



ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR THE YEAR 2022

PREFATORY STATEMENT

"Public office is a public trust. Public officers and employees must, at all times, be accountable to the people, serve them with utmost responsibility, integrity, loyalty, and efficiency; act with patriotism and justice, and lead modest lives."¹ This tenet is inscribed in our Constitution and our laws both as a charge and reminder to all civil servants that the power held by public officials come from the people and should be used for their benefit and never for personal gains.

As the principal law office of the government mandated to extend free legal assistance to indigent persons and other qualified clients in criminal, civil, labor, administrative, and other quasi-judicial cases,² the Public Attorney's Office (PAO or Office) is entrusted with the noble, yet daunting task of representing the poor and underprivileged members of our society. It is daunting considering that 18.1% or approximately 19.99 million Filipinos live below the poverty threshold of about Php 12,030.00 per month for a family of five.³ Significantly more would qualify under the indigency requirement⁴ of the PAO that assesses individual net income, not the family income, which ranges from Php 20,000.00 to

¹ Article XI, Section 1, Constitution.

² Section 2, Republic Act No. 9406.

³ *Proportion of Poor Filipinos was Recorded at 18.1 Percent in 2021* released on 15 August 2022, accessible at <https://psa.gov.ph/poverty-press-releases/nid/167972>, last accessed on 16 January 2023.

⁴ Chapter 2, Article 3, *2021 Revised Public Attorney's Office (PAO) Operations Manual*.

Php 24,000.00 per month depending on the residence of the applicant.⁵

However, despite the overwhelming task at hand, the PAO still finds ways to remain true to its mission, and fulfill its mandate with utmost zeal and fidelity to its clients. In cooperation with other stakeholders, the PAO is able to implement programs and projects for the betterment of the Office and the clients it represents. For this, the PAO can only express its gratitude to these partners as it lightens the workload and uplifts the morale of the PAO men and women working behind the scene knowing that their work is recognized and appreciated.

After several postponements due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PAO was finally able to successfully conduct its 7th Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) - Accredited National Convention of Public Attorneys (Convention) on 10-14 October 2022 at the Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City, with the support of the National Government, thru PAO's mother department, the Department of Justice (DOJ). With around 2,400 public attorneys in attendance, it is the biggest convention ever organized by the PAO. Invited legal luminaries likewise gave their full support to the PAO by imparting their knowledge and sharing their experience in the practice of law to the participants during the five-day convention. The learnings from the Convention will definitely enrich the knowledge, and enhance the competency of public attorneys for the benefit of the clients they assist and represent.

The National Government, through the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), further expressed its support

⁵ The threshold amounts took into consideration the 2018 Family Income and Expenditure Survey, Volume I, ISHB Series No. 182, National and Regional Estimates conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority, accessible at <https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/FIES%202018%20Final%20Report.pdf>, last accessed on 28 January 2023; See also the 2021 Revised Public Attorney's Office (PAO) Operations Manual accessible at [https://pao.gov.ph/UserFiles/Public_Attorney's_Office/file/2021%20REVISED%20PAO%20OPERATIONS%20MANUAL%20FINAL%20-%20English%20Version\(1\).pdf](https://pao.gov.ph/UserFiles/Public_Attorney's_Office/file/2021%20REVISED%20PAO%20OPERATIONS%20MANUAL%20FINAL%20-%20English%20Version(1).pdf); last accessed on 28 January 2023.

to the PAO and its mission by granting the request for the partial creation of new plantilla positions. A total of 78 public attorney items and two staff items were added to the roster of the PAO, which brings it closer to its vision of achieving a 1:1 ratio of field public attorneys to courts; a worthy vision that will greatly aid in the speedy disposition of the cases to the benefit of all - the courts, counsels, and party litigants.

This year, the PAO also signed Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding with two important national government agency partners, viz.: the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the Office of the Vice President (OVP). Both provide for strengthened referral system and provision of free legal assistance to qualified persons who visit the two offices to ask for help, which falls within the jurisdiction of the PAO.

Similarly, local government units stepped up to support the PAO in its effort to bring its offices closer to the community. Through their invaluable support, 13 new district offices in various parts of the country have been created since the COVID-19 pandemic started, including the three district offices added to the list of PAO field offices this year. Moreover, PAO-Wao, Lanao del Sur District Office was able to transfer to a new two-storey office building constructed by the Provincial Government of Lanao del Sur for the exclusive use of the PAO. These developments will redound to the benefit of the clients who will find it easier and more convenient to avail of the PAO's free legal services.

In partnership with members of the Task Force *Balik-Loob*, the PAO was able to support our government's Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program aimed at helping in the reintegration of former rebels and violent extremists (FRs/FVEs) into the community. For the year 2022, the PAO handled 296 cases involving FRs/FVEs, and provide counselling, documentation, and administration of oath

services to 893 FR/FVE clients. A total of 1,323 participants also benefited from the seven legal outreach activities conducted by the PAO involving FRs/FVEs.

The support of the media also helped the PAO to extend its reach and engage its clients by giving advice and opinion on legal concerns through traditional media, and the PAO's very own online program #PALA. For this year, 816 articles were published in four partner newspapers of general circulation, and 38 episodes of #PALA spread over three seasons were aired on Facebook

The affirmation of the people's trust in the PAO as an institution, and its public attorneys as their champion in their search for justice is an inspiring news during this difficult time. As the Social Weather Stations (SWS) assessed in its survey for the Justice Sector Reform Programme: Governance in Justice II (GOJUST2), the PAO is the most trusted of the twelve justice institutions, and public attorneys obtained the highest net trust rating among the seven justice system professions. The result of the survey truly warms the heart and makes the work of the PAO even more meaningful and humbling.

In addition, the 22 awards received by the PAO in 2022, the highest number of awards received by the office in a single year, are testaments of the support and trust reposed by the people. This includes the *The Outstanding Filipino Award for Justice and Law* conferred by The Outstanding Filipino Awards (TOFIL) and the *Hero of the Year Award* from Gawad Pilipino.

With the outpouring of support and the dedication of the hardworking men and women of the PAO, the Office was able to serve **11,729,353 clients** and handle **850,753 cases** in 2022. This includes **87,577 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs)** represented by the Office who were released from detention in 2022 alone. In proportion to its **2,400 public**

attorneys, this translates to roughly **4,887:1** ratio of clients per one public attorney, and **354:1** ratio of cases per one public attorney. Moreover, the Office was able to secure **82.69% favorable disposition rate** for its cases, surpassing the 82.57% target set under the *General Appropriations Act (GAA) of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022*.

The foregoing considered, it is with great honor and pride for the undersigned to present the PAO's accomplishments for the calendar year 2022.

I. THE OFFICE

Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9406 or the PAO Law of 2007, entitled "An Act Reorganizing and Strengthening the Public Attorney's Office (PAO)," established the PAO as an independent and autonomous office attached to the DOJ *only* for the purpose of policy and program coordination (Section 2, R.A. No. 9406). Thus, the new PAO was born to be **NOT** under the control and supervision of the DOJ — in consonance with the *UNITED NATIONS (UN) Guidelines and Principles on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems*.⁶

The PAO Law of 2007 expanded the mandate of the PAO to include providing free legal services and assistance to indigent clients, other qualified persons, and in the exigency of the service, when called upon by proper government authorities, to render such service to other persons, subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations, in all criminal, civil, labor, administrative, and other quasi-judicial cases. (*Ibid*)

Since 1996, the PAO-Central Office is located at the DOJ Agencies Building, NIA Road corner East Avenue, Diliman,

⁶ accessible at https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/UN_principles_and_guidelines_on_access_to_legal_aid.pdf, last accessed on 16 January 2023; citation omitted

Quezon City. The regional and district/sub-district offices, on the other hand, are strategically located nationwide to effectively respond to indigent clients from 17 regions, 82 provinces, 147 cities, 1,487 municipalities, and 42,047 barangays;⁷ all of which have constituents who are in dire need of legal assistance.

Currently, the PAO has **17 regional offices, 339 district offices, five sub-district offices, two Regional Special and Appealed Cases Units (RSACUs) located in Cagayan de Oro City and Cebu City, and two satellite offices.** Most of these offices are situated at the halls of justice of local government units (LGUs), along with the courts, and other offices involved in the administration of justice. However, some district offices are housed at rented office spaces like the PAO-Manila District Office, and others.

II. PUBLIC ATTORNEYS, THE REGIONAL AND DISTRICT OFFICES, AND THE COURTS

Despite the high turn-over rate of public attorneys, primarily due to resignation purposely to engage in private law practice, transfer to the Judiciary, National Prosecution Service (NAPROSS), or other government agencies and government owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs), and heavy workload, among others, the PAO has a total of **2,400 public attorneys**, who actively handle criminal, civil, labor, administrative, and other quasi-judicial cases before the courts and quasi-judicial bodies nationwide.

About **106** of them devote themselves to special and appealed cases filed before the Court of Appeals (CA), the Supreme Court (SC), and the Office of the President (OP). These public attorneys are the counterparts of the lawyers from the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG). However, the

⁷ Philippine Standard Geographic Codes (PSGC) released on 8 November 2022, accessible at <https://psa.gov.ph/classification/psgc/>, last accessed on 6 January 2023

handling of cases and representation of clients in courts and other quasi-judicial bodies as above-stated is only a portion of the public attorneys' functions. They also render quasi-judicial and non-judicial services, including mediation, investigation, legal counselling, documentation, administration of oath, etc. as will be shown hereafter. All of these PAO services are available at no cost to the clients.

The number of existing offices and assigned public attorneys in each region are as follows:

REGION	DISTRICT / OTHER UNITS	NUMBER OF PUBLIC ATTORNEYS
Central Office	One Central Office (with six services)	99
National Capital Region	16	349
Cordillera Administrative Region	23	69
Region I Ilocos Region	23	137
Region II Cagayan Valley	18	107
Region III Central Luzon	36	235
Region IV-A CALABARZON	38	257
Region IV-B MIMAROPA	14 / one satellite office	65
Region V Bicol Region	29 / one sub-district	149
Region VI Western Visayas	24	165
Region VII Central Visayas	19 / one RSACU	170
Region VIII Eastern Visayas	26	132
Region IX-A BARMM	5 / one sub-district	47
Region IX-B Zamboanga Peninsula	15 / one satellite office	99
Region X	19 / one RSACU &	106

Northern Mindanao	three sub-district offices	
Region XI Davao Region	14	72
Region XII SOCCSKSARGEN	12	89
Region XIII CARAGA	12	53
TOTAL	370[*]	2,400

Table No. 1

The establishment of district offices in different regions of the country complements the agency's mission to provide all indigent and qualified litigants, wherever they may be, free access to courts and quasi-judicial agencies by rendering legal assistance without cost. The PAO envisions the establishment of adequate district offices to enhance the accessibility of its services to its clients so that justice could efficiently be delivered despite geographical fragmentation. For the year 2022, three district offices were created to extend the reach of the office.

III. SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. CLIENTS ASSISTED AND CASES HANDLED

The statistical figures below show the total number of indigent and other qualified clients assisted and the total number of cases (judicial and quasi-judicial) handled by the PAO and its proportionate relation to the **2,400 lawyers** for the period covering January to December 2022.

Total No. of Clients Assisted	11,729,353
Total No. of Cases Handled	850,753
Average No. of Clients Assisted by Each Lawyer	4,887
Average No. of Cases Handled by Each Lawyer	354

Table No. 2

^{*} Including the 17 regional offices

2. ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOME AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In line with R.A. No. 11639 or the General Appropriations Act for FY 2022, the PAO adopted the following organizational outcomes and performance indicators with positive results, to wit:

Organizational Outcome: Accessible, efficient, and effective legal service to indigents and other qualified persons assured.

PUBLIC LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	FY 2022 TARGETS	FY 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS
A. Outcome Indicators:		
1. Number of available lawyer's time spent for each service	24 hours	24 hours
2. Percentage of cases, including the appealed cases, that were favorably disposed	82.57%	82.69% (288,752/349,185)
3. Public attorney to court ratio	1:1	1:2*
B. Output Indicators:		
1. Percentage of hearings for which no postponement is sought by the PAO legal representative	100%	100.00% (789,542/789,542)
2. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) success rate	92.92%	91.35%** (23,898/26,162)
3. Percentage of request for non-judicial assistance	100%	100% (4,009,026/4,009,026)

that are acted upon within two hours		
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Table No. 3

- * There are **2,505** authorized positions for public attorney *vis-a-vis* **2,504** organized courts reported by the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) of the Supreme Court as of 31 May 2022. Note that the number of organized courts (2,504) reported by the OCA only includes the first and second level courts. It does not include the appellate and other special courts, such as the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and *Sandiganbayan*, as well as the various quasi-judicial bodies that adjudicate and resolve legal issues between opposing parties, including the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) and its various regional arbitration branches nationwide, National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM), Professional Regulation Commission (PRC), etc.

Considering that there are no additional plantilla items for the said appellate courts, NLRC, and other quasi-judicial bodies, which equally require legal representation from the PAO, the public attorneys in the field offices nationwide are still overworked. This results in the exodus of a number of public attorneys who could no longer withstand the heavy burden of handling cases not only in courts, but also in quasi-judicial bodies.

To the dismay of most of the public attorneys, whenever the Congress creates additional courts, there is no automatic creation by the DBM of **additional public attorney and staff plantilla items** as counterpart thereof. However, Section 7 of R.A. No. 9406 (PAO Law), a mandatory provision, states that:

SEC. 7. Ratio of Public Attorney's Position to an Organized Sala. - There shall be a ***corresponding number of public attorney's positions*** at the ratio of one public attorney to

an organized sala and the corresponding administrative and support staff thereto.

