



Republic of the Philippines  
**PUBLIC ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**  
**Tanggapan ng Manananggol Pambayan**

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## **ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FOR THE YEAR 2023**

### **PREFATORY STATEMENT**

An enhanced administration of justice, as envisioned in the Philippine Development Plan of 2023-2028, begins with an access thereto. It has always been an essential element of democracy in a civilized society. In our country, no less than our Constitution guarantees this fundamental right by providing that "Free access to the courts and quasi-judicial bodies and adequate legal assistance shall not be denied to any person by reason of poverty". (Section 11, Article III)

The Public Attorney's Office (PAO or Office) was established, first and foremost, to give meaning to the Constitutional guarantee of adequate access to justice. The Office continues to earnestly carry out its mandate to provide free legal assistance and representation to the oppressed, marginalized, and underprivileged members of the society.

Without a doubt, access to justice is one of the country's most firmly embedded yet seemingly demanding legal principles. Among the biggest barriers to accessing justice, however, is the people's knowledge and understanding, or the lack thereof, of their legal rights — it reduces certainty and confidence in the legal system which ultimately erodes the rule of law.

The contours of strong rule of law, albeit deeply rooted, need constant development. The Office addresses the need

for development by consistently striving to create innovative ways to disseminate information, i.e. from the traditional mode of providing legal advice to walk-in clients and hotline callers, to PAO's very own online program #PALA (Persida Acosta's Legal Advice). This initiative effectively provides a better access to justice at the awareness level, which will ultimately empower every individual to protect their rights and seek recourses within the formal justice system. For the year 2023, a total of **29 episodes** of #PALA spread over two seasons were aired on Facebook and uploaded on various social media platforms for easy access by the general populace.

Certainly, information technology is the way to move forward and keep up with the fast-changing social landscape. Yet, technology-driven innovation efforts cannot succeed without a sturdy and robust foundation. For this reason, the Office continues to strengthen its conventional information dissemination programs to boost its effort to educate the people of their legal rights, responsibilities, and remedies. As a result, the Office was able to assist almost a million people in 2023 through its jail visitation and conventional legal information dissemination programs.

In parallel, the Office remains open for partnership with various public and private agencies to carry out the duties and responsibilities that fall within the ambit of its mandate, as well as those which will nonetheless enhance the administration of justice in general. That is why in 2023, the PAO affirmed its commitment to assist in the plight of refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons through the renewal of its decade-long Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Office likewise executed three Memoranda of Agreement with other national government agencies relative to the recently concluded 2023 *Barangay* and *Sangguniang Kabataan* Elections; all aimed to provide various election stakeholders' access to justice. Finally, in coordination with

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local government units, seven new district offices were opened in 2023 to cater to the legal needs of the local communities, especially in far flung areas of our country.

These efforts would go to waste without the support of the competent women and men of the PAO, which enables the Office to effectively provide access to justice, particularly to indigents and other qualified clients. To keep their morale and motivation high, the Office strives to provide incentives and trainings to its personnel. The *5<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Rank and File Employees of the Public Attorney's Office* held on October 9-11, 2023 at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), Pasay City is an example. The said convention was organized to develop and enhance the capability of the support staff to perform their functions, and to recognize those who have remained loyal to the Office and the cause of its clients.

As a testament to its untiring commitment to the public, the Office received a record-breaking **51 awards** in 2023 from various award-giving bodies— the highest number of awards in a single year thus far. These include the double awards for *Most Outstanding Public Service Office Award* (for the PAO) and *Most Outstanding Public Servant Award* (for the Chief Public Attorney) given by the People's Choice Excellence Awards Committee and the Asia Pacific Awards Council during the 41st People's Choice Excellence Awards that was held on March 5, 2023 at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila, Pasay City.

Overall, by taking initiatives to improve access to justice in pursuit of an enhanced administration of justice, the Office was able to serve **12,516,668 clients** and handle **833,279 cases** in 2023. The said clients include **87,656 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs)** represented by the Office who were released from detention in the same year. In proportion to its **2,505 public attorneys**, this translates to roughly **4,997:1** ratio of clients per one public attorney, and



**333:1** ratio of cases per one public attorney. Moreover, the Office was able to secure **83.55% favorable disposition rate** for its cases, commendably surpassing the 83.05% target set under the *General Appropriations Act (GAA) of Fiscal Year (FY) 2023*.

The foregoing considered, it is with great honor and pride for the undersigned to present the PAO's accomplishments for the calendar year 2023.

## 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*.<sup>1</sup>

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, Quezon City. The regional and district/sub-district offices,

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<sup>1</sup> accessible at [https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/UN\\_principles\\_and\\_guidelines\\_on\\_access\\_to\\_legal\\_aid.pdf](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

on the other hand, are strategically located nationwide to effectively and efficiently respond to indigent clients from 17 regions, 82 provinces, 149 cities, 1,485 municipalities, and 42,001 barangays;<sup>2</sup> all of which have constituents who are in dire need of legal assistance.

Currently, the PAO has **17 regional offices, 354 district offices, five sub-district offices, two Regional Special and Appealed Cases Units (RSACUs) located in Cagayan de Oro City and Cebu City, and one satellite office.** 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, which are nonetheless in close proximity to the courts, 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 **2,505 public attorneys**, who actively handle criminal, civil, labor, administrative, and other quasi-judicial cases before the courts and quasi-judicial bodies nationwide. About **113** 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).

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<sup>2</sup> Philippine Standard Geographic Codes (PSGC) released on 24 October 2023, accessible at <https://psa.gov.ph/classification/psgc/>, last accessed on 4 January 2024

However, the 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 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:

<b>REGION</b>	<b>DISTRICT / OTHER UNITS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PUBLIC ATTORNEYS</b>
Central Office	One Central Office (with six services)	114
National Capital Region	16	362
Cordillera Administrative Region	25	72
Region I Ilocos Region	25	147
Region II Cagayan Valley	21	110
Region III Central Luzon	37	246
Region IV-A CALABARZON	38	266
Region IV-B MIMAROPA	14 / one satellite office	70
Region V Bicol Region	30 / one sub-district	161
Region VI Western Visayas	25	172
Region VII Central Visayas	19 / one RSACU	170
Region VIII Eastern Visayas	27	135
Region IX-A BARMM	5 / one sub-district	52
Region IX-B Zamboanga Peninsula	15	100
Region X	19 / one RSACU &	107

Northern Mindanao	three sub-district offices	
Region XI Davao Region	14	73
Region XII SOCCSKSARGEN	12	92
Region XIII CARAGA	12	56
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>380<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>2,505</b>

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 2023, seven new 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, as well as its proportionate relation to the **2,505 lawyers** for the period covering January to December 2023.

Total No. of Clients Assisted	<b>12,516,668</b>
Total No. of Cases Handled	<b>833,279</b>
Average No. of Clients Assisted by Each Lawyer	<b>4,997</b>
Average No. of Cases Handled by Each Lawyer	<b>333</b>

Table No. 2

<sup>3</sup> Including the 17 regional offices

## 2. ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOME AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In line with R.A. No. 11936 or the General Appropriations Act for FY 2023, 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 2023 TARGETS	FY 2023 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	83.05%	83.55% (290,855/348,113)
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% (815,725/815,725)
2. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) success rate	92.92%	92.97% (23,238/24,996)
3. Percentage of request for non-judicial assistance that are acted upon within two hours	100%	100% (5,003,153/5,003,153)

Table No. 3





\* As of 31 December 2023, there are 2,505 authorized positions for public attorney *vis-a-vis* 2,543 organized courts reported by the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) of the Supreme Court. Note that the number of organized courts (2,543) 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, which include, among others, the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) and its various regional arbitration branches nationwide, National Police Commission (NAPOLCOM), and Professional Regulation Commission (PRC).

Considering that there are no additional plantilla items for the said appellate courts, NLRC, and other quasi-judicial bodies— whose indigent litigants are equally deserving of legal representation and assistance 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.

Sadly, 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.

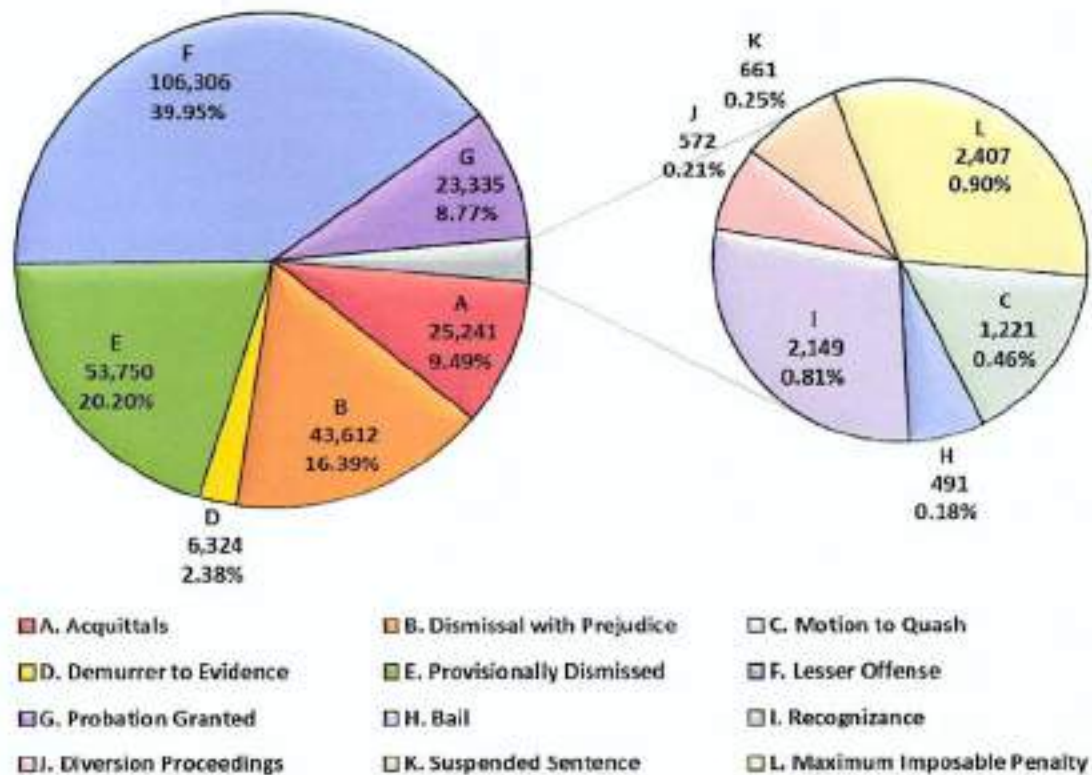
Given the current number of public attorneys *vis-a-vis* the combined courts and quasi-judicial agencies wherein the PAO represents indigent and other qualified clients, it is clear that additional plantilla positions are needed in order to realize the intent behind the 1:1 ratio of public attorneys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

- **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. They were able to skillfully facilitate the release and attain favorable disposition of cases of their clients by way of acquittal, dismissal of case, or other legal reasons, 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 2023, totaling 266,069.

**ACQUITTALS/DISMISSAL OF CASES/RELEASE FROM DETENTION/JAILS AND OTHER FAVORABLE DISPOSITIONS**



Graph No. 1

## • WINNING APPEALED CASES

For criminal cases alone, a total of **1,077 cases** were favorably disposed during the period of January to December 2023 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	782
Acquittals from Reclusion Temporal	123
Other Favorable Dispositions	172
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,077</b>

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 2023, **1,530** civil and special cases handled by the PAO were terminated. Of the terminated cases, **685 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. As a complement to physical or in-person jail visitation, legal consultation and representation are also being conducted in some areas through electronic means, which is commonly referred to as *e-dalaw*. The table below shows the output of the project for the year 2023, to wit:

#### Regular Monthly Jail Visitation of District Offices Nationwide:

No. of PDLs	Monthly Jail Visitation of District Offices Nationwide
<b>Interviewed &amp; Assisted</b>	260,469
<b>Provided Legal Representation in Court</b>	451,795
<b>Released</b>	87,656

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) until 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.

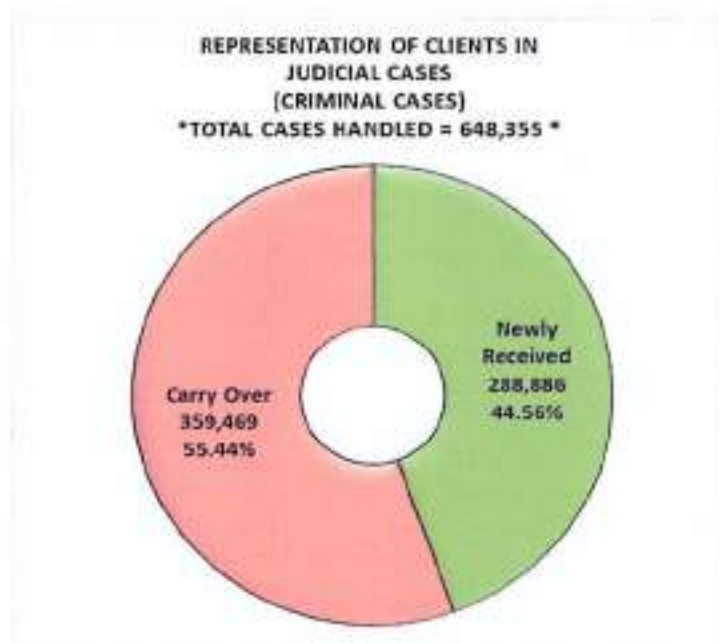
A total of **88,615 clients** benefited from the services provided by the PAO consisting of inquest assistance, legal advice/counselling, and documentation at the above duty stations covering the period January to December 2023.

