedure, petitioner is hereby ordered to cause the publication of herein petition, together with this order in a newspaper of general circulation at its own expense.

*Let this case be set for hearing on **Thursday, 05 June 2008 at 8:30 o'clock in the morning**, at the Session Hall of the Commission, 8th Floor, Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila.*

SO ORDERED.

Given this 27th day of May 2008, Manila Philippines.

FOR THE COMMISSION:

*(Signed) JOSE A.R. MELO
Chairman”*

The hearing and reception of evidence was delegated to the Clerk of the Commission per Order dated 5 June 2008. Amb. Henrietta T. De Villa, Chairman of PPCRV and Atty. Howard M. Calleja, counsel for PPCRV, appeared. There was no oppositor present. Counsel presented for marking the following exhibits

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| Exhibit “A” - | Affidavit of Publication issued by the newspaper Business Mirror dated June 3, 2008; |
| Exhibit “A-1” - | The attached copy of the Notice and the Order as published in the newspaper Business Mirror; |
| Exhibit “A-2” - | Signature of the affiant Mr. Edwin F. Libas of the newspaper Business Mirror; |
| Exhibit “A-3” - | Second page of the affidavit of publication; |
| Exhibit “B” to “B-11 | Pages A1 to A12 of the newspaper Business Mirror dated June 3, 2008 |
| Exhibit “B-12” | Page A5 of the newspaper Business Mirror dated June 3, 2008 where the copy of the Notice and the Order were published. |

The Chairperson of the PPCRV, Former Ambassador Herietta T. De Villa was presented as witness and she testified among others, the extent of the participation of PPCRV as citizens’ arm of the Commission since 1993.

There being no other witness, counsel formally offered Exhibits “A”, “A-1” TO “A-3”, “B”, “B-1” to “B-12” including the testimony of his witness. Said exhibits were admitted in evidence per Order of the Commission dated 10 June 2008.

Upon evaluation of the records of the case, the Commission acknowledges the participation of the PPCRV during the past electoral exercises and its commitment towards clean, honest and orderly elections. Considering that the Petitioner has complied with the requirements for accreditation prescribed in Rule 33 of the Comelec Rules of procedure, the Commission hereby **RESOLVED**, as it hereby **RESOLVES** to **ACCREDIT** the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) as citizen's arm of the Commission for the 11 August 2008 ARMM Regional Election pursuant to Section 2 (5) of Article IX © of the Constitution and Section 52 (k) of the Omnibus Election Code, as amended and other election laws under the Commission's direct and immediate control and supervision, charged with the following duties, responsibilities and functions:

1. Conduct voters' orientation/education and poll watching in each voting precinct, as well as information drives on the modern election system adopted by the Commission for the ARMM elections.
2. In addition, the PPCRV is hereby authorized or designated to:
 - 2.a. Collect a hard copy of the election returns, statement of votes and certificates of canvass by the municipal or city precinct;
 - 2.b. Collect a hard copy of the legislative district/province certificates of canvass for assemblyman, vice-governor and governor supported by statement of votes by city/municipality in each legislative district/province;
 - 2.c. Collect a hard copy of the regional certificate of canvass for ARMM governor and vice-governor supported by statement of votes by legislative district/province; and
 - 2.d. Receive free of charge, the Computerized Voters List (CVLs) for the effective discharged of its responsibility particularly on the aspect, of Voters Assistance.

In addition to the conditions set above, the accreditation herein granted to the Petitioner is subject to the following conditions:

1. That it shall be subject to the direct and immediate control of the Commission and shall comply with all lawful orders of the Commission in the performance of its specific functions and activities as provided in Section 52 (k), Omnibus Election Code, and such other functions and activities which the Commission may assign to it;

2. That it shall be non-partisan and impartial during the election period;
3. That it shall not be under the influence whatsoever of any foreign government corporation, or entity and shall not solicit or receive, directly or indirectly, any contribution or aid of whatever form or nature from any foreign government, corporation or entity, and that neither shall said organization nor any of its members seek to achieve its objectives or programs through violence, or aim to propagate any ideology opposed to the principles of a republican and democratic government;
4. That it shall undertake to police its ranks and all of its affidavits and prevent infiltration by persons or group of persons who may, directly or indirectly, destroy its character of impartiality;
5. That it shall submit to the Commission the present list of its responsible officials and other officers constituting its board and there shall be no changes therein without the approval of the Commission;
6. That it shall make available to the commission its personnel, facilities, equipment, papers and effects and coordinate its activity with other accredited citizen's arms of the Commission
7. That it shall submit a weekly written report of its operations during the period of the 11 August 2008 ARMM Regional elections as well as its overall report thirty (30) days after the end of the election period; and
8. That this accreditation shall be deemed automatically revoked in case it violates any of the conditions herein set forth.

The Executive Director of this Commission in coordination with the Clerk of the Commission shall implement this Resolution immediately upon its promulgation, furnishing copies thereof to all field officers of the ARMM including the candidates and the political parties or coalition of political parties.

The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation.

SO ORDERED.

(Sgd.) **JOSE A. R. MELO**
Chairman

(Sgd.) **RENE V. SARMIENTO**
Commissioner

(Sgd.) **NICODEMO T. FERRER**
Commissioner

(Sgd.) **MOSLEMEN T. MACARAMBON**
Commissioner

CERTIFICATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the conclusions in the foregoing Resolution were reached in consultation among the members of the Commission (*En Banc*) before the case was assigned to the *ponente* of the opinion.

(Sgd.) **JOSE A. R. MELO**
Chairman