With the expanded mandate of the PAO, it is imperative to assign public attorneys to handle such cases pending before the appellate and other special courts, and quasi-judicial agencies, as well as to appear in other special interest cases; for instance, the ones assigned at the Executive Support Staff (ESS), Legal Research Service (LRS), Field Operations and Statistics Service (FOSS), and Special and Appealed Cases Service (SACS) at the PAO Central Office, as well as those assigned at the Regional Special and Appealed Cases Units (RSACUs) in Cebu City and Cagayan de Oro City. Those handling appeals serve as the counterparts of the solicitors from the Office of the Solicitor General, while those appearing before the *Sandiganbayan* serve as the counterparts of the prosecutors from the Office of the Ombudsman. To be clear, these public attorneys are assigned to handle cases in courts or quasi-judicial agencies that are not included in the number of courts reported by the OCA.

Given the current number of public attorneys *vis-a-vis* the combined courts and quasi-judicial agencies wherein the PAO represents indigent and other qualified clients, it is clear that additional plantilla positions are needed in order to realize the intent behind the 1:1 ratio of public attorneys to courts aspired under the GAA and prescribed by the PAO Law.

** The persistence of the pandemic made it especially difficult for the PAO to achieve a 92.92% ADR success rate primarily because the mediation and conciliation service of the PAO is essentially a face-to-face service, which is hampered by IATF protocols. Specifically, the difficulties encountered by the Office are as follows:

- 1) There are fewer cases set for mediation for the year 2022 due to the lockdowns, movement/travel

restrictions, and observance of physical distancing rules. With fewer cases set for mediation, there are less opportunities for public attorneys to encourage disputing parties to settle;

- 2) The lack of ample office space in various district offices of the PAO also bars the conduct of mediation and conciliation. In some district offices, clients even had to be assisted outside the office (in booths or through windows) due to limited office space. Note that there will be at least three (3) parties in a mediation meeting (the public attorney, complainant, and respondent) so ample space is required in order to comply with physical distancing rules;
- 3) There is a minimal turnout or attendance in scheduled mediation proceedings since the pandemic started. Mediation is set by sending out a notice to the adverse party inviting him or her to come to the office. Per internal procedure, the public attorney may send three notices but if the adverse party will not appear or will refuse to settle, then the proceedings will be terminated (as unsuccessful) and the next appropriate legal course of action will be taken. The PAO can only surmise that the pandemic discourages the adverse party to heed the notice and attend the mediation for fear of his or her health and safety. Note that the PAO has no power to compel the adverse party to attend the mediation. It can only invite the adverse party who is free to accept or refuse the invitation;
- 4) Transition to the use of internet and information technology (IT) cannot be effectively taken due to the limited resources of the indigent clients and their oftentimes limited access and knowledge on using the internet, especially those who live in far flung areas. The resources and capacity of the adverse party is also

a concern as both parties must be technologically capable for online or remote mediation to work; and,

- 5) Mediation requires a human element. To be effective, a mediator must not only be competent, but must also build rapport with both parties. This is difficult to do if you have to distance yourself, limit speech, or if the mediation will be conducted online to comply with physical distancing rules.

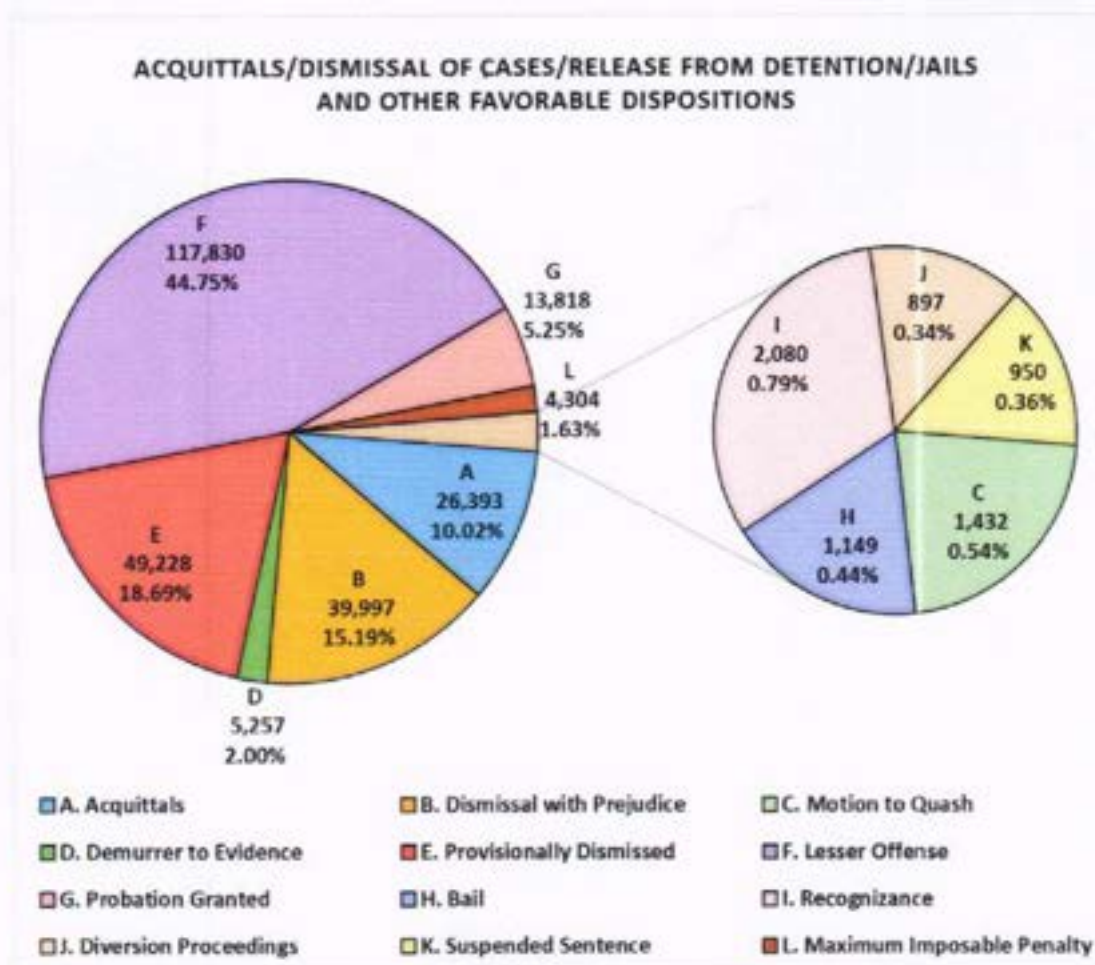
As a result of the foregoing, the number of cases set for mediation was reduced from 161,891 in 2019 (pre-COVID year) to 60,641 in 2022. Correspondingly, the number and percentage of successful mediation likewise fell. Nonetheless, for the first time since the pandemic started, the number of cases set for mediation increased from 53,171 in 2021 to 60,641 in 2022. The ADR success rate also increased from 89.43% in 2021 to 91.35% in 2022. Although the result is still below the target, it shows that the PAO is on its way to achieving its target, owing to improving conditions and the continuous training of public attorneys in the field of ADR.

- **CLIENTS ASSISTED IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS AND CRIMINAL CASES HANDLED**

Undaunted by the overwhelming caseload, public attorneys ably represented indigent and other qualified clients who are accused in court. Public attorneys skillfully facilitated the release and favorable disposition of cases of its clients by way of acquittal, dismissal of case, or other legal reasons. Their cases were favorably disposed, as shown in the succeeding graph.



The succeeding graph shows the figures of acquittal, dismissal, and other favorable dispositions in criminal cases pending before trial courts that were handled by the Office for the period covering January to December 2022, totaling 263,335.



• WINNING APPEALED CASES

For criminal cases alone, a total of **1,083 cases** were favorably disposed during the period of January to December 2022 by the PAO-SACS and the two RSACUs stationed in Cebu City and Cagayan de Oro City.

The table below shows the breakdown of figures, to wit:

Acquittals from Reclusion Perpetua	738
Acquittals from Reclusion Temporal	140
Other Favorable Dispositions	205
TOTAL	1,083

Table No. 4

Aside from criminal cases, the PAO-SACS and the two RSACUs also handled civil and special cases such as appeals from decisions of the National Labor Relations Commission, Social Security System, and Government Service Insurance System. From January to December 2022, **1,099** civil and special cases handled by the PAO were terminated. Of the terminated cases, **456 were favorably disposed** in favor of the clients of PAO.

- ### JAIL VISITATION AND DECONGESTION PROGRAM

This non-judicial service rendered by the Office to PDLs has been strengthened by the PAO-Central Office Legal, Medical, Dental, and Optical Jail Visitation Program. The program started in 2007 and is now being continuously conducted in various jails in the Philippines. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, physical jail visitation was significantly restricted to prevent the spread of the disease in jails and detention facilities. In lieu of physical jail visitation, legal consultation and representation was conducted through electronic means, which was commonly referred to as *e-dalaw*. The table below shows the output of the project for the year 2022, to wit:

Regular Monthly Jail Visitation of District Offices Nationwide:

No. of PDLs	Monthly Jail Visitation of District Offices Nationwide
Interviewed & Assisted	235,933
Provided Legal Representation in Court	398,439
Released	87,577

Table No. 5

- **LEGAL/INQUEST PROCEEDINGS ASSISTANCE**

On their scheduled duties, public attorneys and staff of the PAO-Central Office have been providing legal and inquest proceedings assistance even during night time, weekends, and holidays since October 2009. For this purpose, the PAO hotline (02) 8929-9436 (*local 106 or 107 during office hours and local 159 or 160 after office hours*) is open to the public 24/7.

In September 2010, the coverage of this program was expanded to serve the clients assisted by the regional and district offices of the PAO nationwide. Since then, the said offices have been rendering *legal assistance* (e.g. giving legal advice and attending to the legal needs of arrested persons in the police stations within their territorial jurisdiction) up to *10:00 P.M.* every day, including weekends and holidays. Further, the assigned PAO inquest public attorneys and staff therein remain on call, even beyond *10:00 P.M.*, to attend to inquest calls in police stations nationwide. Even during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, public attorneys and staff were directed to remain on call and ready to respond to urgent requests for legal assistance.

A total of **98,545 clients** benefited from the services provided by the PAO consisting of inquest assistance, legal advice/counselling, and documentation at the above duty stations covering the period January to December 2022.

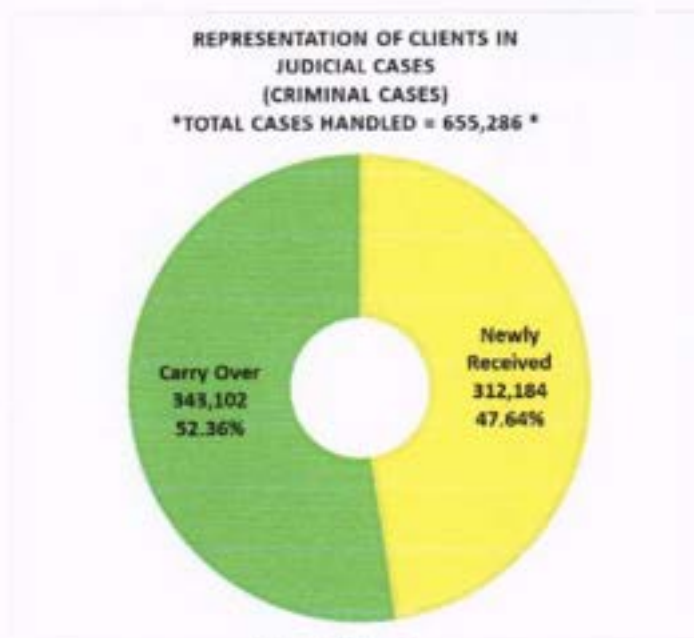


IV. CASE LOAD, STATISTICAL REPORT, AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

A. RENDITION OF JUDICIAL SERVICES

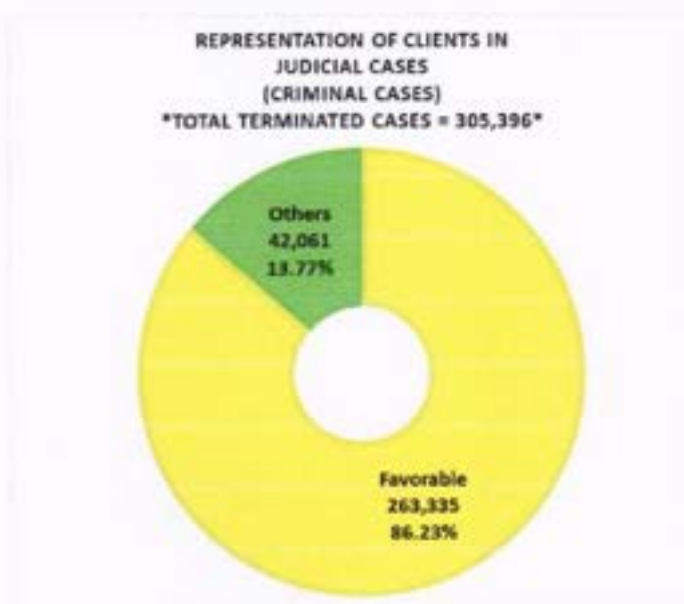
1. Regular Services

a) CRIMINAL



Graph No. 2

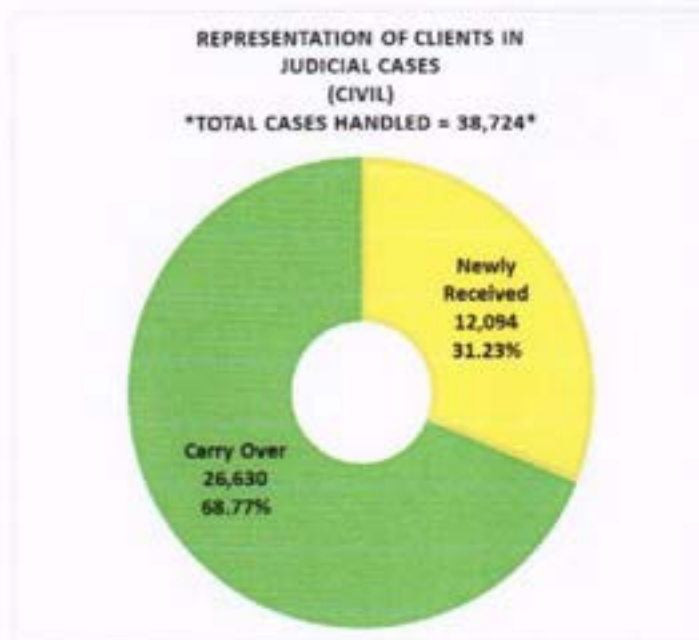
For the year 2022, the PAO handled a total of **655,286 criminal cases**. Of this total, **312,184** cases were newly received cases and **343,102** cases were carried-over from the previous year.