## IV. CASE LOAD, STATISTICAL REPORT, AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

### A. RENDITION OF JUDICIAL SERVICES

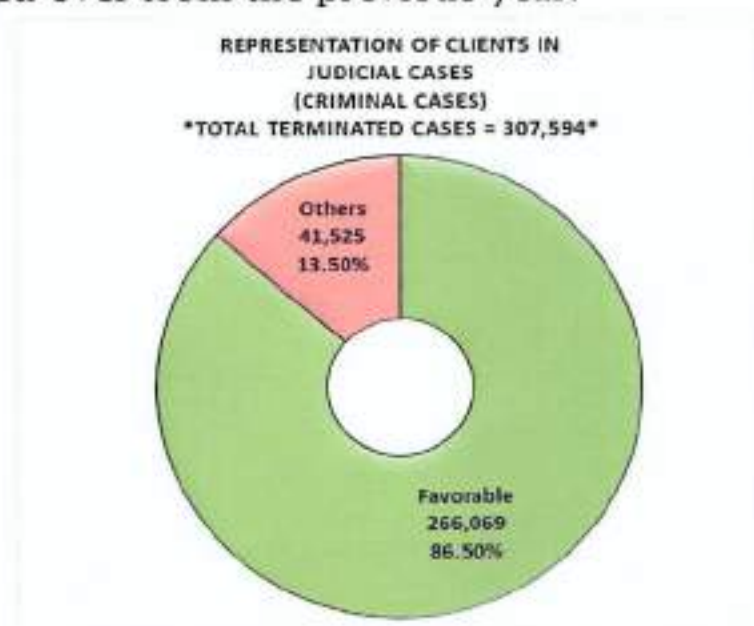
#### 1. Regular Services

##### a) CRIMINAL



Graph No. 2

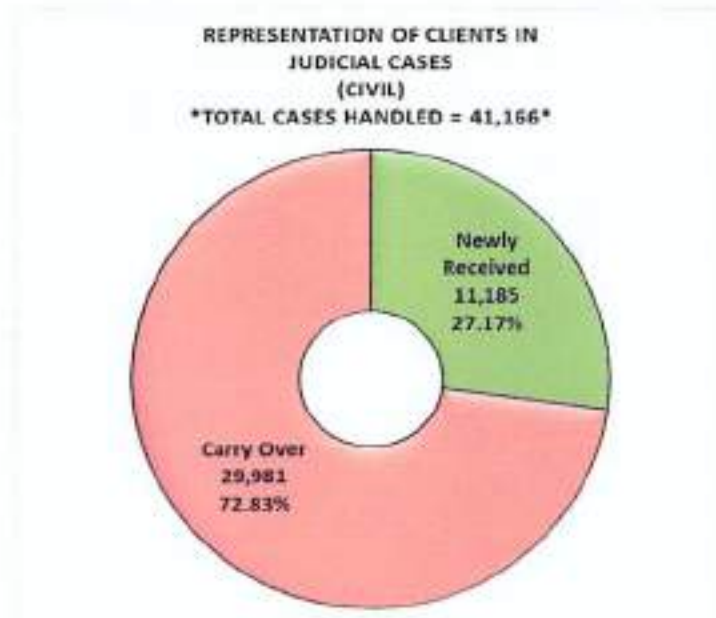
For the year 2023, the PAO handled a total of **648,355 criminal cases**. Of this total, **288,886 cases** were newly received cases and **359,469 cases** were carried-over from the previous year.



Graph No. 3

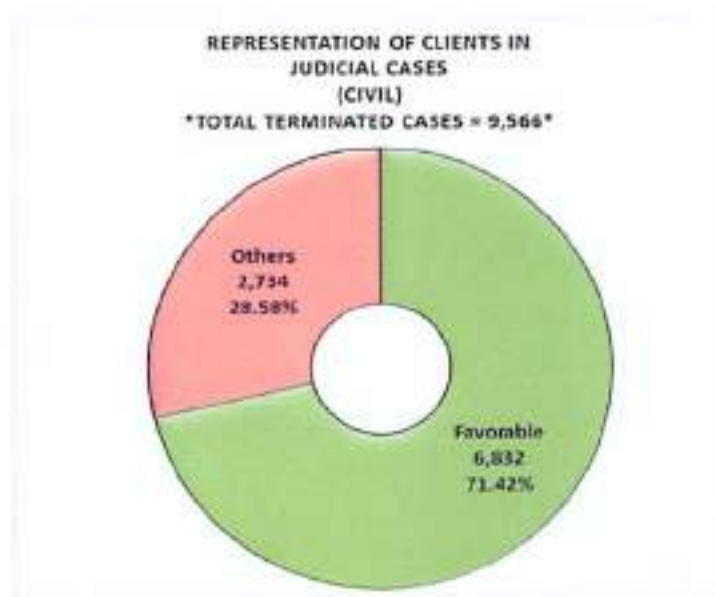
Out of the 307,594 terminated criminal cases from January to December 2023, 266,069 cases or about 86.50% thereof were favorably disposed by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

**b) CIVIL**



Graph No. 4

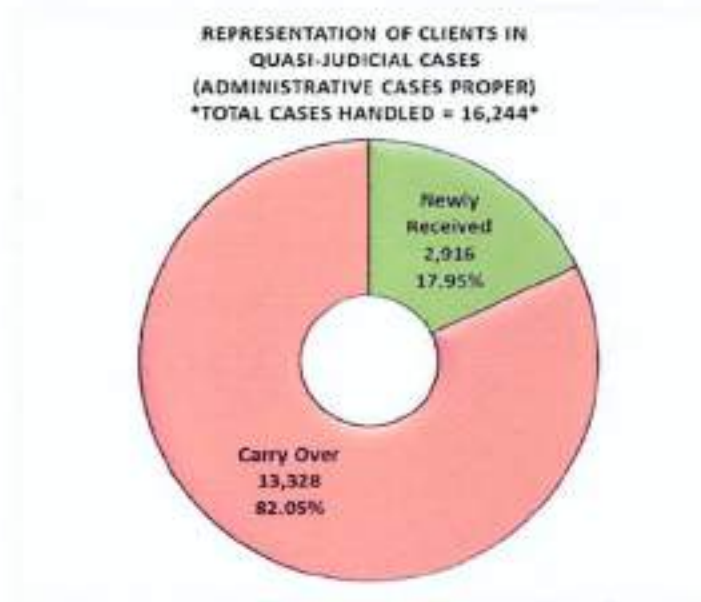
For the year 2023, the PAO handled a total of 41,166 civil cases. Of this total, 11,185 cases were newly received cases and 29,981 cases were carried-over from the previous year.



Graph No. 5

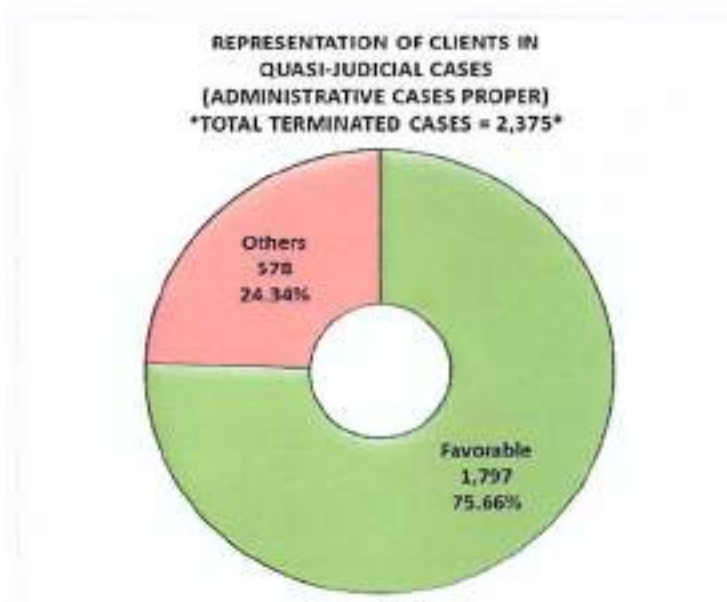
Out of the **9,566** terminated civil cases from January to December 2023, **6,832 cases or about 71.42% thereof were favorably disposed** by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

**c) ADMINISTRATIVE CASES PROPER**



Graph No. 6

The PAO handled a total of **16,244 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 **13,328** carry-over cases and **2,916** newly received cases from January to December 2023.

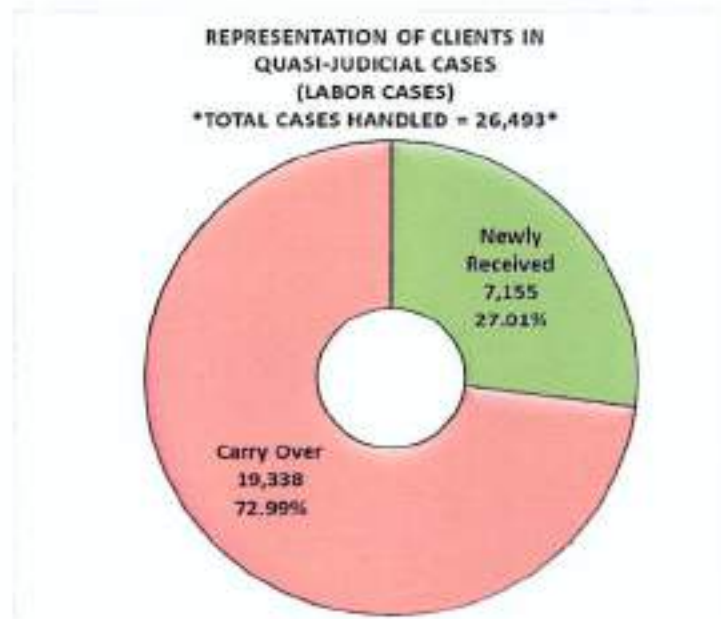


Graph No. 7



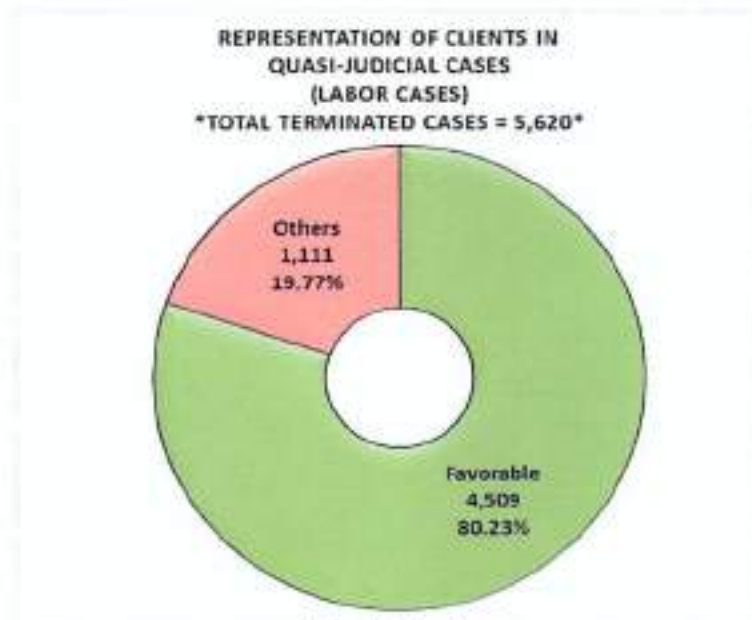
Out of the 2,375 terminated administrative cases from January to December 2023, 1,797 cases or about 75.66% thereof were favorably disposed by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

**d) LABOR CASES**



Graph No. 8

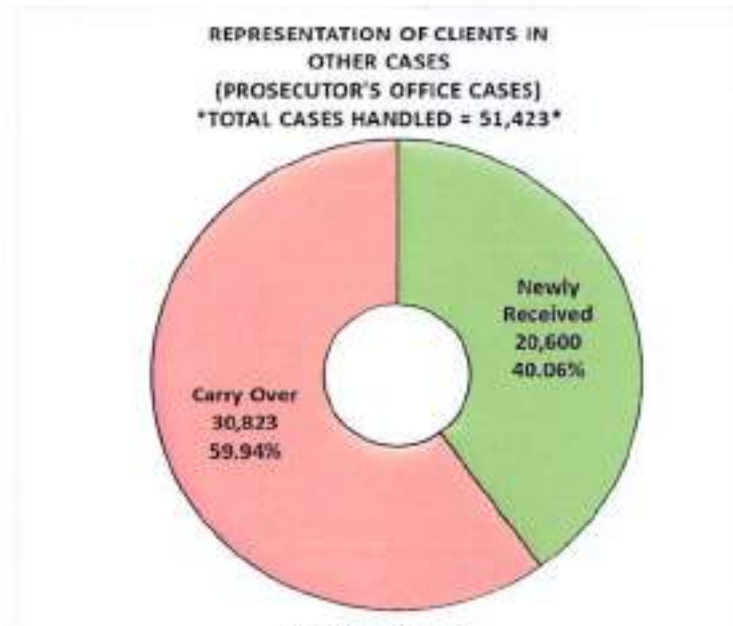
As to labor cases, the PAO handled a total of 26,493 labor cases from January to December 2023. Of this number, 7,155 were newly received, while the remaining 19,338 were carried over from the previous year.