Graph No. 3

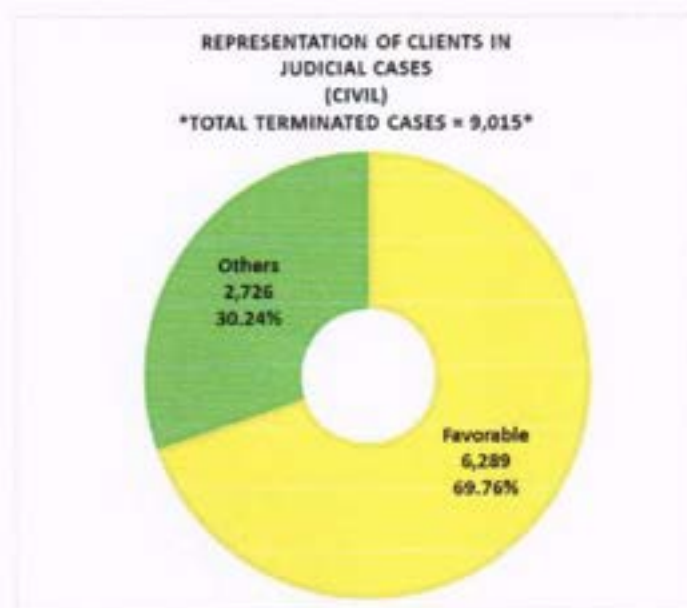
Out of the **305,396** terminated criminal cases from January to December 2022, **263,335 cases or about 86.23% thereof were favorably disposed** by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

b) CIVIL



Graph No. 4

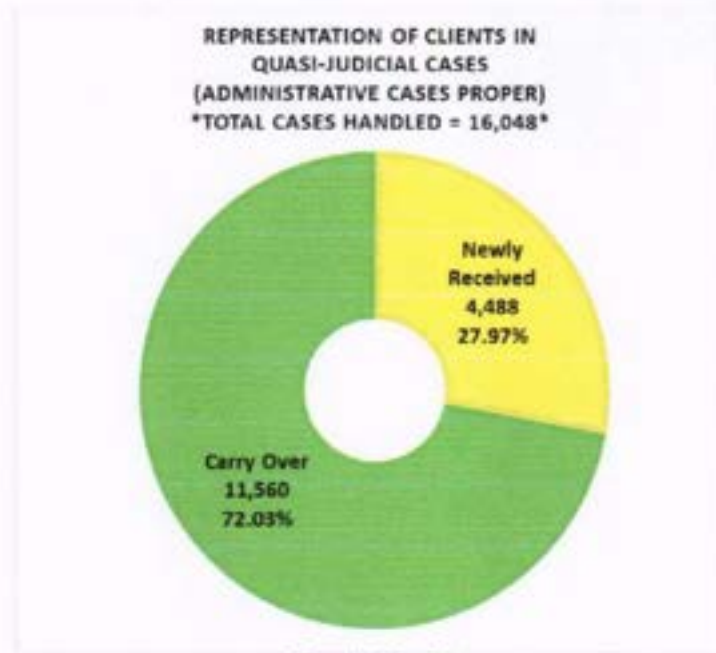
For the year 2022, the PAO handled a total of **38,724 civil cases**. Of this total, **12,094** cases were newly received cases and **26,630** cases were carried-over from the previous year.



Graph No. 5

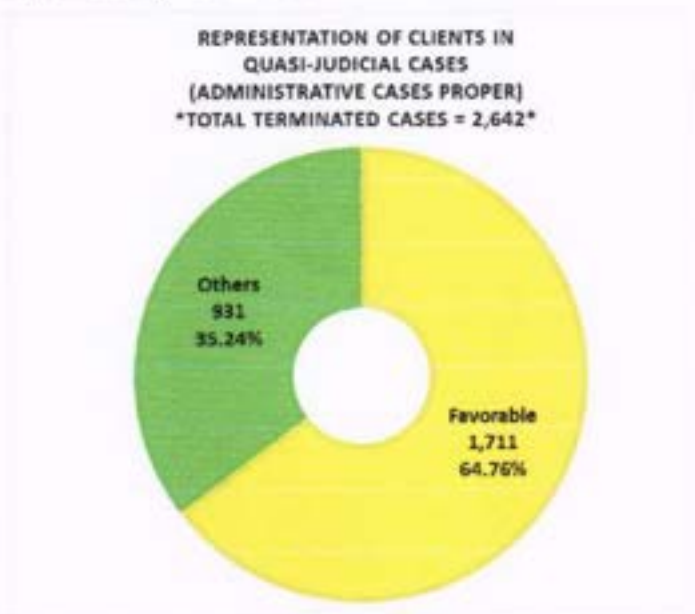
Out of the **9,015** terminated civil cases from January to December 2022, **6,289 cases or about 69.76% thereof were favorably disposed** by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

c) ADMINISTRATIVE CASES PROPER



Graph No. 6

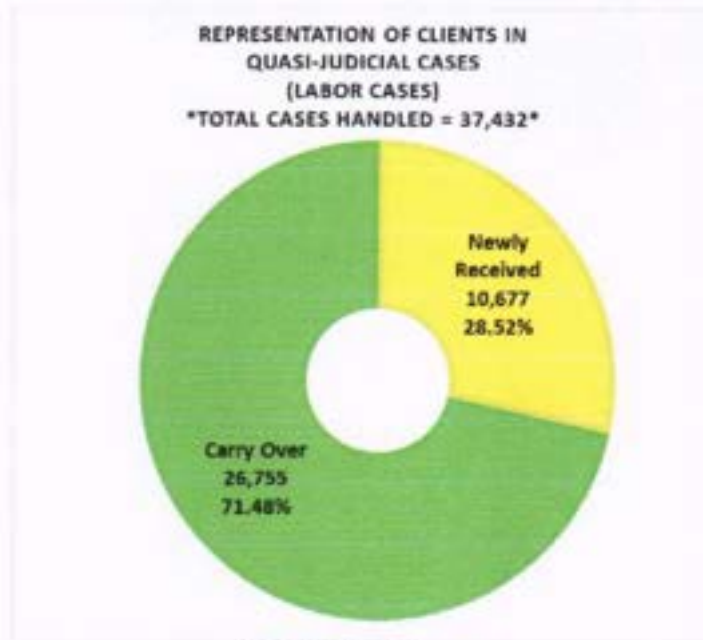
The PAO handled a total of **16,048 administrative cases** (i.e. those which involve the exercise of quasi-judicial powers by administrative authorities such as cases before the PRC and NAPOLCOM) consisting of **11,560** carry-over cases and **4,488** newly received cases from January to December 2022.



Graph No. 7

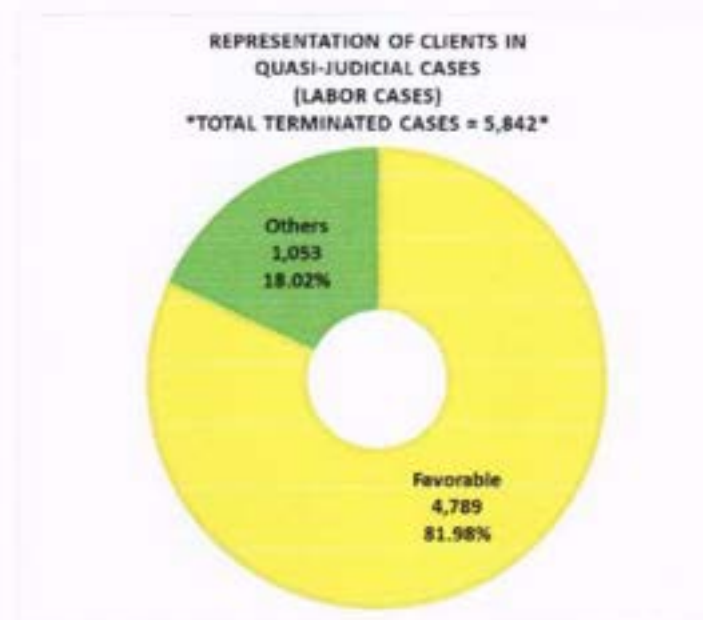
Out of the 2,642 terminated administrative cases from January to December 2022, 1,711 cases or about 64.76% thereof were favorably disposed by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

d) LABOR CASES



Graph No. 8

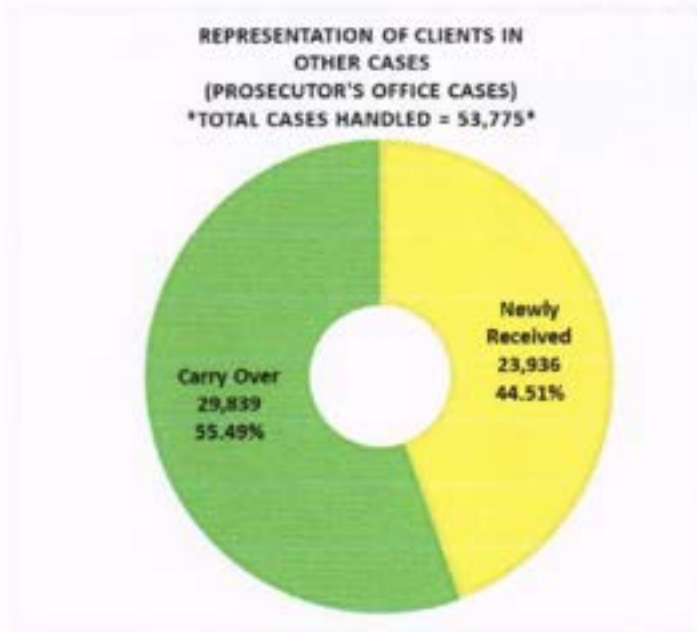
As to labor cases, the PAO handled a total of 37,432 labor cases from January to December 2022. Of this number, 10,677 were newly received, while the remaining 26,755 were carried over from the previous year.



Graph No. 9

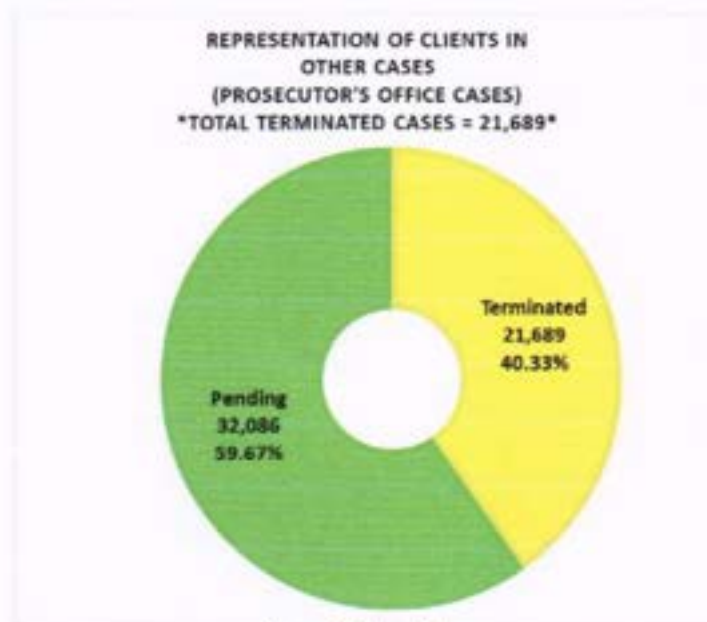
Out of the 5,842 terminated labor cases from January to December 2022, 4,789 cases or about 81.98% thereof were favorably disposed by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

e) PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE CASES



Graph No. 10

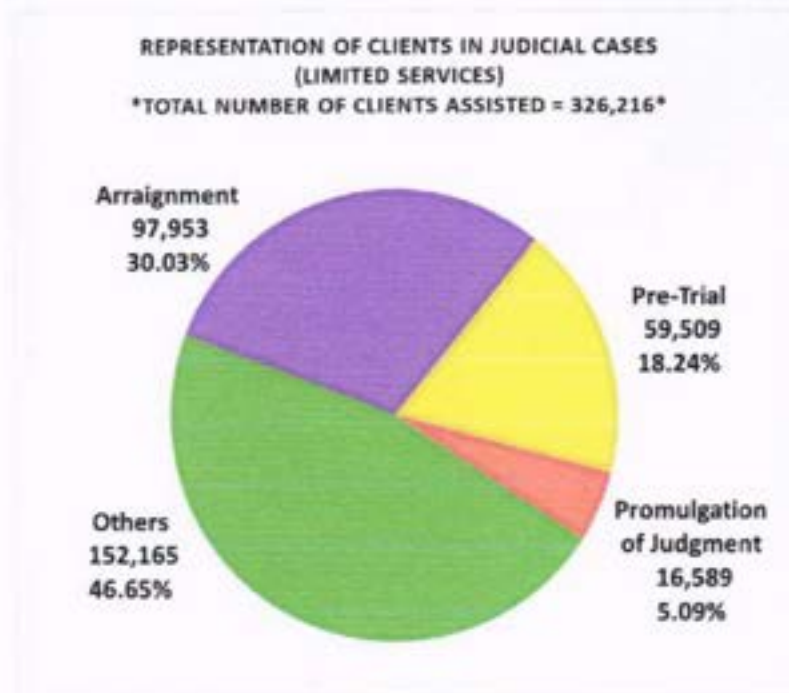
For the year 2022, the Office handled a total of 53,775 cases for preliminary investigation at the prosecutor's office level, 23,936 of which were newly received and 29,839 were carried over from the previous year.



Graph No. 11

For the same period, **21,689** cases were terminated by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

2. Limited Services



Graph No. 12

The PAO extended limited services to clients in judicial cases specifically on the stages of arraignment, pre-trial, promulgation of sentence, and in such other stages of the case where the PAO was either directed by the court or sought to represent clients. It assisted a total of **326,216 clients** from January to December 2022.

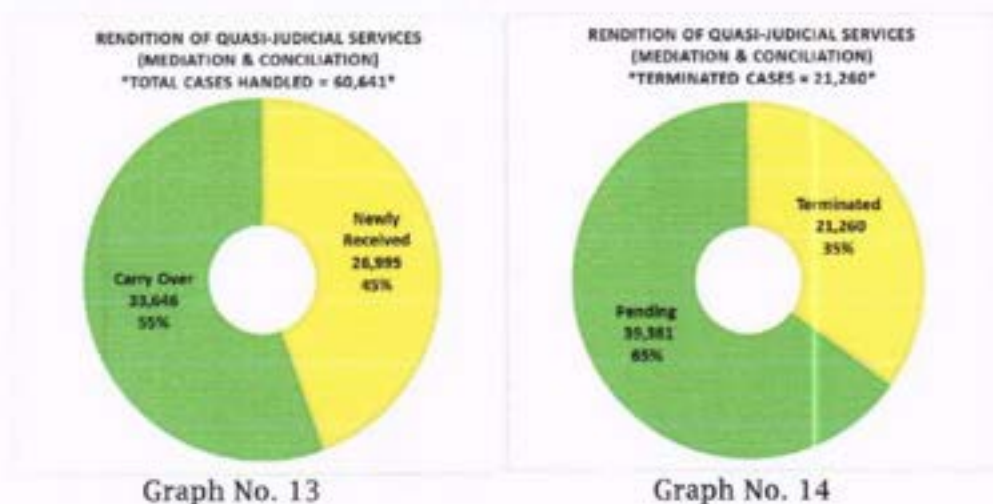
3. Special Legal Services (Pursuant to the PAO Law and Various Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs))

From January to December 2022, the PAO served a total of **2,048 clients** in **1,821 cases** provided with Special Legal Services pursuant to the PAO Law, as well as various MOAs entered into by the PAO with other government offices. *Sec. 14-A of R.A. No. 9406* specifically provides that:

SEC. 14-A Powers and Functions. - The PAO shall independently discharge its mandate to render, free of charge, legal representation, assistance, and counselling to indigent persons in criminal, civil, labor, administrative and other quasi-judicial cases. In the exigency of the service, the PAO may be called upon by proper government authorities to render such service to other persons, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations.

B. RENDITION OF QUASI-JUDICIAL SERVICES

1. Mediation and Conciliation



It is worthy to take note that the Office also renders mediation and conciliation services as part of its quasi-judicial function and in support of our government's drive to promote alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in settling disputes between contending parties. For the period covering January to December 2022, the PAO handled a total of **60,641 disputes/cases** involving **68,101 clients**. **24,995** of the **cases** handled in 2022 were received during the year, while the remaining **33,646 cases** were carried over from the previous year. The PAO was able to terminate **21,260 mediation cases** handled in 2022.

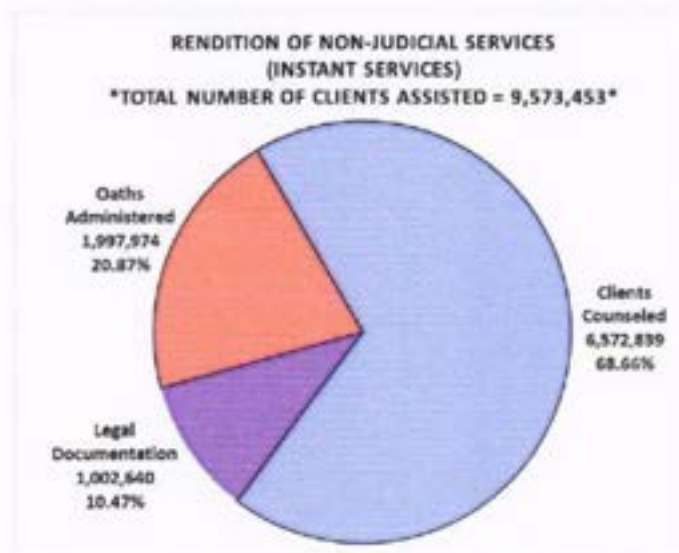
2. Investigation

For the year 2022, the PAO conducted a total of **40 investigations** of cases involving torture. The Office is mandated to assist victims of torture by *Sec. 11 of R.A. No. 9745* or the *Anti-Torture Act of 2009*, viz.:

Section 11. Assistance in Filing a Complaint.
- The CHR and the PAO shall render legal assistance in the investigation and monitoring and/or filing of the complaint for a person who suffers torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, or for any interested party thereto.

C. RENDITION OF NON-JUDICIAL SERVICES

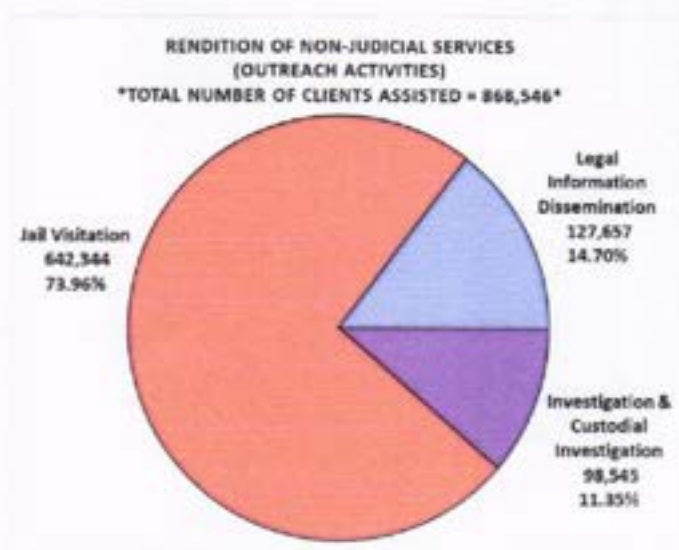
1. Instant Services



Graph No. 15

The PAO rendered instant services, composed of legal documentation, counselling, and administering of oath, to **9,573,453 clients** for the period covering January to December 2022.

2. Outreach Services



Graph No. 16

In the outreach activities conducted by the Office from January to December 2022, it assisted a total of **868,546 clients** broken down as follows: **642,344 clients** for jail visitation, **98,545 clients** for inquest investigation and custodial interrogation, and **127,657 clients** for legal information dissemination.

In addition to the above outreach services, the PAO-Central Office also conducted its first face-to-face legal and medical outreach activity since the pandemic started. The activity conducted on 28 November 2022 in Tatalon, Quezon City yielded positive results, as follows:

TIME	NO. OF LAWYERS & STAFF	LEG	NO. OF BENEFICIARIES FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE (ADVICE)	NO. OF BENEFICIARIES FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE	NO. OF BENEFICIARIES FOR DENTAL ASSISTANCE	NO. OF READING GLASSES DISTRIBUTED
8:00am to 12:00nn	33	1 ST	8	125	22	110

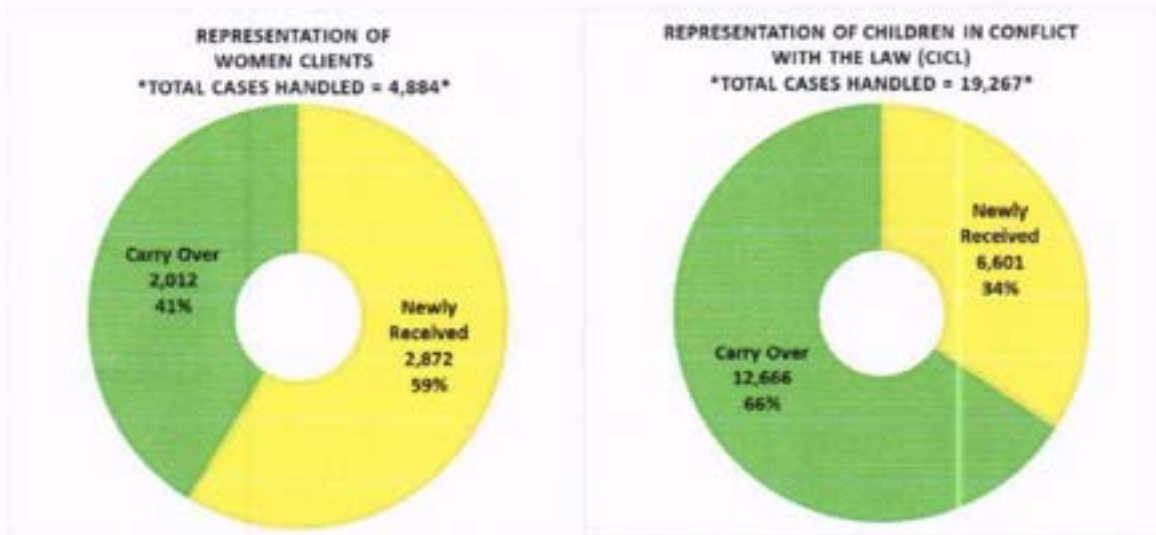
Table No. 6

WOMEN CLIENTS AND CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

Under R.A. No. 9262, otherwise known as the "Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children (VAWC) Act", and

R.A. No. 9344, otherwise known as the “Juvenile Justice and Welfare System Act”, as well as subsequent pertinent issuances, the PAO is specifically mandated by law to extend legal assistance to women and their children who become victims of violence, and to facilitate the release and proper disposition of cases involving children in conflict with the law (CICLs), particularly those who were 15 years old or below at the time of the alleged commission of the crime.

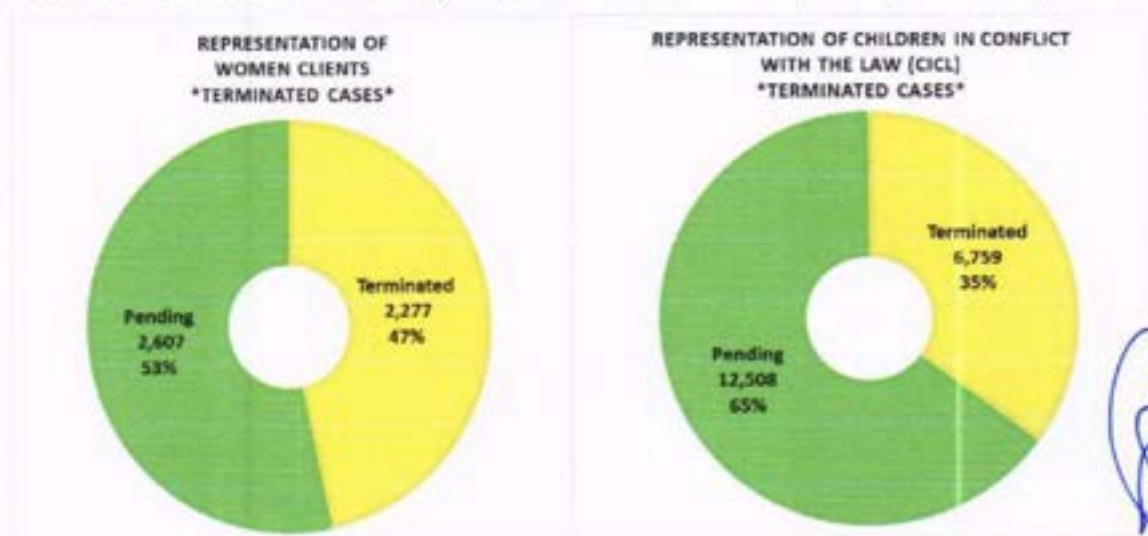
To fulfill this noble task, the PAO consistently gives special attention to the cause of women and children, in so far as the criminal justice system is concerned.



Graph No. 17

Graph No. 18

The graphs above show the number of women and children assisted by the PAO for the year 2022. From January to December 2022, the Office handled a total of **4,884 and 19,267 cases** involving **women and CICLs**, respectively.



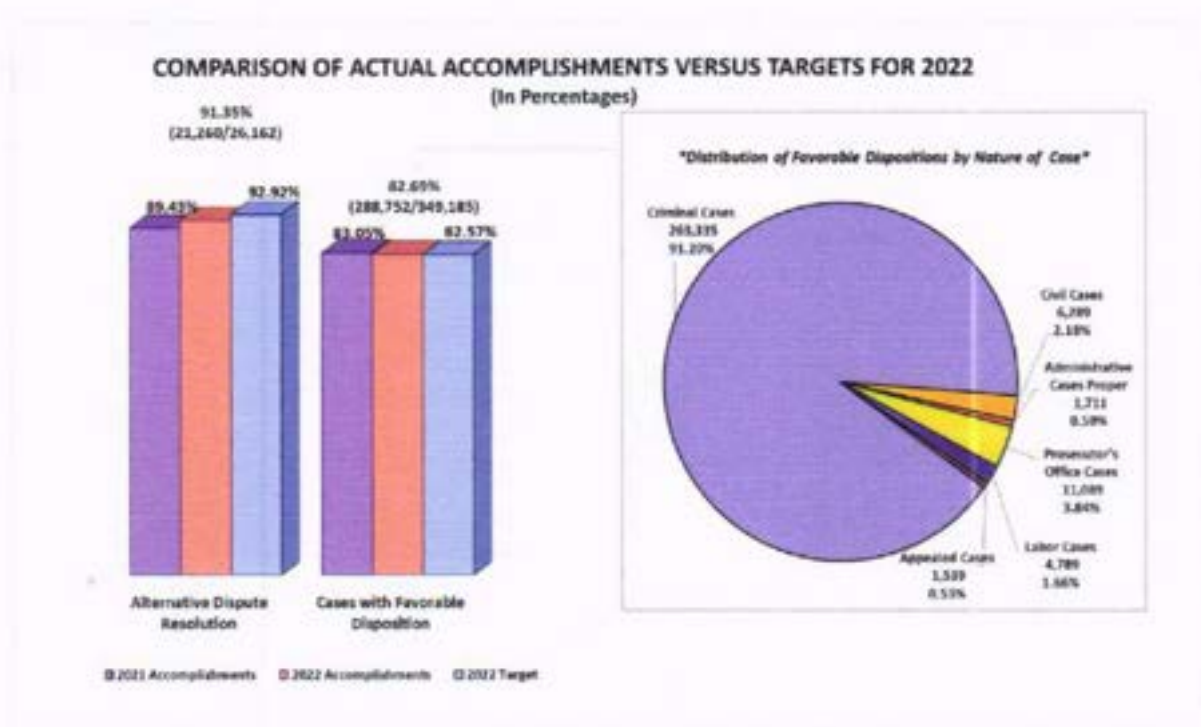
Graph No. 19

Graph No. 20

For the same period, 2,277 and 6,759 cases were terminated involving women and CICLs, respectively.