Graph No. 9

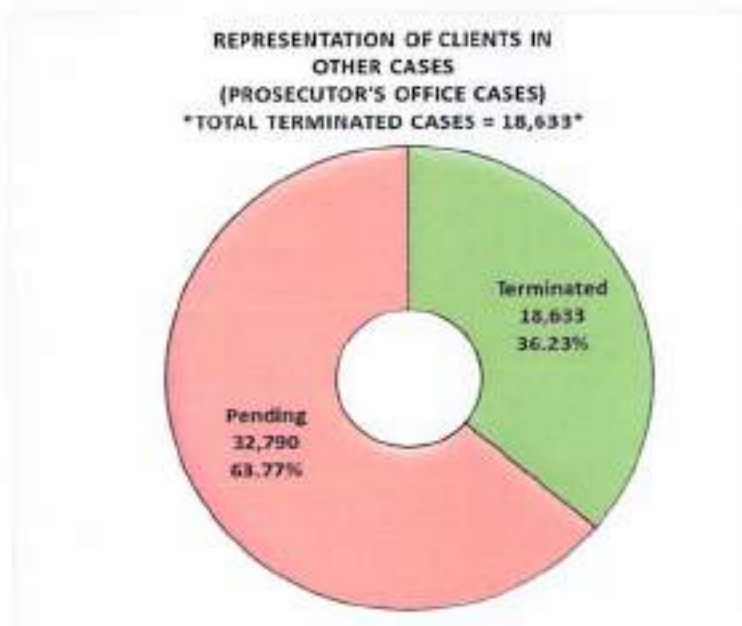
Out of the 5,620 terminated labor cases from January to December 2023, 4,509 cases or about 80.23% thereof were favorably disposed by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

**e) PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE CASES**



Graph No. 10

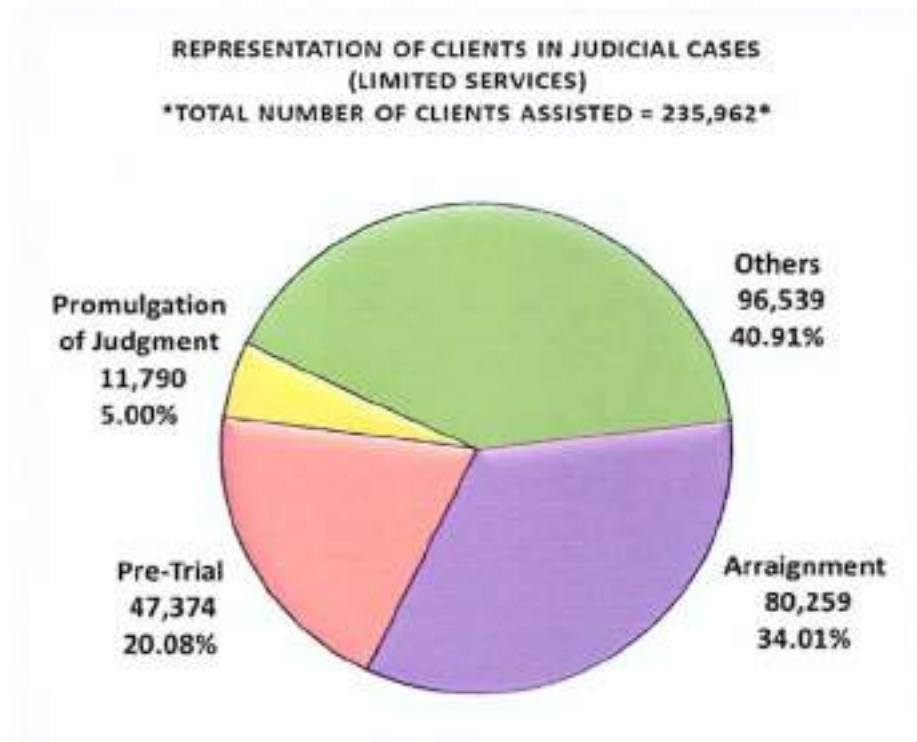
For the year 2023, the Office handled a total of 51,423 cases for preliminary investigation at the prosecutor's office level, 20,600 of which were newly received and 30,823 were carried over from the previous year.



Graph No. 11

For the same period, **18,633** cases were terminated by the respective public attorneys assigned to handle the same.

## 2. Limited Services



Graph No. 11

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 **235,962 clients** from January to December 2023.

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

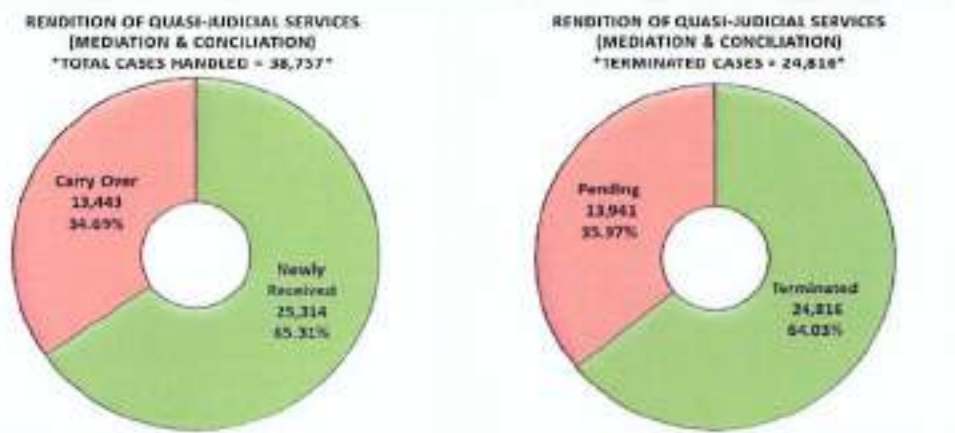
From January to December 2023, the PAO served a total of **1,599 clients** in **1,280 cases** provided with Special Legal Services pursuant to the PAO Law, as well as various MOAs entered into by the PAO with other

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



Graph No. 13

Graph No. 14

It is worth noting 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 2023, the PAO handled a total of **38,757 disputes/cases** involving **45,504 clients**. **25,314 of the cases** handled in 2023 were received during the

year, while the remaining 13,443 cases were carried over from the previous year. The PAO was able to terminate 24,996 mediation cases handled in 2023.

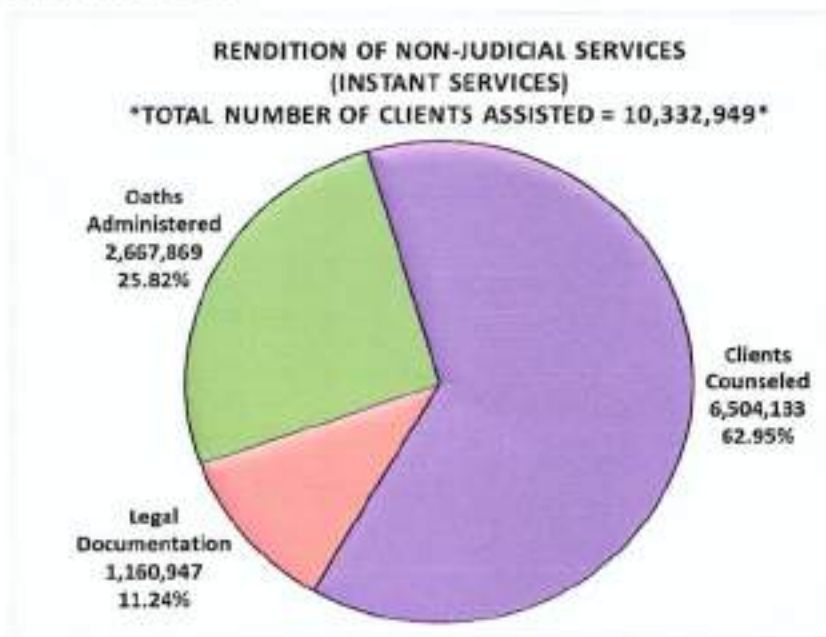
## 2. Investigation

For the year 2023, the PAO conducted a total of 20 investigations of cases involving torture in pursuit of its mandate to assist victims of torture as enunciated in *Section 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

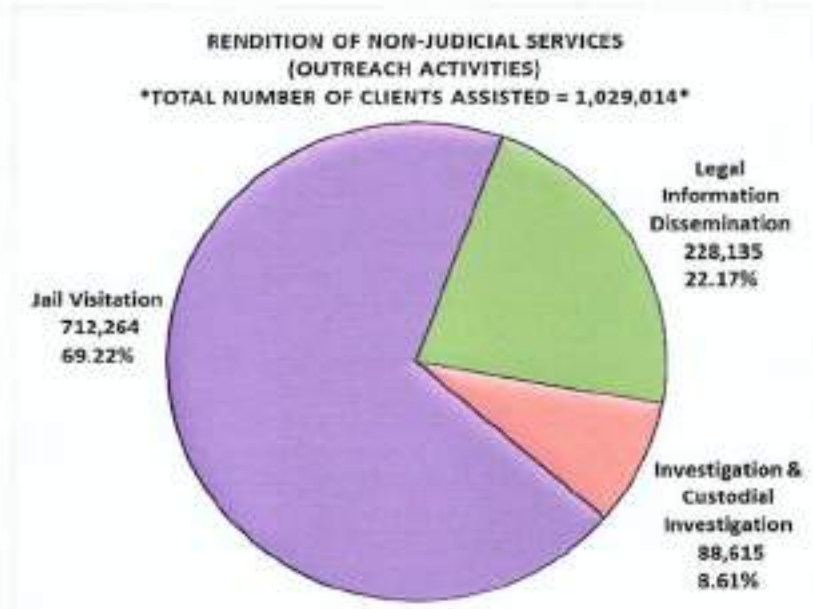
### 1. Instant Services



Graph No. 15

The PAO rendered instant services, composed of legal documentation, counselling, and administering of oath, to **10,332,949 clients** for the period covering January to December 2023.

## 2. Outreach Services



Graph No. 16

The outreach activities regularly conducted by the Office from January to December 2023 resulted to the assistance of a total of **1,029,014 clients** broken down as follows: **712,264 clients** for jail visitation, **88,615 clients** for inquest investigation and custodial interrogation, and **228,135 clients** for legal information dissemination.

In addition to the above outreach services, the PAO-Central Office also conducted separate legal and medical outreach activities during the year, *viz.:*

NO.	JAIL VISITED	DATE	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
1	Correctional Institution for Women	April 03, 2023	1 <sup>st</sup>	236	129	64	51
2	Quezon City Female Dormitory	April 04, 2023	2 <sup>nd</sup>	39	130	58	37

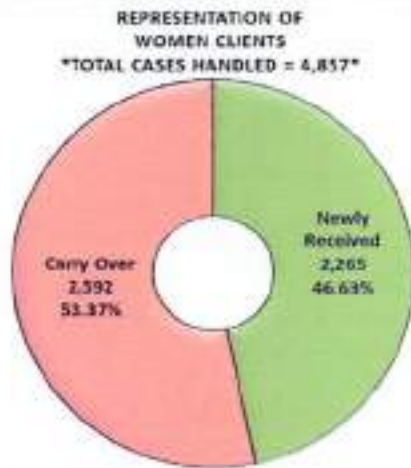
3	Makati City Jail	May 08, 2023	3 <sup>rd</sup>	61	197	90	153
4	Caloocan City Jail	May 09, 2023	4 <sup>th</sup>	91	162	77	148
5	Quezon City Female Dormitory	July 10, 2023	5 <sup>th</sup>	58	98	86	104
6	Correctional Institution for Women	July 11, 2023	6 <sup>th</sup>	207	298	107	156
7	Correctional Institution for Women	October 26, 2023	7 <sup>th</sup>	271	313	103	127
8	Maximum Security Compound	November 23, 2023	8 <sup>th</sup>	282	290	93	124
9	Maximum Security Compound	December 19, 2023	9 <sup>th</sup>	230	271	107	186
TOTAL				1,475	1,888	785	1,086

Table No. 6

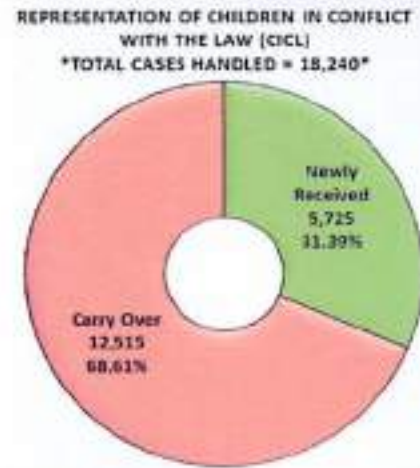
### ***WOMEN CLIENTS AND CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW***

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.

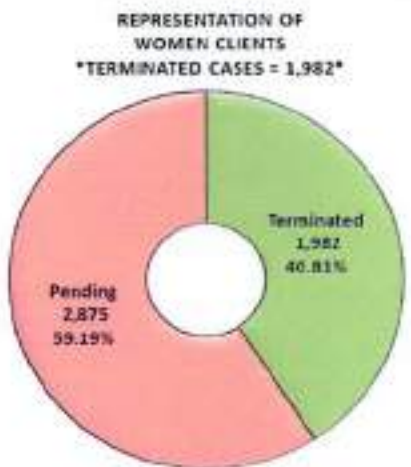


Graph No. 17

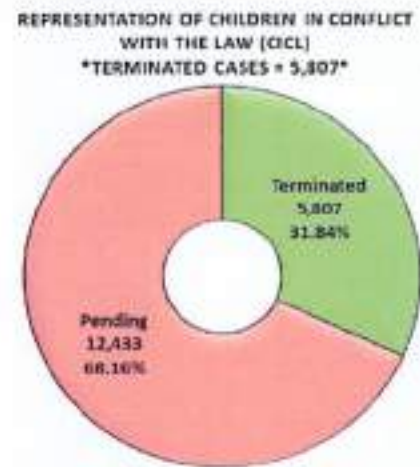


Graph No. 18

The graphs above show the number of women VAWC victims and CICLs assisted by the PAO for the year 2023. From January to December 2023, the Office handled a total of **4,857 cases involving women VAWC victims and 18,240 cases involving CICLs.**



Graph No. 19



Graph No. 20

For the same period, **1,982 and 5,807 cases were terminated involving women and CICLs, respectively.**

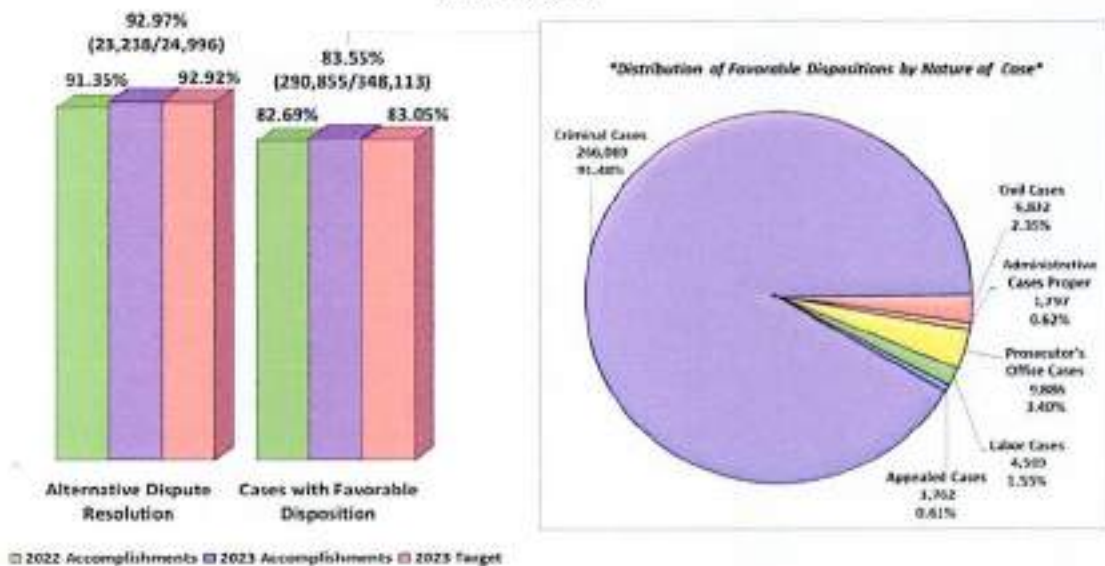
The above-shown data is a testament to the continued trust and confidence of the people in the Office and their faith to the fulfillment of its mandate. It is viewed that when the agency performs its duties and responsibilities with the highest standard of efficiency and dedication, it gives its humble 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. 2023 TARGET AND 2022 PERFORMANCE

**COMPARISON OF ACTUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS VERSUS TARGETS FOR 2023**  
(In Percentages)



Graph No. 21

Overall, the PAO achieved **83.55%** favorable disposition rate for the cases it handled for the calendar year 2023, which is equivalent to **290,855 favorable dispositions** out of **348,113** terminated cases. This feat surpassed the target favorable disposition rate of 83.05% (based on the GAA of FY 2023) by **0.50%**, translating to **1,747** cases with favorable disposition above the target. The 2023 disposition rate is also higher by 0.86% than last year's favorable disposition rate of 82.69%.

The **290,855** cases with favorable disposition for the calendar year 2023 is broken down as follows: **266,069** criminal cases = **91.48%**; **6,832** civil cases = **2.35%**; **1,797** administrative cases = **0.62%**; **9,886** prosecutor's office cases

= 3.40%; 4,509 labor cases = 1.55%; and 1,762 appealed cases = 0.60%.

With respect to performance in ADR for the calendar year 2023, the Office garnered **92.97% ADR settlement rate**, which is equivalent to **23,238 cases successfully terminated through ADR** out of **24,996** terminated cases for ADR. This number is 0.05% higher than 92.92% target settlement rate (based on the GAA of FY 2023), and is also 1.57% higher than last year's (2022) ADR settlement rate of 91.35%. With the encouragement of the top management and the zeal of all the public attorneys, the PAO was able to finally achieve its ADR settlement rate target this year.

## **VI. THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PUBLIC ATTORNEY**

A. The Office of the Chief Public Attorney **received/answered 44,442 communications**, in addition to **23,849 replies/answers** to queries and requests for legal assistance (excluding social media engagement), from January to December 2023. The breakdown is as follows:

<b>I. Communication to / from CPA Rueda-Acosta</b>	<b>No. of Communications</b>	
A. Communication from Executive Division		<b>10,315</b>
1. Appointments	1,203	
2. Memorandum	492	
3. Memorandum Order	622	
4. Memorandum Circular	4	
5. Office Order	170	
6. Reassignment Order	71	
7. Travel Order	163	
8. Special Order	31	
9. Detail Order	5	
10. Travel Authority	329	
11. Other Communications		
11.1. Signed by CPA	96	
11.2. Signed by Executive	7,129	

Lawyers		
<b>B. Communication from Other Divisions</b>		237
1. Executive Support Staff	237	
<b>C. Communication from Other Services</b>		7,274
1. Administrative Service	2,669	
2. Legal Research Service	3,765	
3. Field Operations and Statistics Service	371	
4. Financial Planning and Management Service	98	
5. Special and Appealed Cases Service	371	
<b>D. Communication from Regional Offices</b>		4,785
1. Region I	130	
2. Region II	53	
3. Region III	399	
4. Region IV-A	1,004	
5. Region IV-B	226	
6. Region V	180	
7. Region VI	242	
8. Region VII	101	
9. Region VIII	132	
10. Region IX-BARMM	49	
11. Region IX-ZMB	205	
12. Region X	98	
13. Region XI	154	
14. Region XII	122	
15. Region XIII/CARAGA	132	
16. CAR	199	
17. NCR	1,359	
<b>E. Communication/Emails from District Offices</b>		1,194
<b>II. Communication to / from FMD / CASH</b>		7,391
A. Cash Advance	203	
B. Purchase Order	208	
C. Requisition and Issue Slips	1,608	
D. Vouchers and Checks	5,372	
<b>II. Communication to / from DCPA Mosing</b>		2,344
A. Clearance (from Personnel Section)	1,257	
B. Authority to Travel	354	
C. Exec-LRS Cases	160	
D. LRS 8888	573	
<b>IV. Core Process</b>		
A. Communication from OP, OVP, Senate & HOR		911
<b>B. Communication from Other Offices</b>		1,875
1. Department of Justice	45	
2. Supreme Court	23	

3. Court of Appeals	38	
4. RTC / MTC / MCTC / <i>Sandiganbayan</i>	11	
5. Other Offices	1,264	
6. Applicants	494	
C. Publications		
1. Dear PAO (Manila Times)	355	770
2. <i>Magtanong kay Attorney (Bulgar)</i>	351	
3. <i>Daing Mula sa Hukay... Hustisyal (Bulgar)</i>	48	
4. <i>Sabi ni Doc (Bulgar)</i>	16	
D. EMAILS		
1. Legal Assistance	5,064	6,250
2. Applicants	34	
3. Others emails	1,152	
E. Communications on Special Cases		1,096
<b>TOTAL NO. OF COMMUNICATIONS</b>		<b>44,442</b>

Table No. 7

- B. The Office of the Chief Public Attorney actually served a total of **3,334,223 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 **170 persons** (as of 31 December 2023) 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 accordingly acted upon 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 2023, **two dead Dengvaxia vaccinees** were 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 2023, **158** criminal complaints and **154** 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 158 criminal complaints, 43 are already pending in court, while the rest are still pending before the DOJ either for preliminary investigation or for review. Meanwhile, 120 out of the 154 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 said petition, the DOH amended its interim guidelines on the administration of COVID-19 vaccine on minors and removed the contested provision which allowed the State to give consent to the vaccination if the parents refuse to permit it. The case then proceeded with the presentation of the evidence.

As of December 2023, the Honorable Court already resolved the parties' respective Formal Offers of Evidence. Consequently, the parties were directed to submit their respective memoranda on the main petition and the application for injunctive relief.

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

1. ***Philippine Distinct Men and Women of Excellence Award*** given during the Philippine Distinct Men and Women of Excellence Awards held on December 28, 2023 at Manila Grand Opera Hotel, Manila;
2. ***Dangal ng Bayan Award*** conferred during *Gawad Pilipino's "Duyan Ka Ng Magiting"* Year-Ender Recognition to Outstanding Filipinos from Gawad Pilipino Awards held on December 27, 2023 at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City;
3. ***Inspire Award*** from Inspire Magazine during its 2<sup>nd</sup> Issue Launching and the holding of the Inspire Awards Night on December 19, 2023 at Marriott Hotel, Pasay City;
4. ***Plaque of Participation*** (In grateful acknowledgment of her distinguished and invaluable service rendered as Guest of Honor and Speaker during the 8th Year Anniversary Program of *Mata ng Masa* Task Force contributing immeasurably to the prestige and success of the occasion), from the PNP Force Multiplier - *Mata ng Masa* Task Force, received during

#PALA's show on December 15, 2023 at the PAO Central Office, Quezon City;

5. ***Philippine Eagle National President's Award (PREXY) 2023*** from The Fraternal Order of Eagles - Philippine Eagles, Inc., personally received during #PALA's show on December 15, 2023 at the PAO Central Office, Quezon City;
6. ***Public Servant Excellence Award*** conferred during the 34<sup>th</sup> Founding Anniversary of the Mike Delta Force held on December 10, 2023 at Tramway Bayview Buffet, Pasay City;
7. ***Hall of Fame Award*** given during the Charity Gala and Hall of Fame 2023 on December 8, 2023 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
8. ***Premier Achiever - Outstanding and Inspiring Public Servant of the Year*** given by La Visual Corporation during the Southeast Asian Premier Business and Achiever Awards 2023 held on December 8, 2023 at Winford Resort and Casino Manila, Manila;
9. ***Most Outstanding Individual Achievement in Public Service and Legal Practice (2nd Year)*** awarded during the Asian Sterling Awards 2023 on December 4, 2023 at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila, Pasay City;
10. ***Most Prominent Achievement in Public Service and Legal Practice*** given during the NCO Pacific Eminence Awards 2023 on December 4, 2023 at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila, Pasay City;
11. ***Public Servant of the Year*** conferred during the 1st Philippine Pageantry Excellence Awards 2024 by Best Magazine on December 2, 2023 at Teatrino Promenade, San Juan City;
12. ***Circle of Excellence Award*** (Received on behalf of the Public Attorney's Office) given during the Asia CEO Awards 2023 held on October 24, 2023 at Marriott Grand Ballroom, Pasay City;

13. ***Outstanding Legal Expertise and Commitment to Public Welfare Award*** given during the Asean Excellence Achievers Awards 2023 held on October 23, 2023 at Okada, Manila, Parañaque City;
14. ***Excellence Award in Public Service*** conferred during the 2023 Saludo Excellence Awards held at the Centennial Hall of The Manila Hotel, Manila, on October 8, 2023;
15. ***Hall of Fame Award*** from the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption awarded during its 25<sup>th</sup> Founding Anniversary Celebration on September 30, 2023 at Club Filipino, San Juan City;
16. ***Major Award*** (In heartfelt appreciation for and in recognition of her consistent dedication to the PAO's mandate and advocacy on public service and justice which redounds to the benefit of its clients and the public) from the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, awarded during its 25<sup>th</sup> Founding Anniversary Celebration on September 30, 2023 at Club Filipino, San Juan City;
17. ***Major Award*** (Received on behalf of the Public Attorney's Office, citation same as above) from the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption awarded during its 25<sup>th</sup> Founding Anniversary Celebration on September 30, 2023 at Club Filipino, San Juan City;
18. ***Outstanding Leader and Public Servant*** from the 3 Stars Productions and Inspire Magazine Philippines during the 3rd Diamond Excellence Awards held on September 26, 2023 at Marriott Hotel, Pasay City;
19. ***Certificate of Recognition*** (In grateful recognition of the PAO's steadfast support and commitment of ensuring a safe environment for media workers) from the Office of the President - Presidential Task Force on Media Security given during the NCR segment of the 2023 Nationwide Summit: Promoting a Free and Responsible Press Towards a Safer Media Environment held on September 19, 2023 at Bayview Park Hotel, Roxas Blvd., Manila;