The above-shown data is a testament to the continuous trust, confidence, and faith of the people in the Office and the fulfillment of its mandate. It is viewed that when the agency performs its duties and responsibilities with the highest standard of efficiency and dedication, it gives its humble share in converting and transforming public apathy and chaos into trust, confidence, and faith in the criminal justice system, and ultimately, in the orderly administration of justice.

V. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ACTUAL ACCOMPLISHMENT vs. 2022 TARGET AND 2021 PERFORMANCE



Graph No. 21

Overall, the PAO achieved **82.69%** favorable disposition rate for the cases it handled for the calendar year 2022, which is equivalent to **288,752 favorable dispositions** out of **349,185** terminated cases. This feat surpassed the target favorable disposition rate of 82.57% (based on the GAA of FY

2022) by **0.12%**, translating to **430** cases with favorable disposition above the target. The 2022 disposition rate is slightly lower compared to last year's favorable disposition rate, but is still above the target.

The **288,752** cases with favorable disposition for the calendar year 2022 is broken down as follows: **263,335** criminal cases = **91.20%**; **6,289** civil cases = **2.18%**; **1,711** administrative cases = **0.59%**; **11,089** prosecutor's office cases = **3.84%**; **4,789** labor cases = **1.66%**; and **1,539** appealed cases = **0.53%**.

Calendar year 2022 marked the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic started that the Office saw a significant increase in the number of favorable dispositions, as well as terminations, in the cases it handles. To be precise, the number of favorable dispositions increased from 248,963 to 288,752, or 39,789 more favorable dispositions compared to last year. This represents a 15.98% increase in the number of favorable dispositions for year 2022. Perhaps, this is owed to the gradual loosening of social distancing restrictions because of improving conditions, which allowed the members of the justice sector, including the PAO, to perform their duties more effectively and efficiently.

With respect to performance in ADR for the calendar year 2022, the Office garnered **91.35%** ADR success rate, which is equivalent to **23,898 cases successfully terminated through ADR** out of **26,162** terminated cases for ADR. This number is 1.57% short of the 92.92% target success rate (based on the GAA of FY 2022), but is 1.92% higher than last year's (2021) ADR success rate of 89.43%. The non-achievement of the target is still mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited the PAO's ability to effectively render mediation services to its clients. However, the improved performance of the PAO in this year evinces its commitment to serve its clients with utmost diligence even in the midst of the pandemic. If the general condition

continues to improve, the PAO expects to achieve its target next year.

VI. THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PUBLIC ATTORNEY

A. The Office of the Chief Public Attorney **received/answered 52,600 communications**, in addition to **52,034 replies/answers** to queries from the public, from January to December 2022. The breakdown is as follows:

I. Communication to / from CPA Rueda-Acosta	No. of Communications	
A. Communication from Executive Division		15,178
1. Appointments	947	
2. Memorandum	732	
3. Memorandum Order	485	
4. Memorandum Circular	1	
5. Office Order	134	
6. Reassignment Order	86	
7. Travel Order	89	
8. Special Order	24	
9. Detail Order	3	
10. Travel Authority	24	
11. Other Communications		
11.1. Signed by CPA	104	
11.2. Signed by Executive Lawyers	12,549	
B. Communication from Other Divisions		255
1. Executive Support Staff	255	
C. Communication from Other Services		6,059
1. Administrative Service	3,529	
2. Legal Research Service	1,284	
3. Field Operations and Statistics Service	527	
4. Financial Planning and Management Service	135	
5. Special and Appealed Cases Service	584	
D. Communication from Regional Offices		5,845
1. Region I	269	
2. Region II	160	
3. Region III	645	

4. Region IV-A	952	
5. Region IV-B	260	
6. Region V	219	
7. Region VI	358	
8. Region VII	115	
9. Region VIII	195	
10. Region IX-BARMM	71	
11. Region IX-ZMB	219	
12. Region X	163	
13. Region XI	157	
14. Region XII	136	
15. Region XIII/CARAGA	118	
16. CAR	385	
17. NCR	1,423	
E. Communication/Emails from District Offices		1,870
II. Communication to / from FMD / CASH		
A. Cash Advance	345	12,275
B. Purchase Order	339	
C. Requisition and Issue Slips	2,786	
D. Vouchers and Checks	8,805	
II. Communication to / from DCPA Mosing		
A. Clearance (from Personnel Section)	866	1,601
B. Authority to Travel	77	
C. Exec-LRS Cases	176	
D. LRS 8888	482	
IV. Core Process		
A. Communication from OP, OVP, Senate & HOR		361
B. Communication from Other Offices		2,156
1. Department of Justice	57	
2. Supreme Court	5	
3. Court of Appeals	16	
4. RTC / MTC / MCTC / Sandiganbayan	2	
5. Other Offices	1,063	
6. Applicants	1,013	
C. Publications		816
1. Dear PAO (Manila Times)	365	
2. <i>Magtanong kay Attorney (Bulgar)</i>	355	
3. <i>Daing Mula sa Hukay... Hustisya!</i>	50	
4. <i>Sabi ni Doc</i>	46	
D. EMAILS		5,120
1. Legal Assistance	3,917	
2. Applicants	63	
3. Others emails	1,140	
E. Communications on Special Cases		1,064
TOTAL NO. OF COMMUNICATIONS		52,600

Table No. 7

- B. The Office of the Chief Public Attorney actually served a total of **4,655,006 clients and other persons** during this period.
- C. The Chief Public Attorney, together with the PAO Special Panel of Public Attorneys, *personally handled and/or led* the following cases, *and/or rendered legal assistance* to the following individuals, *inter alia*, to wit:

1. Forensic & medico-legal examination, and legal assistance rendered to Dengvaxia victims and their families

The surviving families of **168 persons** (as of 31 December 2022) who had all been inoculated with *Dengvaxia* vaccine, and got injured and/or died after mass indiscriminate inoculation without screening and blood test, sought the help of the PAO for forensic examination and analysis, and legal assistance. Their requests were acted accordingly by the PAO and the PAO Forensic Team, pursuant to DOJ Order No. 792 dated 12 December 2017, issued by then Secretary of Justice Vitaliano N. Aguirre II. For the year 2022, **one dead Dengvaxia vaccinee** was examined by the PAO Forensic Team.

Relative thereto, criminal complaints for Reckless Imprudence Resulting in Homicide, violation of the Anti-Torture Law, violation of the Consumer Act of the Philippines, violation of the Pharmacy Law, and Obstruction of Justice before the DOJ, as well as civil cases for damages before the Regional Trial Court (RTC) of Quezon City, were filed against those responsible, both public servants and private persons, for the deaths of the inoculated victims.

As of 31 December 2022, **157** criminal complaints and **139** civil cases were filed against the persons

responsible for the injury and/or death of the inoculated victims composed of minor children, together with two public servants consisting of one police officer, and one medical doctor.

Of the 157 criminal complaints, 16 are already pending in court, while the rest are still pending before the DOJ either for preliminary investigation or for review. Meanwhile, 134 out of the 139 civil cases are already consolidated before the RTC - Branch 216, Quezon City as of the end of the year.

2. Petition to Protect Minors from Mandatory Inoculation of COVID-19 Vaccine

On 3 February 2022, parents of minors who are at risk of being vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine against their will, through the PAO, filed before the RTC of Quezon City an *Extremely Urgent Petition for Certiorari, Prohibition, Declaratory Relief, and Injunction* enjoining the Department of Health (DOH) from rolling out the COVID-19 vaccination program for children five (5) to eleven (11) years old. A day after the filing of the petition, the DOH amended its interim guidelines on the administration of COVID-19 vaccine on minors to remove the contested provision that allows the State to give consent to vaccination if the parents refuse to permit it. The case then proceeded with the presentation of the evidence for the petitioners.

D. The Chief Public Attorney and the Office received the following prestigious **awards and recognitions**, among others, to wit:

1. ***Most Outstanding Public Servant*** from the Gawad Dangal Filipino Awards 2022 given on 28 December 2022 at Eurotel Hotel - North EDSA, Quezon City;

2. ***Award of Excellence (As one of the Philippine Men and Women of Integrity and Honor)*** from the Gawad Dangal Filipino Awards 2022 given on 28 December 2022 at Eurotel Hotel - North EDSA, Quezon City;
3. ***Hero of the Year*** awarded during the Gawad Pilipino Heroes Awards 2022, from Gawad Pilipino on 27 December 2022 at Novotel Hotel and Resorts, Cubao, Quezon City;
4. ***Certificate of Recognition for being a "Top Inspiring Personality"*** from Aspire Magazine awarded on 21 December 2022 at Windmills and Rainforest, Quezon City;
5. ***Outstanding Public Servant***, conferred during the Metro Excellence Leadership Awards (MELA) 2022, by MELA on 18 December 2022 at the Main Ballroom of the Villamor Air Base Golf Club, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City;
6. ***The Outstanding Filipino Award for Justice and Law*** from The Outstanding Filipino Awards (TOFIL) given on 12 December 2022 at Rizal Park Hotel, Manila;
7. ***Legacy Award in Public Service*** awarded during the 35th Aliw Awards by the Aliw Awards Foundation, Inc. on 5 December 2022 at the Fiesta Pavilion of The Manila Hotel, Manila;
8. ***Hall of Fame Award*** conferred during the 4th Philippine Faces of Success 2023 by the Philippine Faces of Success on 3 December 2022 at Teatrino, Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan City;
9. ***Iconic Attorney of the People*** awarded during the Global Iconic Aces Awards 2022 by the officers

(headed by President Bennilyn Amigo-Molina) and organizers of the Global Iconic Aces Awards 2022, held on 26 October 2022 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;

10. ***Ace Public Servant of the Year*** awarded during the Global Iconic Aces Awards 2022 by the officers (headed by President Bennilyn Amigo-Molina) and organizers of the Global Iconic Aces Awards 2022, held on 26 October 2022 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
11. ***Outstanding Public Service Host Award (For #PALA-Persida Acosta's Legal Advice)***, awarded during the 2nd Diamond Excellence Awards by the 3Stars Productions and Diamond Excellence Awards on 27 September 2022 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
12. ***Outstanding Public Servant of the Year*** given during the Icon of the Year Awards by the Gawad Pilipino Awards and EUROTV Philippines on 17 September 2022 at the Metropolitan Theatre, Manila;
13. ***6th Outstanding Woman of the Philippines Award*** conferred during the 6th Outstanding Men and Women of the Philippines 2022 by the RDH Entertainment Network on 27 August 2022 at Teatrino, Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan City;
14. ***Most Outstanding Individual Achievement as Public Servant in Legal Practice Award*** from the Asian Sterling Awards 2022 and the NCO Events Management & Advertising Co., Inc. given on 26 August 2022 at the Metropolitan Theater, Manila;
15. ***Leadership Achievement in Public Service Award*** during the 9th Elite Business and Leadership Awards awarded by Triumph International Events Innovation

and Marketing Co. on 15 July 2022 at Sofitel Philippines Plaza Manila, Pasay City;

16. ***Maharlikang Parangal Sa Larangan Ng Serbisyo Publiko*** from the Maharlikang Filipino Awards 2022 conferred on 17 June 2022 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
17. ***World Class Achiever Lifetime Award (Outstanding in Public Service and Legal Jurisprudence)*** from the World Class Excellence Japan Awards (WCEJA), awarded on 15 June 2022 at the Heritage Hotel Manila, Pasay City;
18. ***Philippine Fashion Circle Awards (PFCA) Woman of Significance Award (Plaque of Recognition for Outstanding Vision, Personal Contribution, Dedication and Commitment to Excellence)*** from the 2022 PFCA conferred on 2 May 2022 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
19. **Outstanding Woman Leader Award** from Crystal International Women's Awards given on 30 March 2022 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
20. ***Philippine Empowered Men and Women of the Year 2022 Award*** from the Philippine Empowered Men and Women Awards conferred on 26 March 2022 at Teatrino, Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan City;
21. ***Plaque of Recognition*** from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), as the PCSO's ***Honoree***, in recognition of her contributions and unwavering support to Gender and Development (GAD) advocacies and her sustainable inclusive actions towards women empowerment and gender equality, awarded on 7 March 2022 at the PCSO Conservatory Building, Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City; and,

22. ***Plaque of Appreciation*** (in grateful recognition as Guest of Honor and Speaker during the Joint Commencement Exercise of the Justice Colleges of the Philippines) conferred on 5 March 2022 at The Manila Hotel, Manila.

E. The Chief Public Attorney served as **Speaker/Resource Person** in the following events:

1. ***Organizer and Speaker, 7th MCLE-Accredited National Convention of Public Attorneys***, held on 10-14 October, 2022 at the Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City;
2. ***Resource Speaker, "Think Like A Lawyer: Webinar Series | Public Attorneys,"*** conducted by the Dr. Jovito R. Salonga Center for Law and Development, Silliman University, and Silliman University College of Law on April 30, 2022;
3. ***Guest of Honor/Speaker and Awardee, The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office's (PCSO's) Traditional Monday Flag Honoring & Awarding to Dr. Acosta as the First Honoree to be Awarded by the PCSO in Line with Its Month-Long Observance of the National Women's Month Celebration***, held on 7 March 2022 at the PCSO Conservatory Building, Shaw Blvd. Mandaluyong City
4. ***Guest of Honor and Speaker, Justice Colleges of the Philippines Joint Commencement Exercises (Batch 2019-2020 and Batch 2020-2021), Bachelor of Science in Criminology***, held on 5 March 2022 at the Rigodon Hall, Manila Hotel, Manila.