20. ***Certificate of Appreciation*** (Awarded to the PAO, in appreciation of the invaluable partnership with the American Bar Association - Rule of Law Initiative during the implementation of the "Access to Justice and Support for the Rule of Law in the Philippines (ACCESS) Project," from the American Bar Association - Rule of Law Initiative given on September 15, 2023 at Rizal Park Hotel, Manila;
21. ***Plaque of Appreciation*** (In grateful appreciation of her valuable participation and support to the Philippine Public Health Association) given during its 88<sup>th</sup> National Convention held on September 13 to 14, 2023 at Winford Manila Resort and Casino, Manila;
22. ***Appreciation Trophy*** from the *Maharlika*s Fraternal and Sororal Order of Tigers (Tiger of Asia) for being the Guest of Honor during their National Oath Taking Ceremonies held on September 10, 2023 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
23. ***Outstanding Excellence Award in Public Service*** from La Visual Corp. bestowed during Philippine Finest Business Awards and Outstanding Achievers 2023 held on September 8, 2023 at the Penthouse Floor, The Hexagon Events Place, Hexagon Corporate Center, Quezon City;
24. ***Global Iconic Public Servant with Outstanding Dedication to Public Welfare and Social Services Award*** from the Global Aces Awards (headed by Ms. Bennilyn Amigo-Molina) awarded during the 2nd Global Iconic Aces Awards 2023 held on August 28, 2023 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
25. ***Lifetime Achievement Award*** from RDH Entertainment Network and Best Magazine, conferred during the 7th Outstanding Men and Women of the Philippines 2023 Awards held on August 25, 2023 at Music Museum, San Juan City;
26. ***Plake Ng Pagpapahalaga*** (*Sa kanyang hindi matatawarang pagsuporta, at taos-pusong paglalaan ng oras at kaalaman bilang Panauhing*

*Tagapagsalita*) given during Bulacan State University's (BulSU) Juris Doctor Conferment Ceremony held on August 24, 2023 at BulSU, Malolos, Bulacan;

27. ***Plaque of Support*** (In recognition of your unwavering commitment, dedication, and tireless efforts in delivering justice to the marginalized and underprivileged communities) from The Fraternal Order of Eagles - Philippine Eagles, Inc. awarded on August 18, 2023 at the PAO Central Office, Quezon City;
28. ***Plaque of Recognition*** given during the Testimonial and Induction of 2020-2021 New Lawyers of IBP Manila I, III and IV Chapters, personally received on August 18, 2023 at the PAO Central Office, Quezon City;
29. ***Plaque of Appreciation*** (In recognition of her outstanding performance and leadership, dedication to public service, and love and respect for the media in its significant role to nation-building) from the Quezon City Press Club, Inc. received on August 15, 2023 at the PAO Central Office, Quezon City;
30. ***MELA 2023 Most Trusted and Empowered Public Servant of the Year*** from Metro Excellence Leadership Awards (MELA) and *Gintong Pamana ng Lahi 2023*, awarded on July 22, 2023 at Crowne Plaza Hotel Manila, Quezon City;
31. ***Honorary Public Servant of the Year - Excellence in Government Service Award*** from the Nation Builders and MOSLIV Awards and Sustainability Standards, Inc., conferred on June 30, 2023 at the Grand Ballroom of Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
32. ***Certificate of Appreciation*** from the Philippine Association of Local Government Accountants, Inc. (PhALGA) given on June 28, 2023 at the Surigao Provincial Gymnasium, Surigao City;
33. ***Outstanding Achiever in Public Service Award*** from Asian Top Choice Awards given on June 24, 2023 at

the Golden Ballroom of Okada Manila, Parañaque City;

34. ***Bravo Filipino Award ("Pusong Bayani")*** from the Bravo Filipino Awards given on June 13, 2023 at the Maynila Ballroom, The Manila Hotel, Manila;
35. ***Plaque of Appreciation for the Public Attorney's Office*** (In recognition of its contribution to the Office of the Vice President's vision to reach, serve, and create lasting impact on the lives of the Filipino people) from H. E. Vice President Sara Z. Duterte, given on June 5, 2023 at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila, Pasay City;
36. ***Remarkable Woman of Strength and Outstanding Public Servant Award*** from *Maharlikang Filipino Awards 2023* held on June 2, 2023 at Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
37. ***Lifetime Achievement Award in Public Service*** from the Laguna Excellence Awards during the 4<sup>th</sup> Laguna Excellence Awards held on May 7, 2023 at Calamba Tent, Calamba, Laguna;
38. ***Leadership Achievement in Public Service "Hall of Fame" Award*** from the Elite Business and Leadership Awards conferred on April 1, 2023 at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila, Pasay City;
39. ***Tambuli Award*** from the Toastmasters International District 75 Division K held on April 1, 2023 at Analog Devices Inc. Auditorium, General Trias, Cavite;
40. ***Outstanding Woman of Class with Unwavering Dedication to Public Service*** given during the Crystal International Women's Awards 2023 held on March 28, 2023 at the Golden Grand Ballroom, Okada Manila, Parañaque;
41. ***Outstanding Public Servant Award*** from NGO TV Awards given on March 28, 2023 at *Tanghalang Pasigueño*, Pasig City;

42. ***Ambassador for Human Rights*** from *Gawad Pilipino Awards* conferred on March 25, 2023 at Eurotel Hotel North EDSA, Quezon City;
43. ***Natatanging Pilipina sa Larangan ng Serbisyo Publiko*** from *Gawad Pilipino Awards* awarded on March 25, 2023 at Eurotel Hotel North EDSA, Quezon City;
44. ***100 Most Empowered Women of the Year*** from *Gawad Pilipino Awards* given on March 25, 2023 at Eurotel Hotel North EDSA, Quezon City;
45. ***Most Outstanding Public Servant Award*** given by the People's Choice Excellence Awards Committee and the Asia Pacific Awards Council (APAC) during the 41st People's Choice Excellence Award held on March 5, 2023 at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila, Pasay City;
46. ***Most Outstanding Public Service Office Award*** (for PAO) given by the People's Choice Excellence Awards Committee and the APAC during the 41st People's Choice Excellence Award held on March 5, 2023 at Sofitel Philippine Plaza Manila, Pasay City;
47. ***Plaque of Appreciation*** (In recognition for her invaluable support as "Keynote Speaker" during the 15th Mindanao Geographical Conference of the PhALGA) given on February 22, 2023 at the SMX Convention Center, Davao City;
48. ***Global Excellence in Social Development and Public Service Award*** given during the Global Trends Business Leaders Awards Year 2 held on February 20, 2023 at Okada Manila, Parañaque;
49. ***Heroes' Iconic Public Servant and Advocate for Justice Award*** conferred during the Asia's Modern Hero Awards 2023 held on February 17, 2023 at the Grand Ballroom, Okada Manila, Parañaque;
50. ***Most Prolific Public Defender Award*** from Diamond Golden Peace Care Good Heart World Class Global Award International Phils., Inc. given

during the 4th Diamond Golden Awards Night 2023 held on February 12, 2023 at the New World Hotel, Makati City; and

51. ***Certificate of Appreciation*** (In recognition of her participation as "Guest of Honor and Speaker" during the Chartering of Marikina City Masigasig Bagwis Eagle Club and Quezon City Matulungin Bagwis Eagles Club and Induction of New Members under NCR-L) from The Fraternal Order of Eagles - Philippine Eagles, Inc., given on January 29, 2023 at Marriott Hotel, Pasay City.

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

**Local**

1. ***Speaker***, 2023 Northern Luzon Media Summit, conducted by the PAO and the Presidential Task Force on Media Security, held on December 11, 2023 at Elizabeth Hotel, Baguio City;
2. ***Speaker***, 2023 Visayas Media Summit, conducted by the PAO and the Presidential Task Force on Media Security, held on November 21, 2023 at Marco Polo Hotel, Cebu City;
3. ***Speaker***, 2023 Central Luzon and Southern Luzon Media Summit, conducted by the PAO and the Presidential Task Force on Media Security, held on November 7, 2023 at Tagaytay Royale Hotel, Tagaytay City;
4. ***Organizer and Speaker***, 5<sup>th</sup> National Convention of the Rank-and-File Employees of the PAO, October 9 - 11, 2023, PICC, Pasay City;
5. ***Guest of Honor and Speaker***, National Oath Taking Ceremonies, Maharlikans Fraternal and Sororal Order of Tigers (Tiger of Asia), September 10, 2023, Okada Manila, Parañaque City;
6. ***Guest Speaker***, Juris Doctor Conferment Ceremony, August 24, 2023, Bulacan State University College of Law, Malolos, Bulacan;

7. **Keynote Speaker**, Mindanao Geographical Conference of PhALGA, June 28, 2023, Surigao Provincial Gymnasium, Surigao City;
8. **Keynote Speaker**, Toastmasters International Division K Speech Contests, April 1, 2023, Analog Devices Inc. Auditorium, General Trias, Cavite;
9. **Resource Speaker** (online "Discussion on Women's Rights for Different Scenarios"), FY23 Women at Microsoft (Wam) Brown Bag Sessions Spotlight on Women's Rights, Microsoft Philippines, March 17, 2023;
10. **Keynote Speaker**, 15th Mindanao Geographical Conference of PhALGA, February 22, 2023, SMX Convention Center, Davao City; and
11. **Guest of Honor and Speaker**, Chartering of Marikina City Masigasig Bagwis Eagle Club and Quezon City Matulungin Bagwis Eagles Club and Induction of New Members under NCR-L, The Fraternal Order of Eagles - Philippine Eagles, Inc., January 29, 2023, Marriott Hotel, Pasay City.

### International

12. **Speaker**, "1<sup>st</sup> Regional Conference on Access to Legal Aid" hosted and sponsored by the Government of India, the International Legal Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme, and the United Nations Children's Fund, held on November 27 to 28, 2023 in New Delhi, India;
13. **Speaker**, "2023 International Forum on Legal Aid" hosted and sponsored by the Legal Aid Foundation (LAF), Taiwan, held on November 13 to 15, 2023 in Taipei, Taiwan;
14. **Speaker**, 1<sup>st</sup> Corrections Technology Conference (CTC)" hosted by the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA), held on May 23 to 25, 2023 at the Adelaide Convention, Adelaide, Australia; and

15. **Fellow**, "Global Innovations on Youth Violence, Safety, and Justice" hosted and sponsored by Salzburg Global Seminar, held on February 8 to 12, 2023, Salzburg, Austria.

## **VIII. OTHER SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### ***On the Organization and Administration of the PAO***

#### ***A. 5<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Rank and File Employees of the Public Attorney's Office***

The 5<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Rank and File Employees of the Public Attorney's Office was held on October 9-11, 2023 at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), Pasay City. With around 1,000 rank and file employee-participants from all the offices of the PAO nationwide, the three-day event incorporated 18 lectures, ranging from the updates on government services and requirements (i.e. occupational safety, SALN, CSC Rules, etc.), gender and development, personal development, health and wellness, to PAO Code of Conduct and Revised PAO Operations Manual— all aimed to develop and enhance the capability of the participants to deliver "Prompt service with a smile" to the clients of the PAO, and to recognize those who have remained loyal to the Office and the cause of its clients.

#### ***B. Creation of District Offices***

Among the plans and programs of the PAO is the delivery of free legal services throughout the country's rural and remote areas. To achieve this plan, the PAO remains in constant coordination with LGUs, especially those in far-flung areas, to discuss the possibility of opening a district office that will cater to the legal needs



of the local community. For the year 2023, seven additional district offices were created, namely: Pasil, Kalinga District Office; Alcala, Cagayan District Office; Lallo Cagayan District Office; Asingan, Pangasinan District Office; Santa Rosa, Nueva Ecija District Office; Kasibu, Nueva Ecija District Office; and Passi City, Iloilo District Office. With this recent addition, the PAO now has 380 offices across the country, including its Central Office and regional offices, to serve the legal needs of indigents and other qualified clients of the Office.

***C. Execution of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) / Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Important National Agencies and International Organization Partners***

This year, the PAO also signed several MOA with various national government agencies and international organization partners to pursue matters of public interest, which are entwined with the mandate of the PAO. On 19 April 2023, the PAO and the UNHCR, renewed its decade-long MOU that provides free legal assistance, counselling, and representation to refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons.

The recently concluded 2023 Barangay and *Sangguniang Kabataan* Elections called for the execution of a MOA between: 1) the PAO and the Commission on Election (COMELEC) to effectively enforce the provisions the Omnibus Election Code on vote-buying and vote-selling, particularly on filing or handling reported incidents of such nature; 2) the PAO, COMELEC, and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology for the free and voluntary exercise of the fundamental right to vote of PDLs; and 3) the PAO, COMELEC, and the Department of Education to ensure legal assistance and representation to persons rendering election service for suits filed in



relation to the performance of their election duty functions.

Finally, to address the critical issues faced by media practitioners, the PAO and the Presidential Task Force on Media Security executed a MOA to facilitate the participation of the PAO in planning and organizing the implementation of the nationwide summit aimed to protect the welfare of media personnel, as well as to contribute legal expertise and insights during the said summit.

### *On the Services Rendered by the Office*

#### *D. Cases Covered by Rule III, Section 22 of the Code of Professional Responsibility and Accountability*

Rule III, Section 22 of the Code of Professional Responsibility and Accountability (CPRA), A.M. No. 22-09-01-SC dated 11 April 2023, issued by the Supreme Court allowed the PAO to handle cases of opposing clients that are traditionally covered by the Conflict of Interest Rule. Pursuant to the Supreme Court rules, the PAO devised ways and means to comply with the directive of the Supreme Court and assist indigent opponents who are equally in dire need of free legal representation in courts and other quasi-judicial agencies. Thus, for the year 2023, the PAO was able to handle **690 cases** where the opposing parties are both represented by the Office as allowed under the CPRA; thus reducing the number of indigent court litigants who are left on their own and unassisted by counsel. The details are as follows:

SERVICES/REGIONS	Total Cases
Special and Appealed Cases Service	2
National Capital Region	245
Cordillera Administrative Region	8

Region 1	58
Region 2	29
Region 3	62
Region 4A	98
Region 4B	14
Region 5	44
Region 6	24
Region 7	19
Region 8	7
Region 9A (Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao)	-
Region 9B	6
Region 10	41
Region 11	10
Region 12	20
Region 13 (CARAGA)	3
<b>Total No. of Cases</b>	<b>690</b>

#### **E. #PALA (Persida Acosta's Legal Advice) Program**

#PALA Program is an online legal counselling program that is broadcasted live and posted on Facebook, and also uploaded to YouTube. It 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. The program features teleconsultation, updates on PAO plans, programs, activities and achievements, general information on laws and jurisprudence, and interviews with public personalities, among others. For the year 2023, a total of **29 episodes** spread over two seasons were aired on Facebook, all of which remains accessible to the netizens.

#### ***F. Release of PDLs***

With the vigilance of our public attorneys, the PAO was able to secure the release of **87,656 PDLs** for the whole year 2023. 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.

In addition thereto, the DOJ, PAO's mother department, tapped the Office for its jail decongestion efforts. This collaboration resulted to a regular culmination activity where hundreds of PDLs were released almost every month. From the nine culminating programs conducted during the year, **5,210 PDLs** were released from penal facilities administered by the Bureau of Corrections.

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

For the year 2023, public attorneys nationwide assisted a total of **7,525 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 remedies, if applicable. Of this number, **1,029 PDLs have been released** or are pending release by virtue of a granted petition, while **1,208 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.).

#### ***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 former rebels / former violent extremists (FRs/FVEs) who desire to surrender and be reintegrated into the community. For the year 2023, the PAO handled **493 cases** involving FRs/FVEs, and provided counselling, documentation, and administration of oath services to **1,729 FR/FVE clients**. A total of **2,489 participants** also benefited from the 23 legal outreach activities involving FRs/FVEs conducted by the PAO.

#### ***I. Justice for Slain Youth Victims (Carl Angelo Arnaiz and Reynaldo "Kulot" De Guzman)***

To recall, 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. The testimony of an eye witness, as well as the findings of the PAO Forensic Team that the victim was shot while kneeling with raised hands conclusively disproved the initial claim.

With the assistance of the PAO, the parents of Carl and Kulot filed several 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. On 13 March 2023, the Regional Trial Court - Branch 287, Navotas City found the accused guilty beyond reasonable doubt for two counts of

murder (for the death of Carl and Kulot) and sentenced him to *reclusion perpetua* without eligibility for parole.

***J. Several Delivery Riders Were Declared as Employees of Lazada E-Services Philippines, Inc.***

In 2017, several delivery riders of Lazada E-Services Philippines, Inc. (Lazada) filed an illegal dismissal case against the said company after they were removed from their usual routes and were no longer given any schedules. The PAO assisted them in litigating their claim. Despite losing the case before the labor arbiter, NLRC and the Court of Appeals, the PAO, through its Special and Appealed Cases Service, was able to persuade the Supreme Court to reverse the decisions of the said tribunals.

In its decision dated 21 September 2022, which was received by the PAO on 30 January 2023, the Supreme Court declared the complainant-delivery riders as employees of Lazada, and not merely independent contractors, as their services are integral to Lazada's business. As such, the Supreme Court ordered the reinstatement of the illegally dismissed delivery riders and payment of their monetary claims. (See *Chrisden Ditiangkin, Hendrix Molinez, Harvey Juanio, Joselito Verde, and Brian Nabong vs. Lazada E-Services, et al.*, G.R. No. 246892, 21 September 2022)

## **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**

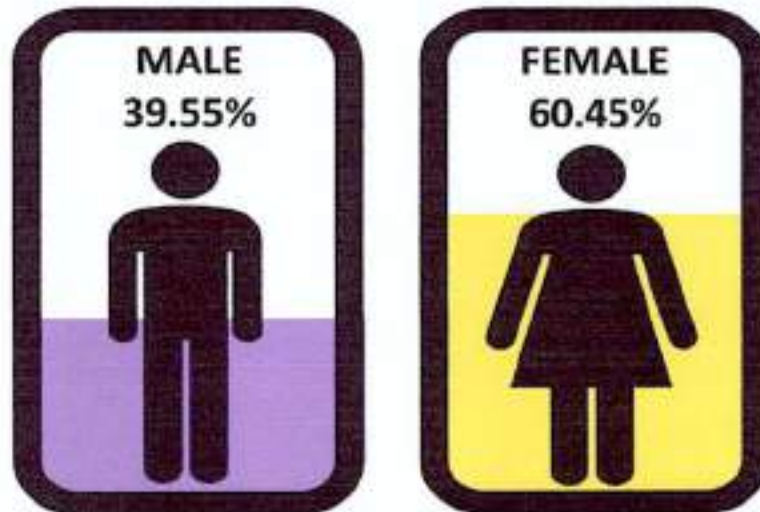
The table below shows the number of authorized, filled, and unfilled positions in the PAO for the year 2023, to wit:

Position	Authorized	Filled	Unfilled
Lawyers	2,505	2,505	0
Support Personnel	1,045	1,032	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,550</b>	<b>3,537</b>	<b>13</b>

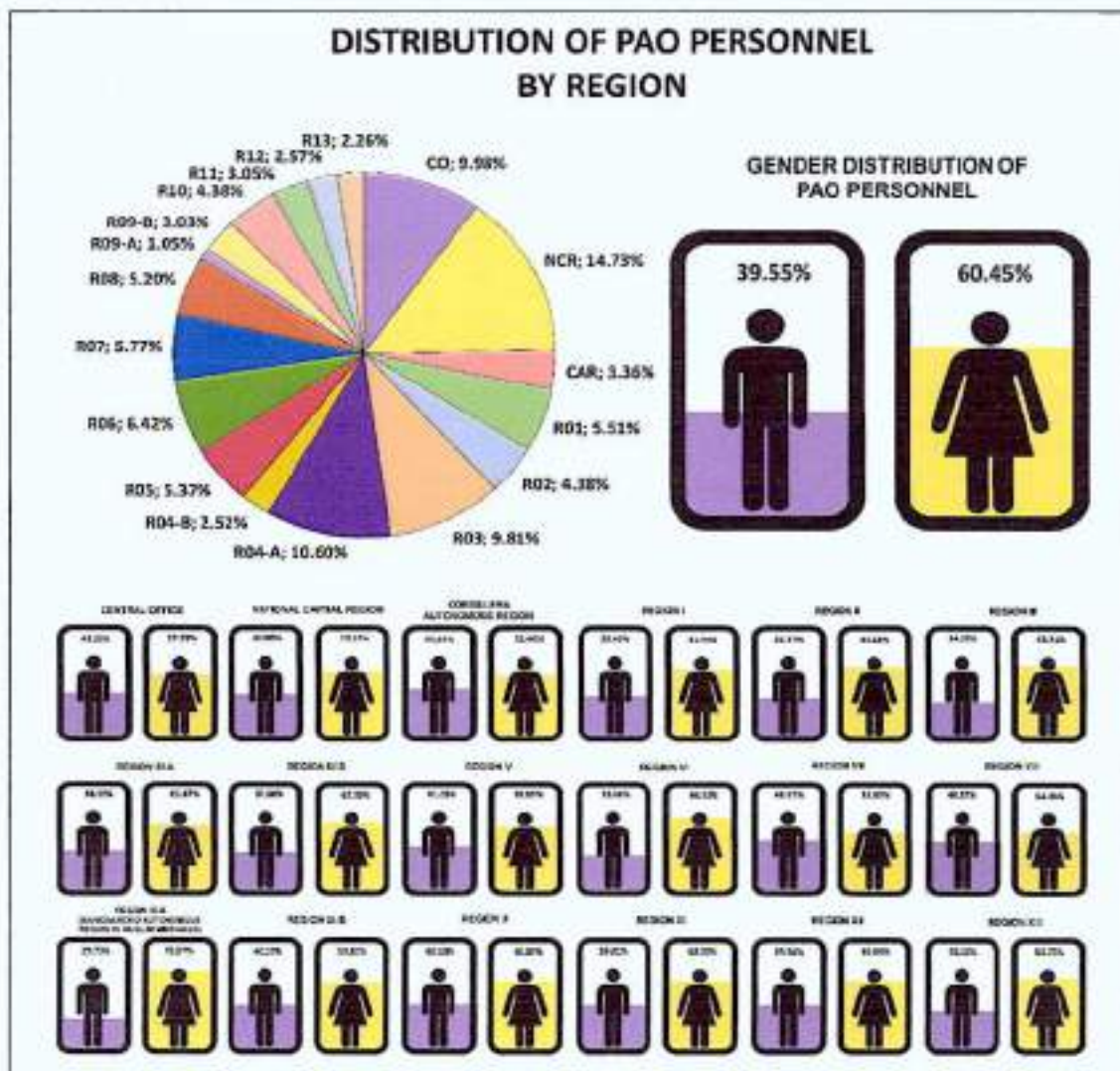
Table No. 8

Similar to the previous year, there are more female personnel than male personnel. Specifically, the Office has **2,138 female personnel**, which is equivalent to **60.45%** of the total personnel complement of the Office, vis-à-vis **1,399 male personnel (39.55%)**. Nonetheless, the gap slightly decreased this year with the current ratio standing at 1.53:1 from last year's 1.55:1.

**GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF  
PAO PERSONNEL**



Graph No. 22



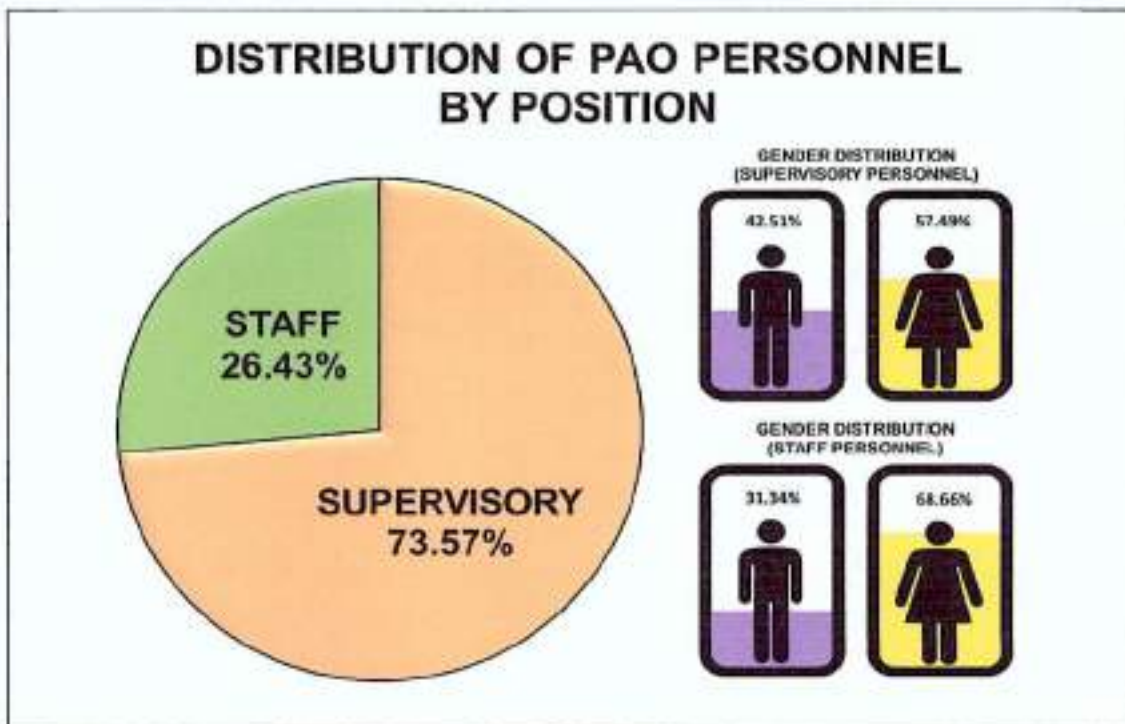
Graph No. 23

Out of the total personnel complement of the Office, 2,602 (73.57%) occupy supervisory positions. These include all public attorneys and other personnel with salary grade of 18 or above who supervise other staff. 1,496 (57.49%) of supervisory personnel are female. The remaining 1,106 (42.51%) are male. The percentage of supervisory employees increased by 1.53% this year, which is mainly due to hiring additional public attorneys.

Meanwhile, 935 (26.43%) personnel occupy staff positions. These are the rank-and-file employees of the PAO who perform various functions that support its operation. The sex distribution of staff positions is 642 (68.66%) female and 293 (31.34%) male.

Position	Male	Female	TOTAL
Supervisory	1,106	1,496	2,602
Staff	293	642	835
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,399</b>	<b>2,138</b>	<b>3,537</b>

Table No. 9



Graph No. 24

A considerable portion of the personnel complement of the Office is relatively new with **1,297 personnel (36.67%)** rendering four years of service or less. This is, in part, due to the high turnover of public attorneys who either resigned for personal reasons or transferred 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 three years—indicating that a substantial portion of personnel completed five years of service with the Office in year 2023, and that more senior public attorneys are deciding to stay longer in the Office.