VIII. OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

On the Organization and Administration of the PAO

A. 7th Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) - Accredited National Convention of Public Attorneys

After several postponements due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PAO was finally able to successfully conduct its 7th MCLE - Accredited National Convention of Public Attorneys on 10-14 October 2022 at the Philippine International Convention Center, Pasay City. With around 2,400 public attorneys in attendance, it is the biggest convention ever organized by the PAO. Legal luminaries imparted their knowledge and shared their experience in the practice of law to the participants during the five-day convention. Guests of honor/awardees who supported the PAO in the past years and contributed to its success also graced the event. Among them were Vice President Sara Z. Duterte, Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo, and several members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

B. Creation and Upgrading of District Offices

One of the strategies of the PAO in reaching its clients in far-flung areas is to bring its district offices closer to the community. This need was further highlighted during the pandemic when strict movement and physical restrictions were imposed, which made it especially difficult for clients in remote areas to visit the office. As such, the creation of additional district offices became imperative. For the year 2022, three additional district offices were created, to wit: Villaverde, Nueva Ecija District Office, Tayum, Abra District Office, and Dingras,

Ilocos Norte District Office. This brings the total number of new district offices to 13 since the pandemic started.

Meanwhile, the continued partnership between the Provincial Government of Lanao del Sur and the PAO bore new fruit as the PAO-Wao, Lanao del Sur District Office was finally able to transfer to its new office building in the first quarter of 2022. The project kicked off in 2019 with the donation of the subject parcel of land by the Municipal Government of Wao, Lanao del Sur. Thereafter, the Provincial Government of Lanao del Sur started constructing a building on the land, which was formally turned over on 27 March 2022 by the said province, represented by Governor Mamintal A. Adiong, to PAO-Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, represented by Regional Public Attorney Ernie A. Masorong. The two-storey multi-purpose building is now being used to cater to the needs of the indigent and other qualified clients of PAO-WAO, Lanao del Sur District Office.

C. Execution of MOA/MOU with Important National Agency Partners

This year, the PAO also signed MOA/MOU with two important national government agency partners, *viz.*: the DSWD and the OVP. Both provide for strengthened referral system and provision of free legal assistance to persons who visit the two offices to ask for help, which falls within the jurisdiction of the PAO.

The MOA with the DSWD was signed on 19 September 2022 and supplements an earlier MOA dated 9 October 2013, which covers provision of legal assistance to victims of VAWC, CICLs, and local prospective adoptive parents who wish to adopt their own child or step-child in order to improve the latter's status. With the latest MOA, single parents who wish to ask for legal support for themselves

or their child/ren were focused, and the assignment of an on-site duty public attorney to the DSWD Central Office was instituted.

On the other hand, the MOU with the OVP was signed on 16 November 2022. It strengthened the tie between the PAO and the OVP in terms of delivery of free legal services to indigent clients who seek assistance from the OVP. At present, there is an ongoing assessment whether to station an on-site duty public attorney to the OVP Central Office and its satellite offices.

D. PAO and Public Attorneys are the Most Trusted Among the Justice Sector Actors

The publication of the *GOJUST II Access to Justice Philippines Final Report* completed on 25 July 22 affirmed the people's trust in the PAO. The accompanying *Justice Needs Survey 2021* conducted by SWS for the GOJUST2 shows that the PAO obtained the highest trust rating from the participants who came from all three main islands of the country, established justice zones, and the 3 poorest provinces. As the SWS assessed, the PAO is the most trusted of the twelve justice institutions, while public attorneys obtained the highest net trust rating among the seven justice system professions. GOJUST2 is a project of the European Union, in partnership with our government, which aims to improve access to justice for all Filipinos in order to contribute to inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development.

On the Services Rendered by the Office

E. Continuing Innovation of #PALA

#PALA Program is an online legal counselling program that is broadcasted live and posted on Facebook, and also uploaded to YouTube, which allows the Chief Public

Attorney to directly interact with clients, and render legal advice on queries sent by followers/viewers (from the Philippines and other countries as well) and legal opinion and teachings on day-to-day legal concerns typically encountered by the general population. What started as a simple program that aims to widen the reach of the PAO, now turned into a ground breaking show that has now garnered a million followers on Facebook, through the account of the Chief Public Attorney.

To consistently engage the general public, segments were added to showcase different facets of the PAO, such as *#PALAtawag* which is a teleconsultation with the Chief Public Attorney concerning one's legal problem, *May batas #PALA* which provides information on existing laws and jurisprudence that the general public may not be aware of, and *PAO ng Mamamayan* where the Chief Public Attorney interviews individuals from various walks of life to highlight their contribution to our society and to inspire others to emulate them. For the year 2022, a total of **38 episodes** spread over three seasons were aired on Facebook, which can still be accessed by netizens.

F. PDLs Released During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic called for the continued attention of the PAO in guarding not only the legal rights of its clients, but also their health and safety. This is especially true in the case of its PDL clients who face tremendous risk in congested jails and detention facilities. With the vigilance of our public attorneys, the PAO was able to secure the release of **87,577 PDLs** for the whole year 2022. Some of the notable legal bases for release of PDL clients include release on recognizance after service of minimum sentence, release due to imprisonment equal to maximum imposable penalty or complete service of sentence, allowance and posting of

bail / reduced bail, plea bargaining, grant of demurrer, dismissal with prejudice, and grant of probation.

G. Continuing Assistance to PDLs in Consonance with R.A. No. 10951

For the year 2022, public attorneys nationwide assisted a total of **7,902 PDLs** relative to R.A. No. 10951, entitled "An Act Adjusting the Amount or the Value of Property and Damage on Which a Penalty is Based and the Fines Imposed Under the Revised Penal Code, Amending for the Purpose Act No. 3815, Otherwise Known as "The Revised Penal Code", as Amended", by assessing their respective cases and pursuing the necessary legal remedy, if applicable. Of this number, **892 PDLs have been released** or are pending release by virtue of a granted petition, while **1,168 PDLs had their sentence reduced**. The rest are either awaiting the resolution of their petition, in the process of filing their petition, or the petition of the PAO is not applicable (e.g. application is not favorable, PDL has a private counsel, etc.). From the passage of the said law on 29 August 2017 up to 31 December 2022, the PAO already assisted a total of **38,933 PDLs** through legal advice, documentation service, and legal representation, when necessary.

H. Assistance Relative to the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP)

In support of our government's E-CLIP, the PAO has been assisting FRs/FVEs who desire to surrender and be reintegrated into the community. For the year 2022, the PAO handled **296 cases** involving FRs/FVEs, and provided counselling, documentation, and administration of oath services to **893 FR/FVE clients**. A total of **1,323 participants** also benefited from the seven legal outreach activities conducted by the PAO involving FRs/FVEs.

This includes the worthy participation of PAO-Gumaca, Quezon District Office in three events that involve mass surrender and/or withdrawal of support by previous supporters and alleged members of Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) during the last quarter of the year. In particular, public attorneys from the said district office assisted by explaining the contents and repercussions of signing a *Kasulatan ng Pagkakaisa*, which is a manifestation of withdrawal of support to the CPP-NPA-NDF, and administering the oath thereon. For the said events alone, PAO-Gumaca, Quezon District Office was able to assist a total of 887 supporters and 58 alleged members of CPP-NPA-NDF.

I. Justice for Slain Youth Victims (Kian Delos Santos, Carl Angelo Arnaiz and Reynaldo "Kulot" De Guzman)

To recall, Kian Loyd Delos Santos (Kian) is a 17-year old minor who died on 16 August 2017 during an anti-illegal drug operation of the Caloocan City Police in Caloocan City. The police alleged that Kian drew a gun ("*nanlaban*") when they accosted him, prompting a shoot-out, which eventually led to his death. A CCTV footage and the findings of the PAO Forensic Team showing that he sustained three gunshot wounds - 2 in the head which may have been inflicted while he was on the ground on a prone position and 1 in the back - tell otherwise. This prompted the parents of Kian to file a criminal complaint against those responsible for their son's death. After trial of the case, three cops were convicted of Murder on 29 November 2018, which the Court of Appeals recently affirmed on 14 December 2022.

Meanwhile, 19-year old Carl Angelo Arnaiz (Carl) and 14-year old Reynaldo De Guzman (Kulot) were last seen hanging out before they went missing on 28 August 2017. Days after, their lifeless bodies were found. Caloocan City

Police claimed that Carl drew his firearm ("*nanlaban*") when they accosted him for committing robbery. An eye witness and the findings of the PAO Forensic Team that he was shot while kneeling with raised hands disproved such claim.

With the assistance of the PAO, the parents of Carl and Kulot filed criminal complaints for the death of their sons. On 10 November 2022, the Regional Trial Court - Branch 122, Caloocan City convicted the accused for Torture and Planting of Evidence. Meanwhile, the Murder case is set for promulgation of judgment on 11 March 2023.

J. Free and Instant Access to the PAO Lawyer Assigned to a Client

The PAO Management religiously allocates from its savings a monthly amount of Five Hundred Pesos (Php 500.00) for every public attorney, which represents telephone/communication expense, so that the latter could conveniently convey important matters to their clients, such as the status of their case, calendar of hearings, documentation, and other response to queries.

IX. ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS

The PAO, in the delivery of its mandated mission, is complemented by several administrative units that render support to its technical operations. Altogether, they managed to carry out its operations with utmost efficiency and dedication throughout the year.

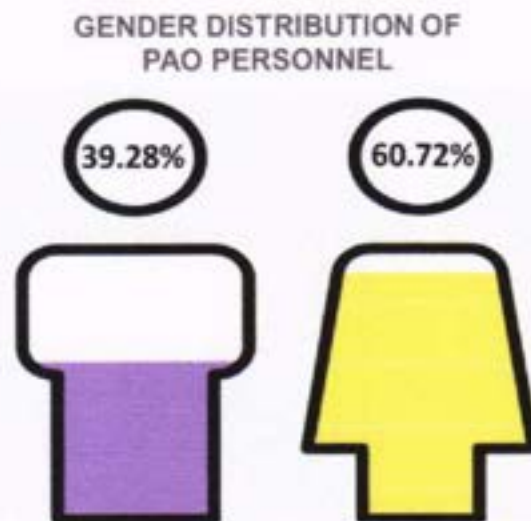
- **PERSONNEL COMPLEMENT**

The table below shows the number of authorized, filled, and unfilled positions in the PAO for the year 2022, to wit:

Position	Authorized	Filled	Unfilled
Lawyers	2,505	2,400	105
Support Personnel	1,045	1,019	26
TOTAL	3,550	3,419	131

Table No. 8

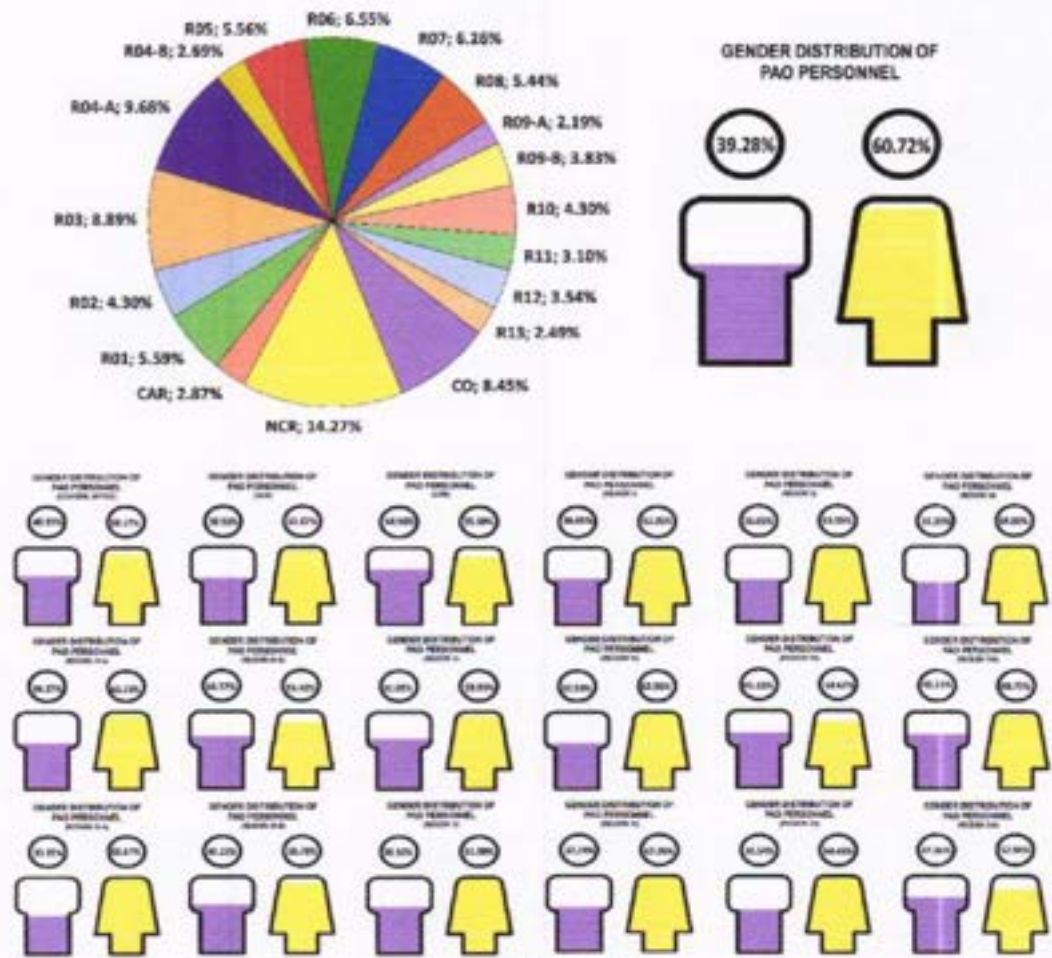
On 7 September 2022, the DBM granted the request of the PAO for the creation of new plantilla positions, viz.: 42 Public Attorney III items, 36 Public Attorney II items, and two staff items. Thus, the number of public attorney positions increased by 78 from 2,427 in 2021 to 2,505 in 2022 bringing the PAO closer to its vision of achieving a 1:1 ratio of field public attorneys to courts.