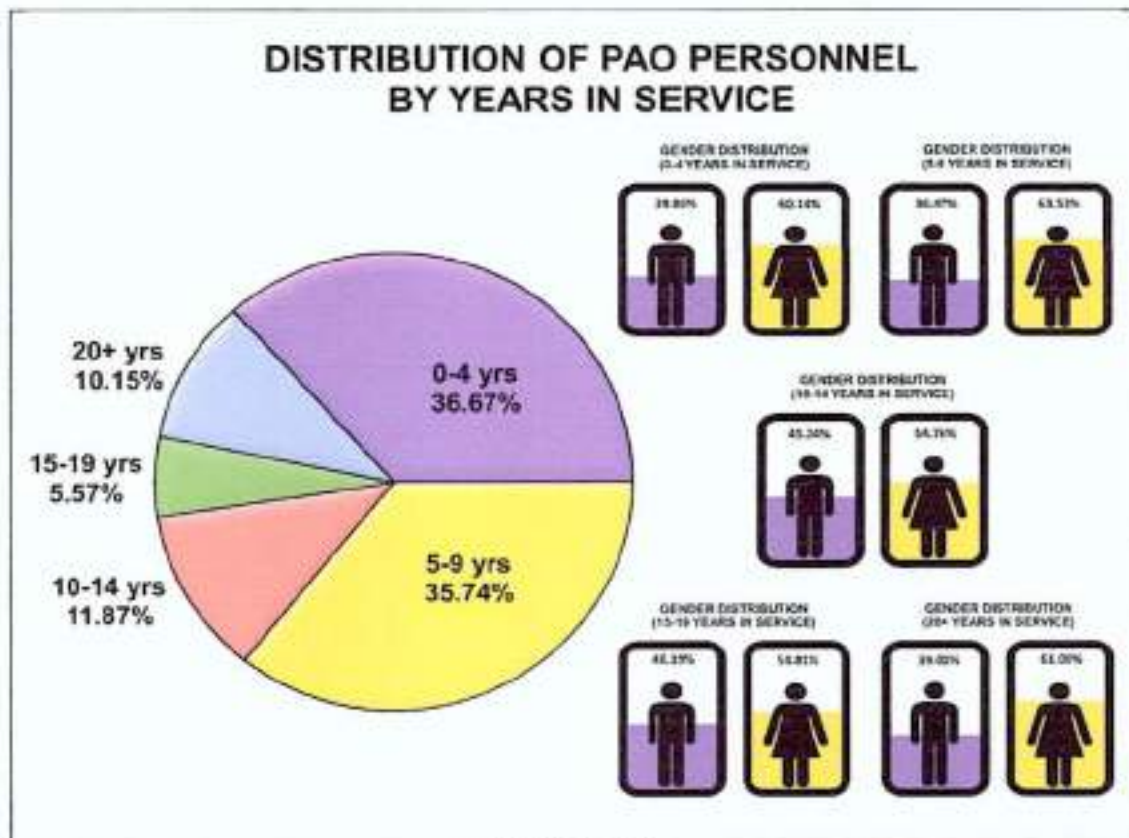
Those who have been with the Office for 20 or more years comprise of **359 personnel (10.15%)**. The remaining **1,881 personnel (53.18%)** belong to the group that has already rendered 5 - 19 years of service.



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 employees are deciding to stay in the Office.

Years in Service	Male	Female	TOTAL
0-4	517	780	1,297
5-9	461	803	1,264
10-14	190	230	420
15-19	91	106	197
20 & up	140	219	359
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,399</b>	<b>2,138</b>	<b>3,537</b>

Table No. 10



Graph No. 25

As to age distribution, majority of the personnel complement of the Office fall within the reproductive age of 18 - 44 years old, comprising of **2,725 personnel**, which is equivalent to **77.04%** 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 **323 (9.13%)** and **319 (9.02%) personnel**, respectively. The smallest age group is comprised of those who are already

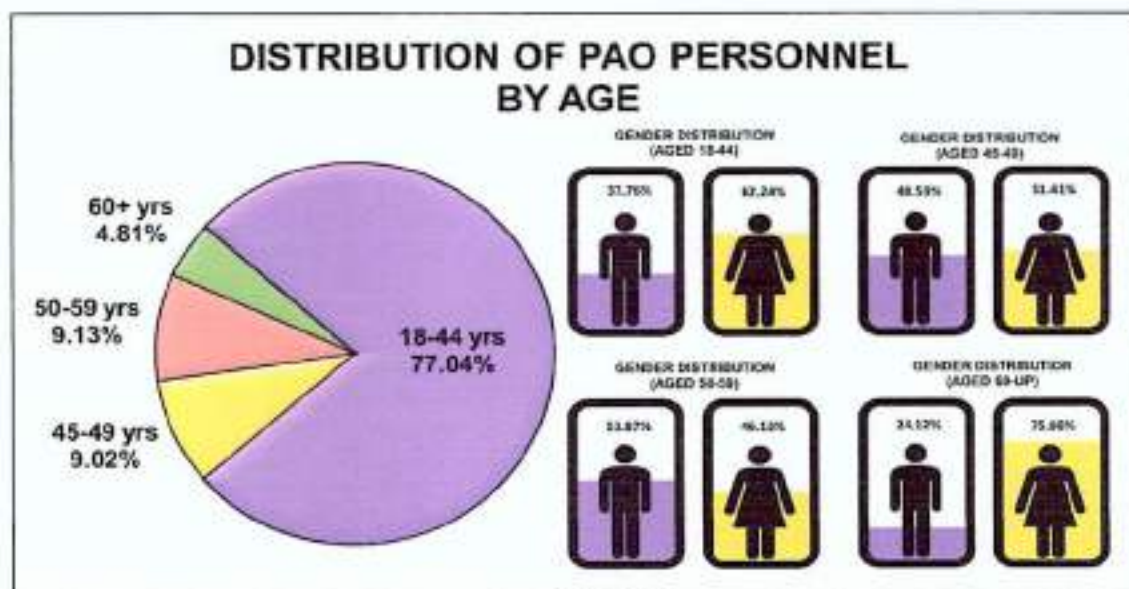
entitled to retirement but still decided remain in service (60 and up age bracket) with 170 (4.81%) personnel.

The above data showed a slight decrease (1.67%) in the number of employees who are within the reproductive age group as compared to last year, given that several employees moved up to the 45-49 age bracket. Similarly, the number of employees who reached the 50-59 and 60 and up age brackets increased by (0.63%) this year.

The females dominate all the age categories, except for the 45-49 age bracket where the males outnumber the females by 25.

Age	Male	Female	TOTAL
18-44	1,029	1,696	2,725
45-49	155	164	319
50-59	174	149	323
60 and up	41	129	170
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,399</b>	<b>2,138</b>	<b>3,537</b>

Table No. 11



Graph No. 26

Finally, the roster of the PAO includes persons with disability (PWDs). By law, our PWD brethren are entitled to equal opportunity for employment. To this end, Section 4 of R.A. No. 7277, otherwise known as the "Magna Carta for

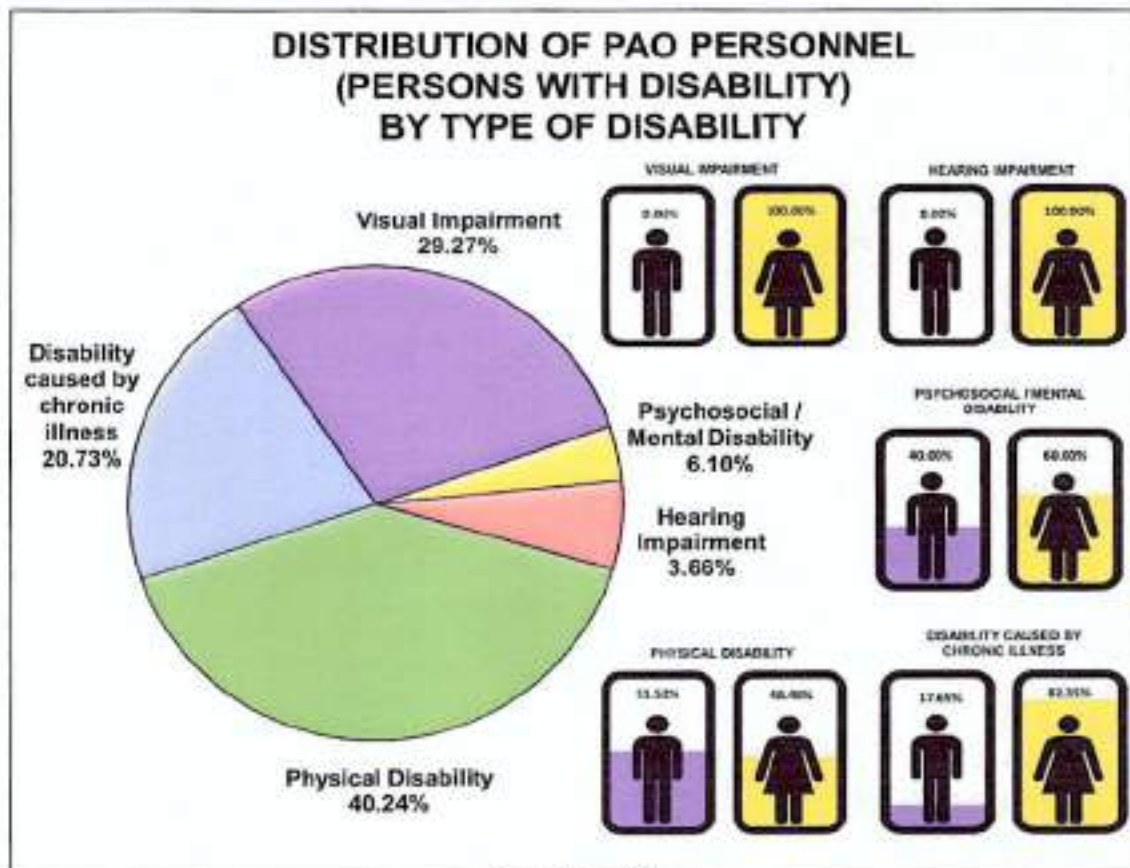
Disabled Persons", guarantees that "No disable person shall be denied access to opportunities for suitable employment. A qualified disabled employee shall be subject to the same terms and conditions of employment and the same compensation, privileges, benefits, fringe benefits, incentives or allowances as a qualified able bodied person."

As of the end of year 2023, the Office employs **82 PWDs**— all of whom perform vital and necessary functions that indubitably supports the operation of the Office and directly impacts the lives of its clients. Out of the 82 PWD employees, **22 (26.83%)** are male, while **60 (73.17%)** are female.

As to type of disability, **33 (40.24%)** employees of the Office suffer from physical disability, while **24 (29.27%)** employees suffer from visual impairment. The rest fall under other types of disability.

<b>Type of Disability</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Visual	-	24	<b>24</b>
Hearing	-	3	<b>3</b>
Speech / Language	-	-	-
Psychosocial / Mental	2	3	<b>5</b>
Physical	17	16	<b>33</b>
Disability Caused by Chronic Illness	3	14	<b>17</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>82</b>

Table No. 12



Graph No. 27

• **PERSONNEL MOVEMENT**

From January to December 2023, the movement of personnel in the PAO is as follows:

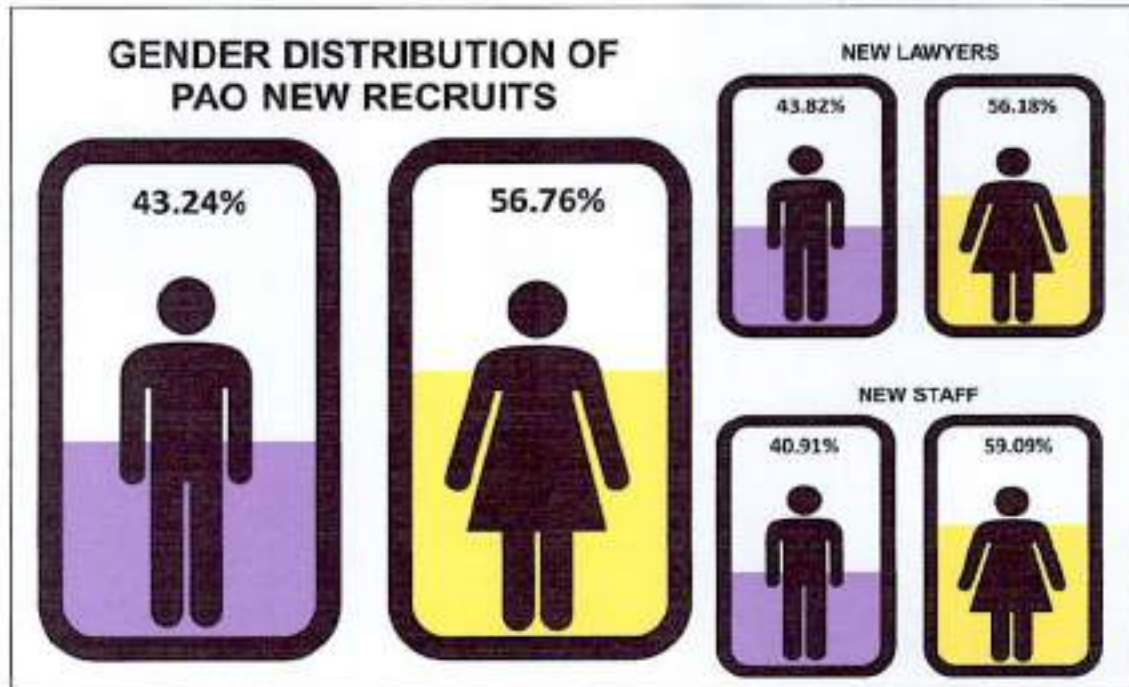
Type of Appointment	Lawyer		Support Staff		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Recruited	39	50	9	13	111
Promoted	43	69	16	43	171
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>282</b>

Table No. 13

For the year 2023, the Office recruited a total of 111 personnel, majority of whom are female. To be specific, there are 50 new female lawyers and 13 new female support staff, which is equivalent to 56.76% of all new recruits. The remaining 48 new recruits or 43.24% are male. With the existing personnel complement and current hiring pattern of the Office, it is reasonably expected that the female employees



will continue to outnumber the male employees in the coming years.