Graph No. 22

Similar to the previous year, there are more female personnel than male personnel. Specifically, the Office has **2,076 female personnel**, which is equivalent to **60.72%** of the total personnel complement of the Office, vis-à-vis **1,343 male personnel (39.28%)**. Hence, the ratio of female to male personnel for the year 2022 slightly increased from 1.52:1 to 1.55:1.

DISTRIBUTION OF PAO PERSONNEL BY YEARS IN SERVICE



Graph No. 23

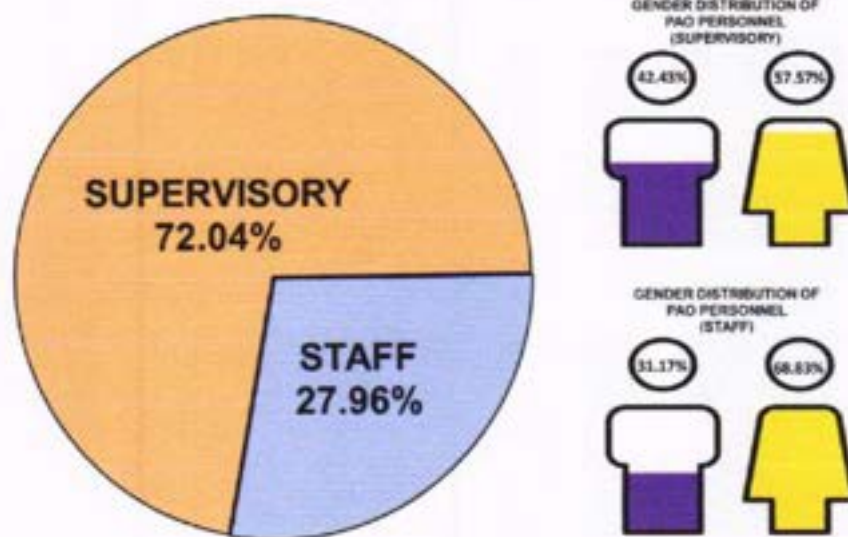
Out of the total personnel complement of the Office, **2,463 (72.04%)** occupy supervisory positions. This includes all public attorneys, and other personnel with salary grade of 18 or above who supervise other staff. **1,418 (57.57%)** of supervisory personnel are female. The remaining **1,045 (42.43%)** are male.

Meanwhile, **956 (27.96%)** personnel occupy staff positions. They are the rank-and-file employees of the PAO who perform various functions to support its operation. The sex distribution of staff positions is **658 (68.83%)** female and **298 (31.17%)** male.

Position	Male	Female	TOTAL
Supervisory	1,045	1,418	2,463
Staff	298	658	956
TOTAL	1,343	2,076	3,419

Table No. 9

DISTRIBUTION OF PAO PERSONNEL BY POSITION



Graph No. 24

A considerable portion of the personnel complement of the Office is relatively new with **1,470 personnel (43%)** rendering four years of service or less. This is due in part to the high turnover of public attorneys who either resign for personal reasons or transfer to other government offices. Nonetheless, personnel belonging to this category further decreased, in terms of number and percentage of total personnel, compared to the past two years, indicating that a lot of personnel completed five years of service with the Office in year 2022, and that more senior public attorneys are deciding to stay longer in PAO.

Those who have been with the Office for 20 or more years comprise of **357 personnel (10.44%)**. The remaining **1,592 personnel (46.56%)** belong to the group that has already rendered 5 - 19 years of service. Those who are in service for 20 or more years decreased by 14 from last year, while those who are in the Office for 5 - 19 years increased by 259 compared to the previous year.

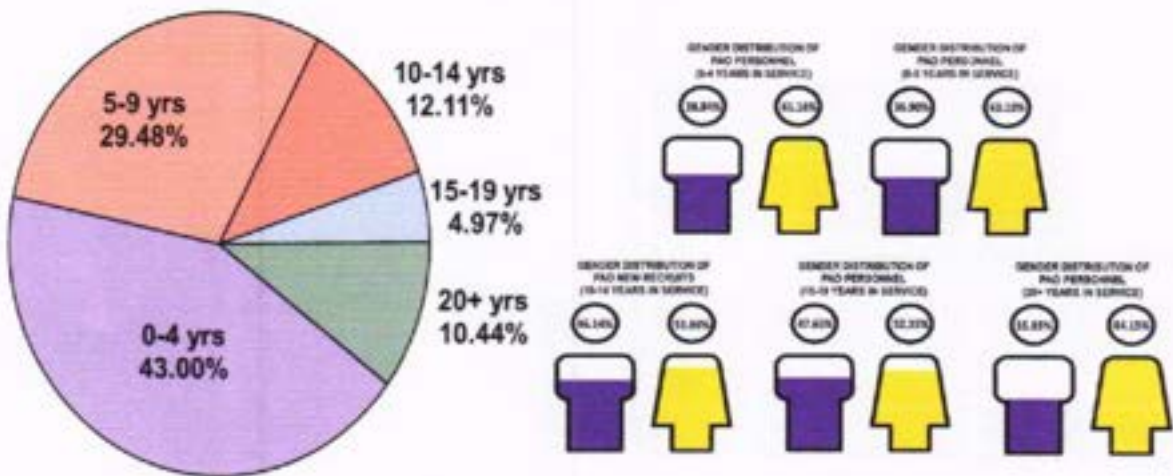
The females eclipse the males in all service year categories signifying that the PAO has been hiring more

female personnel in the past years, and that more female are deciding to stay in the Office.

Years in Service	Male	Female	TOTAL
0-4	571	899	1,470
5-9	372	636	1,008
10-14	191	223	414
15-19	81	89	170
20 & up	128	229	357
TOTAL	1,343	2,076	3,419

Table No. 10

DISTRIBUTION OF PAO PERSONNEL BY YEARS IN SERVICE



Graph No. 25

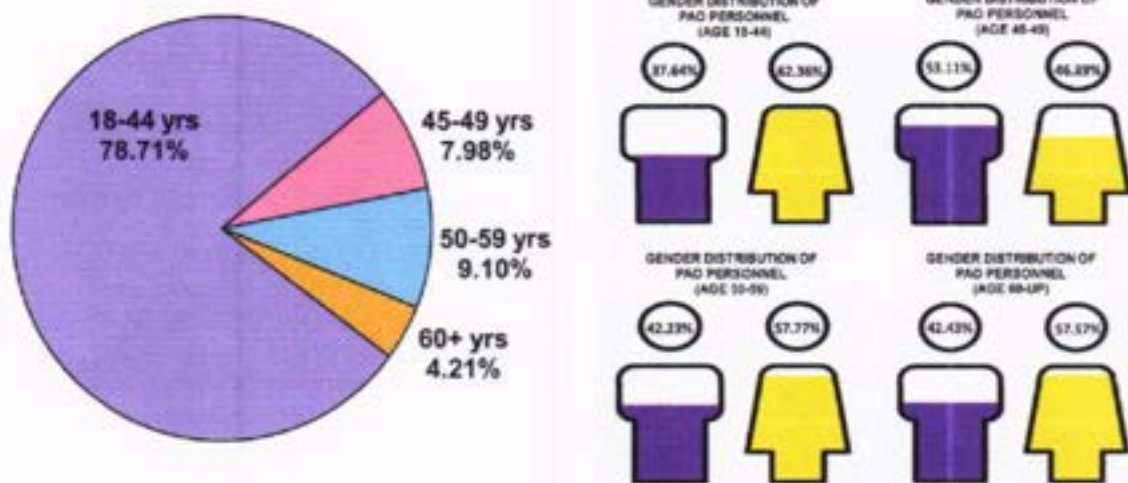
As to age distribution, majority of the personnel complement of the Office are within the reproductive age of 18 - 44 years old, comprising of **2,691 personnel**, which is equivalent to **78.71%** of the total personnel complement. They are followed by the group who could retire within the next 10 years (50-59 age bracket) and the 45-49 age bracket with **311 (9.10%)** and **273 (7.98%) personnel**, respectively. The smallest age group is comprised of those who are already entitled to retirement but still decided remain in service (60 and up age bracket) with **144 (4.21%) personnel**.

The females dominate all the age categories, except for the 45-49 age bracket where the males outnumber the females by 17.

Age	Male	Female	TOTAL
18-44	1,013	1,678	2,691
45-49	145	128	273
50-59	153	158	311
60 and up	32	112	144
TOTAL	1,343	2,076	3,419

Table No. 11

DISTRIBUTION OF PAO PERSONNEL BY AGE



Graph No. 26

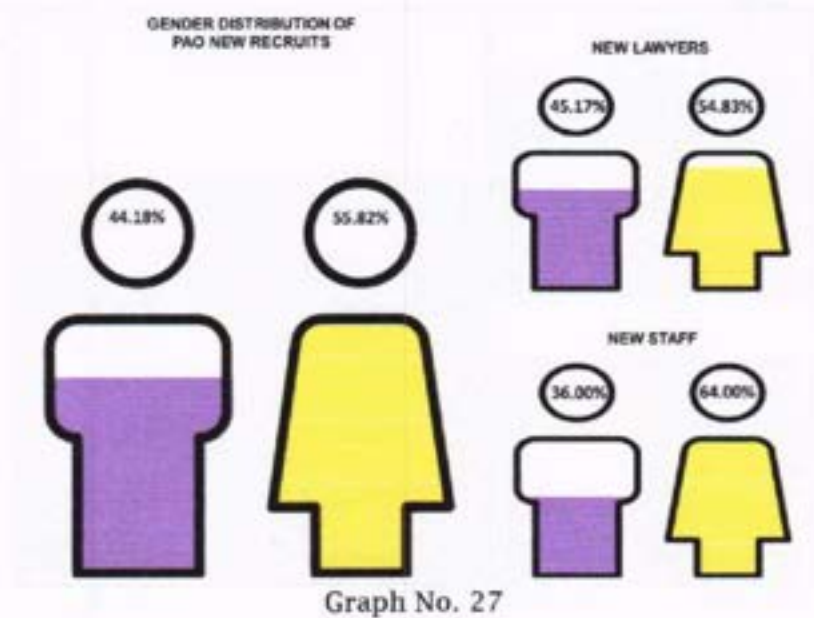
• PERSONNEL MOVEMENT

From January to December 2022, the movement of personnel in the PAO is as follows:

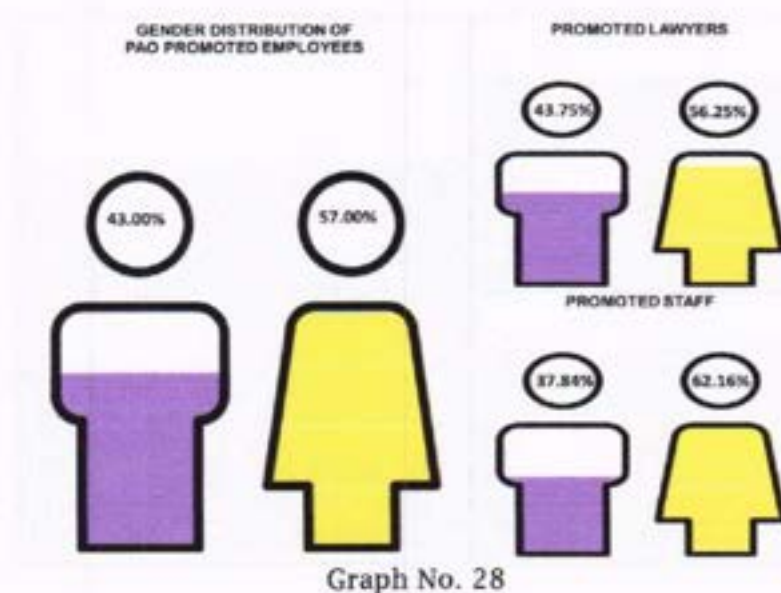
Type of Appointment	Lawyer		Support Staff		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Recruited	187	227	18	32	464
Promoted	112	144	14	23	293
TOTAL	299	371	32	55	757

Table No. 12

For the year 2022, the Office recruited a total of **464 personnel**, majority of whom are female. To be specific, there are **227 new female lawyers** and **32 new female support staff**, which is equivalent to **55.82%** of all new recruits. The remaining **205 new recruits** or **44.18%** are male. With the existing personnel complement and current hiring pattern of the Office, it is reasonably expected that the females will continue to outnumber the males in the coming years.



Similarly, in terms of promotion, females lead the list. For the year 2022, **167 (57%)** female lawyers and staff received a promotion, while **126 (43%)** male lawyers and staff got promoted.



- **PERSONNEL ENHANCEMENT**

The PAO conducts seminars to enhance the capability, knowledge, and professional skills of participants in order to mold them into efficient and truly competitive legal counsels and support personnel.

It has been the PAO's practice to provide a continuing seminar and training program to its personnel, specifically lawyers, to keep them abreast with the recent developments in law and jurisprudence; thus, ensuring the efficiency and capability of the public attorneys in protecting the rights of the oppressed, indigents, and other qualified clients of the Office.

For the year 2022, the PAO conducted three orientation seminars to ensure that new hires as well as those who are for promotion and permanent appointment, are well-informed of the internal rules and regulations, and standard operating procedures of the Office. As discussed earlier, the PAO also conducted its 7th MCLE-Accredited National Convention of Public Attorneys on 10-14 October 2022 at the PICC, Pasay City to ensure that all public attorneys are updated on the latest laws, rules and regulations, and jurisprudence.