Graph No. 28

Similarly, in terms of promotion, females lead the list. For the year 2023, 112 (65.50%) female lawyers and staff received a promotion, while 59 (34.50%) male lawyers and staff got promoted.



Graph No. 29

- **PERSONNEL ENHANCEMENT**

The PAO regularly 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 its 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 2023, the PAO conducted one orientation seminar to ensure that new hires, as well as those who are in line 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 5<sup>th</sup> National Convention of Rank and File Employees of the Public Attorney's Office, which was held on October 9-11, 2023 at the PICC, Pasay City. The purpose of this convention is to develop and enhance the capability of the support staff to deliver "Prompt service with a smile" to the clients of the PAO.

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. This includes the participation of PAO personnel to various international symposia, roundtable discussions, and other training programs, viz.:

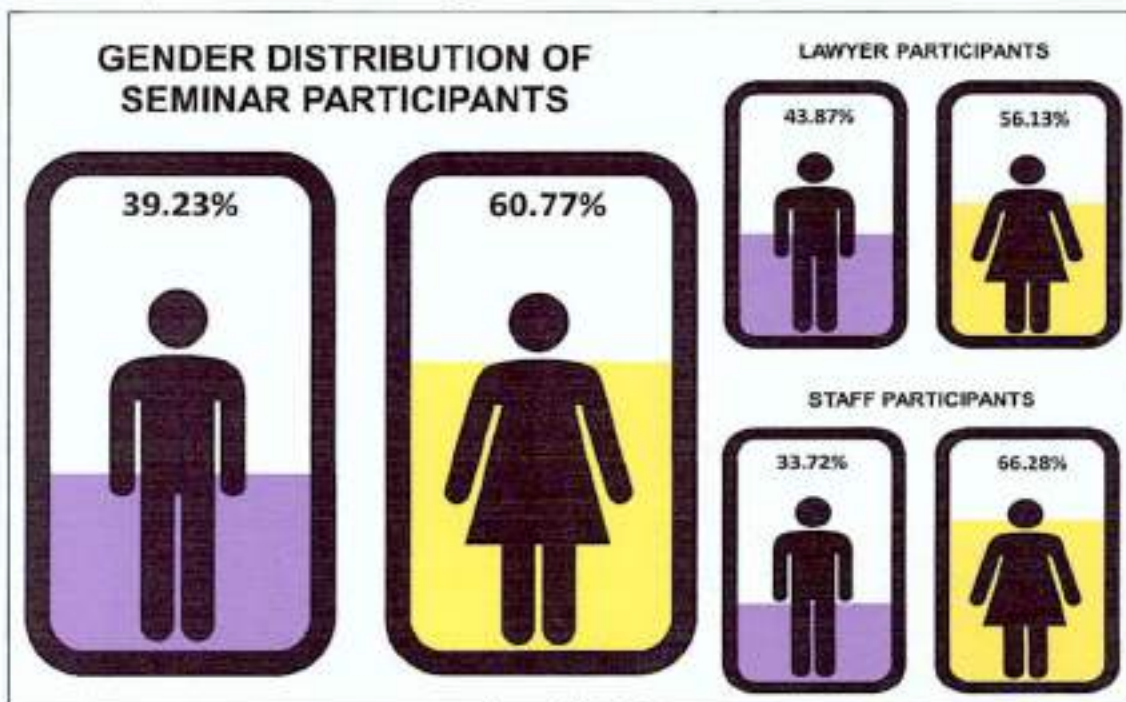
1. "Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Professional Fellows Program sponsored by the US Department of

State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, held on April 17 to May 26, 2023 in the United States of America;

2. "Southeast Asia Regional Workshop on HIV-related Stigma and Discrimination" organized by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, held on June 5-10, 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand;
3. "Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative Professional Fellows Program sponsored by the US Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, held on September 9 to October 13, 2023 in the United States of America;
4. "Juvenile Justice Initiative: Child-Sensitive Approaches for Southeast Asian Practitioners in a Counter-Terrorism Context" organized by The International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law, held on October 10 to 12, 2023 in Bali, Indonesia;
5. "Southeast Asian Senior Officials' Roundtable on Civil Registration, Legal Identity Documentation and the Prevention of Statelessness" organized by the UNHCR, held on October 25, 2023 in Hanoi, Vietnam;
6. "Capacity Building Activity on the Roles and Responsibilities of Oversight and Accountability Mechanisms in Countering Terrorism in South and Southeast Asian Countries" organized by The International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law and held October 31 to November 2, 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia; and
7. "2023 International Forum on Legal Aid" hosted and sponsored by the Legal Aid Foundation (LAF), Taiwan, held on November 13 to 15, 2023 in Taipei, Taiwan.

In total, from January to December 2023, the PAO was able to conduct/participate in **54 seminars**. A total of **2,256 personnel** attended seminars. Out of this number, **1,224** are public attorneys, while the remaining **1,032** are support staff.

It should be noted that majority of the participants are female personnel. Specifically, there were **1,371 female** seminar participants for the year 2023, which is equivalent to **60.77%** of the total number of seminar participants for the said year. The remaining **1,032** participants, equivalent to **39.23%**, were male PAO personnel.



Graph No. 30

- **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

The approved appropriation, with corresponding release, for CY 2023 (per GAA) amounts to Five Billion Thirty Million Five Hundred Thirty-eight Thousand Pesos (**Php 5,030,538,000.00**) and the corresponding Retirement and Life Insurance Premium (RLIP) amounts to Two Hundred Twenty-five Million Four Hundred Forty-eight Thousand Six Hundred Ninety-five Pesos (**Php 225,448,695.00**). These

*gk*



amounts were intended to cover the operational funding requirements of the PAO. In addition, the total amount of Six Hundred Twenty-six Million Nine Hundred Sixty Thousand Two Hundred Forty-four Pesos (**Php 626,960,244.00**) was released for the 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 2021, and c) Salary and Other Compensation of newly hired lawyers. The total obligations for CY 2023 amounted to Five Billion Eight Hundred Eighty-two Million Nine Hundred Forty-six Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty-nine Pesos (**Php 5,882,946,939.00**); 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 2023, the library purchased a number of legal books and basic reference materials, with a total amount of Two Hundred Twelve Thousand Two Hundred Seventy-three Pesos (Php 212,273.00). These materials were distributed nationwide to the PAO regional and district offices as well as the PAO central library for the use of all lawyers and staff. Moreover, the PAO library, through its personnel, was able to collate a total of **1,130 news releases** from various broadsheets and tabloids concerning the Office, and its various cases, programs, and projects for the year 2023.

Through its tri-media linkages, the PAO has been continuously 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 **788 articles** were published and clipped into file from January to December 2023 composed of **365 articles** for *Dear PAO*, **357 articles** for *Magtanong kay Attorney*, **50 articles** for *Daing Mula sa Hukay...Hustisya!* and **16 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. For the year 2023, 52 episodes of "Free Legal Assistance with PAO" aired featuring PAO free legal aid services, counselling, advice, and representation before courts and quasi-judicial bodies.

## • OFFICE EQUIPMENT

For the period covering January to December 2023, the PAO purchased and distributed the following office equipment and semi-expendable properties, to wit:

• Air-conditioning Unit	31 units
• Air Cooler	2 units
• Camera	2 units
• Camera Lens	2 units
• Chair	199 units
• Computer Monitor	2 units
• Conference Table	1 unit
• Desktop Computer	98 units
• Electric Fan	15 units
• Filing Cabinet	84 units
• Gang Chair	2 units
• Gorilla Rack	60 units

• ICT Switcher	1 unit
• Laptop Computer	3 units
• Monobloc Chair	67 units
• Printer	116 units
• Scanner	1 unit
• Table	105 units
• Uninterrupted Power Supply	40 units
• Water Dispenser	3 units

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, said act 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 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, to serve its clients.

The sub-station facilitates the rendition of legal assistance to workers who want to file a labor 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. Manned regularly by two public attorneys and a staff, the PAO-NLRC sub-station was able to assist **15,619 clients** for the period covering January to December 2023.

## 2. RESEARCH AND COMMUNICATION

For the year 2023, a total of **4,718 research works** were duly accomplished by the PAO, through its LRS.

For the said period, the PAO, through the LRS and ESS, was able to answer a total of **1,130 legal queries**, which were published in newspapers of national circulation. The said legal queries include 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— 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 2023, **153 cases were resolved and terminated** out of **178 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 likewise shows that any misconduct or unacceptable behavior committed by an employee 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 through commensurate allocation for lawyers handling cases in other courts and quasi-judicial agencies, senior and key officials, and other Central Office lawyers;
- C.** Advocate the parity between the PAO and their counterparts in the National Prosecution Service or other equivalent government lawyers in terms of qualifications for appointment, rank, salaries, emoluments, benefits, retirement and survivorship privileges as envisioned and provided for under R.A. No. 9406;
- D.** Endorse the creation of additional support staff positions for a more effective and efficient delivery of services pursuant to R.A. No. 9406;
- E.** Issue guidelines or standard operating procedures in labor and civil cases for a uniform/standardized delivery of legal representation service;

- F. Develop a complete monitoring systems for effective performance and delivery of legal services throughout the country's rural and remote areas;
- G. Identification of the areas and legal needs of indigenous peoples to intensify the *barangay* legal outreach activities of PAO;
- H. 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;
- I. Maintain coordination with the criminal justice system corrections sector and the Supreme Court in order to decongest jails and other detention facilities;
- J. Maintain close coordination with the tri-media for the advancement of the PAO outreach activities, more particularly, dissemination of free legal advice, counselling, and mediation;
- K. Maintain close coordination with international organizations and non-government organizations in addressing the plight of the poor, marginalized, and underprivileged members of our society;
- L. Strengthen and modernize the forensic science capability of PAO to cope with advances in science and technology by upgrading the PAO Forensic Laboratory Division;
- M. Establish an anti-cybercrime unit to enable the PAO to better understand, tackle, and handle emerging cases involving information technology and the internet, and deal with threats to its information systems;

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- N. Continuous policy advocacy and coordination for the enhancement of the PAO Victims' Assistance Unit;
- O. Full Integration and Implementation of the PAO's human resource management information system (HRMIS);
- P. Include the PAO's social media platforms on its official website, letterheads, survey forms, etc. to increase awareness on the PAO's presence in social media;
- Q. Upgrading of the database, case management, and monitoring system for all cases handled by the PAO into an information technology system;
- R. Digitalize official communications, records, and files of the PAO for easier access, increased security, improved safekeeping and recovery of data, and to save on resources;
- S. Establish and maintain Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in all regional and district offices of the PAO;
- T. 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;
- U. Continuous 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;
- V. Continuous improvement of communication facilities and other office equipment;

- W.** Maintain compliance with ISO 9000 and the Government Quality Management Systems Standards (GQMSS), or their equivalent;
- X.** Support transparency in governance through the institutionalization and continued implementation of the Freedom of Information policy of the government;
- Y.** Maintain programs and policies aimed at instilling the virtues of excellence, integrity, professionalism, and moral values to all public attorneys and staff;
- Z.** Continuous promotion of good governance, professionalism, and anti-corruption measures;
- AA.** Establish a training program that will enable seasoned public attorneys to pass or share their legal knowledge, strategies, and experience to new public attorneys, and provide decorum training;
- BB.** Empower the PAO personnel by regularly conducting MCLE-Accredited National Convention for Public Attorneys<sup>4</sup>, paralegal trainings for the support staff, and other capacity-building workshops;
- CC.** Promotion of policies on Gender and Development, including projects and activities that promotes gender sensitivity such as special interview rooms for sensitive cases;
- DD.** Organize an international legal aid forum in the Philippines, in coordination with the Department of Foreign Affairs;

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<sup>4</sup> The PAO has been an MCLE-accredited provider since 2003.



- EE. Development of talents of personnel through trainings and support to the PAO-Chorale and Orchestra members;
- FF. Provide annual medical check-up for PAO personnel;
- GG. Promote mental health awareness and work-life balance in the office in coordination with National Center for Mental Health and other mental health institutions; and
- HH. Organize sports fest and team building activities to promote the physical, emotional and well-being of the employees.

### *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 our society. All these accomplishments and awards received 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, and soar despite its minimal workforce of 3,537. It was able to serve **12,516,668 clients** with **83.55%** favorable disposition rate for its cases. In retrospect, for the year 2023, the government merely spent Four Hundred Seventy Pesos (**Php 470.00**) as legal fees for every client of the PAO, reflecting the latter's 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 24<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2024, in Quezon City.



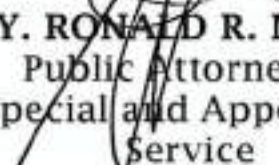
**DR. PERSIDA V. RUEDA-ACOSTA, DSD**  
Chief Public Attorney



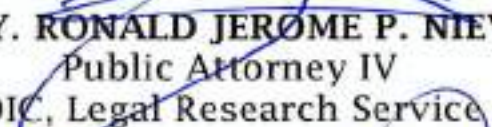
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