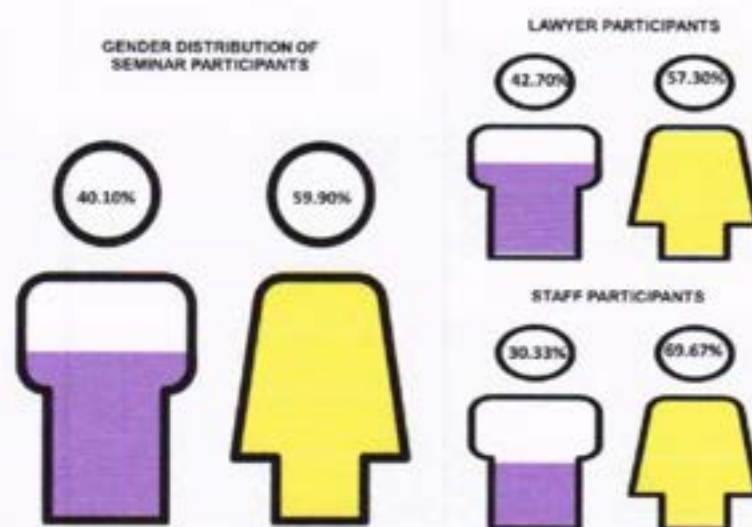
Aside from the training programs and seminars conducted by the Office, lawyers and support personnel from the PAO have likewise attended other trainings, seminars, workshops, and conferences upon invitation of other government offices and non-government organizations.

On this aspect, Regional Public Attorney of Eastern Visayas, Atty. Vevelyn O. Monsanto, was selected to be one of only 20 participants in the Women's Empowerment and Leadership Program for Civil Servants conducted by Angat Bayi, a non-profit organization furthering women's participation and transformative feminist leadership through

capacity building, research, and advocacy activities, which ran from July to October 2022. The program aims to develop and support women leaders in the public sector by enhancing their capabilities in: (1) transformative feminist leadership; (2) inclusive, rights-based, democratic, and good governance; and (3) building and protecting democratic institutions and processes.

From January to December 2022, the PAO was able to conduct/participate in **61 seminars**. A total of **4,172 personnel** attended the seminars. Out of this number, **3,295** are public attorneys, while the remaining **877** are support staff.

It should be noted that majority of the participants are female personnel. Specifically, there are **2,499 female** seminar participants for the year 2022, which is equivalent to **59.90%** of the total number of seminar participants for the said year. The remaining **1,673** participants, equivalent to **40.10%**, are male PAO personnel.



Graph No. 29

• FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The approved appropriation, with corresponding release, for CY 2022 (per GAA) is Four Billion Seven Hundred Forty-Seven Million Six Hundred Ninety-Six Thousand Pesos

(Php 4,747,696,000.00) and the corresponding Retirement and Life Insurance Premium (RLIP) is Two Hundred Eight Million One Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty-Eight Pesos **(Php 208,133,958.00)** to cover the operational funding requirements of the PAO. In addition, the total amount of Four Hundred Fifty-Four Million Four Hundred Seventy-Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty-Nine Pesos **(Php 454,478,829.00)** was released for payment of the following: a) Terminal Leave and Retirement Gratuity Benefits of retired PAO lawyers (Retirement and Pension Differential), b) Performance-Based Bonus for CY 2020, and c) Salary and Other Compensation of newly hired lawyers. The total obligations for CY 2022 amounted to Five Billion Four Hundred Ten Million Three Hundred Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty-Seven Pesos **(Php 5,410,308,787.00)**; thus, resulting to a hundred percent **(100%)** utilization rate.

- **LIBRARY SERVICES**

The PAO, through its library services, envisions giving better and more efficient means of assisting its clientele through the use of modern and advanced information-assisted technology such as the internet, modern fax machines, and telephone units for seamless transmission of output.

For the year 2022, the library purchased a number of legal books and basic reference materials, with a total amount of Two Hundred Forty-Five Thousand Three Hundred Forty-Three Pesos (Php 245,343.00), which were distributed nationwide to the PAO regional and district offices as well as the PAO central library for the use of lawyers and staff. Moreover, the PAO library, through its personnel, was able to collate a total of **668 news releases** from various broadsheets and tabloids for the year 2022 concerning the Office, and its various cases, programs, and projects.

Through its tri-media linkages, the PAO has continuously been rendering legal advice to the general public through the newspaper columns *Dear PAO*, published in *The Manila Times*; and *Magtanong Kay Attorney* and *Daing Mula sa Hukay... Hustisya!*, both published in *Bulgar*. The PAO also has a column in *Bulgar* entitled *Sabi ni Doc* which features medical advice from Dr./Atty. Erwin P. Erfe, the Director of the PAO Forensic Laboratory Division. A total of **816 articles** were published and clipped into file from January to December 2022 composed of **365** articles for *Dear PAO*, **355** articles for *Magtanong kay Attorney*, **50** articles for *Daing Mula sa Hukay...Hustisya!* and **40** articles from *Sabi ni Doc*.

Moreover, the PAO also accepted the invitation of Light TV to incorporate "Free Legal Assistance with PAO" in their program "*Bangon Na Pilipinas*". The program, which is inspired by #PALA, is broadcasted live every Thursday at 9:00 a.m. on Light TV and PAO's FB pages, and on Light TV's Radio Stations DZJV and DWZB, and VHF TV Channels 11 and 33. From August to December 2022, 22 episodes of "Free Legal Assistance with PAO" aired featuring the Chief Public Attorney and other public attorneys.

• OFFICE EQUIPMENT

For the period covering January to December 2022, the PAO purchased and distributed the following office equipment and semi-expendable properties, to wit:

• Air-conditioning Unit	46 units
• Chair	148 units
• Table	67 units
• Filing Cabinet	99 units
• Gorilla Rack	30 units
• Uninterruptible Power Supply	757 units
• Printer	826 units
• Water Dispenser	2 units

• Stand Fan	6 units
• Two-way Radio	32 units
• Monoblock Chair	50 units
• Industrial Air-cooler	3 units
• Scanner	3 units
• Desktop Computer	500 units
• Video Camera	1 unit
• Lapel	2 units
• Teleprompter	1 unit
• Gang Chair	5 units
• Conference Table	7 units
• Photocopying Machine	250 units
• CCTV Camera	30 units
• MS Office License	500 units
• Laptop Computer	2 units
• Pro License 200	3 units
• Adobe After Effects License	1 unit
• Adobe Acrobat PDF Reader	1 unit

Since the assumption to office of the undersigned Chief Public Attorney, it has been her battle cry to put into oblivion the traditional impression of public offices littered with office supplies, and obsolete and/or worn-out office equipment. With the purchase of the foregoing office furnishings, the PAO personnel were able to perform their duties in a more office-friendly environment. Needless to say, it somehow contributed to the continuously swelling public trust in the services of the PAO.

X. TECHNICAL OPERATIONS

1. PAO-NLRC SUB-STATION

By virtue of a MOA between the PAO and the NLRC, the Office maintains a sub-station at the NLRC, located in Banawe, Quezon City, to serve its clients.

The sub-station facilitates the rendition of legal assistance to workers who file their complaint before the NLRC and aims to expedite the proceedings of labor cases;

thus, making the services of the PAO more accessible to complaining workers. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sub-station was temporarily closed to comply with the strict physical distancing rules enforced to prevent the spread of the virus. Nonetheless, the gradual transition to the new normal due to improving conditions allowed the PAO to reopen its sub-station at the NLRC in August 2022. This allowed the PAO once again extend its assistance to workers who visit the NLRC to file their complaints. Thus, manned by two public attorneys and a staff, the PAO-NLRC sub-station was able to assist **4,541 clients** for the period covering August to December 2022.

2. RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION

For the year 2022, a total of **4,538 research works** were duly accomplished by the PAO through the LRS.

For the said period, the PAO, through the LRS and ESS, was able to answer a total of **816 legal queries**, which were published in newspapers of national circulation. It includes legal questions from the public that were either directly addressed or referred to the PAO. The continued surge in the number of research works was brought about by consistent tri-media linkages coupled with the use of non-traditional media as means of education and information dissemination of the PAO. An example of the latter is the innovative *#PALA* Program, which is an online legal counselling and legal information dissemination program that is broadcasted live and posted on Facebook and uploaded to YouTube. Perhaps, the accessibility of the undersigned Chief Public Attorney, personally, to the reach of the public has, for one reason, made a great difference.



3. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE PAO EMPLOYEES

From January to December 2022, **162 cases were resolved and terminated** out of **185 active administrative complaints** handled by the LRS. As a result of these cases, several PAO personnel received administrative sanctions after due notice and hearing, pursuant to the Revised Rules on Administrative Cases for the Civil Service.

This further proves the PAO's thrust in fulfilling its mandate effectively, even to the extent of disciplining its own ranks. This shows that misconduct or unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated; especially since the PAO — through the mantle of fortitude of the undersigned Chief Public Attorney — has been trying to preserve the integrity, not only of the entire agency, but of every lawyer and personnel appointed in the Office.

XI. CONTINUING PLANS AND PROGRAMS

- A. Coordinate with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and National Housing Authority (NHA) for the continuity of construction and immediate completion of the new PAO Central Office building.
- B. Achieve the ideal situation of **one** public attorney being assigned to **one** court for a more effective and efficient representation of clients;
- C. To ensure the rules of law and equity, advocate the parity between the PAO and the National Prosecution Service in terms of qualifications for appointment, rank, salaries, allowances, and retirement privileges as envisioned and provided for under R.A. No. 9406;

- D. Continuous coordination with the criminal justice system corrections sector in order to decongest jails and other detention facilities;
- E. Continuous cooperation with the courts in the case decongestion program being spearheaded by the Supreme Court;
- F. Support transparency in governance through the institutionalization and continued implementation of the Freedom of Information policy of the government.
- G. Continuous development of an internal operating system to address all information technology (IT) concerns, for the rendition of prompt and more effective legal services to the indigents;
- H. Continuous upgrading and maintenance of database, case management, and monitoring system for all cases handled by the PAO nationwide;
- I. Establishment and maintenance of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in all regional and district offices of the PAO;
- J. Maintain compliance with ISO 9000 and the Government Quality Management Systems Standards (GQMSS), pursuant to Administrative Order No. 161, dated 5 October 2006;
- K. Maintain and upgrade the PAO Forensic Laboratory Division for the furtherance of investigations being conducted relative to cases handled by this Office, pursuant to R.A. No. 9745 (Anti-Torture Act of 2009), R.A. No. 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004), R.A. No. 8353 (Anti-Rape Law), and other existing laws mandating the PAO to

assist the victims or accused on a first come-first served basis;

- L. Development of talents of personnel through trainings and support to the PAO-Chorale members;
- M. Establishment of a training program that will enable seasoned public attorneys to pass or share their legal knowledge, strategies, and experience to new public attorneys;
- N. Integration of the PAO's human resource systems and practices (recruitment, selection and placement of employees, learning and development, performance management, and rewards and recognition program) into one unified program;
- O. Policy advocacy and coordination for the enhancement of the PAO Victims' Assistance Unit;
- P. Continuously carry out activities and outreach programs for the welfare of PDLs such as the PAO's Legal and Medical Jail Visitation and Decongestion Program;
- Q. Continuous promotion of good governance, professionalism, and anti-corruption measures;
- R. Continuous improvement of communication facilities and other office equipment;
- S. Vigorous efforts to implement compensation scheme, financial incentives and retirement benefits of the public attorneys to further motivate them in discharging their duties and/or stay in the service pursuant to R.A. No. 9406;

- T. Increase the number of lawyers and support staff assigned in all regional and district offices for a more effective and efficient delivery of services pursuant to R.A. No. 9406;
 - U. Continuous coordination with the tri-media for the advancement of the PAO outreach activities, more particularly, dissemination of free legal advice, counselling, and mediation;
 - V. Vigorously pursue the rendition of prompt, effective, and adequate legal services to the indigent sector;
 - W. Maintain programs and policies aimed at instilling the virtues of excellence, integrity, professionalism, and moral values to all public attorneys and staff;
 - X. Empowerment of the PAO's capacity in promoting Gender and Development Program of the government such as the creation of projects and activities that will promote gender sensitivity;
 - Y. Close coordination with international organizations and non-government organizations in addressing the plight of the poor, marginalized, and underprivileged members of our society; and,
 - Z. Development of more effective communication systems and lines between public attorneys and their respective qualified clients for smooth and timely provision of legal assistance, counselling, and court representation despite the present global pandemic.
- AA.** Conduct of the 8th MCLE-Accredited National Convention of Public Attorneys in 2024.⁹

⁹ The PAO has been an MCLE-accredited provider since 2003.

Concluding Statement


All told, this Accomplishment Report contains a consistent attestation and affirmation of all the hard work, dedication, persistence, and commitment of the PAO in its pursuit to represent and empower the poor and underprivileged members of society. Though faced with tight deadlines and challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the changing demands of the public in the new normal, the PAO was able to render exemplary service, compliant with the mandate of the law. All these accomplishments and awards throughout the year are incomparable to the trust reposed by the Filipino people in the PAO.


As always, the PAO has never failed to improve and innovate despite its minimal workforce of **3,419**. It was able to serve **11,729,353 clients** with **82.69%** favorable disposition rate for its cases. Essentially, the government merely spent Four Hundred Sixty-One Pesos and 26/100 (**Php 461.26**) as legal fees for every client of the PAO, reflecting its efficiency and practical use of taxpayer's money.

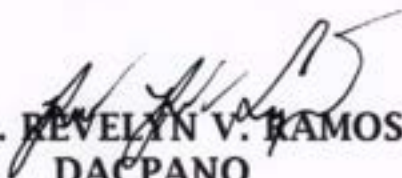
Rest assured, the PAO will maintain its commitment to assist in the government's objective of pursuing swift, effective, and fair administration of justice.

Signed this 14th day of February, 2023, in Quezon City.

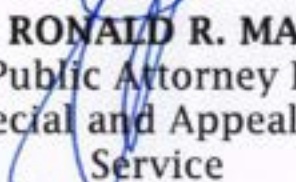

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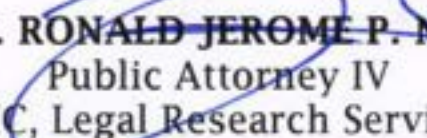

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