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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SANGGUNIANG PANLALAWIGAN OF LEYTE
PROVINCIAL CAPITOL, PALO, LEYTE



BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE REPORT No. 7, Series of 2026
17 March 2026

Administrative Complaint of Christopher A. Elem against Atty. Erwin Belleza and Sofio Reas Beloy, Jr.

I. ANTECEDENTS

This administrative matter originated from a Complaint-Affidavit executed by Christopher A. Elem, Punong Barangay of Barangay Combis, Abuyog, Leyte, charging Atty. Erwin Belleza, Member of the Sangguniang Bayan of Abuyog, Leyte, and Sofio Reas Beloy, Jr., a private individual, with acts allegedly constituting abuse of authority, oppression, misconduct, perjury, and related violations of ethical standards arising from incidents connected with sand and gravel hauling regulation and a barangay checkpoint confrontation.

The matter was endorsed by the Office of the Ombudsman-Visayas to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Leyte for appropriate action on the administrative aspect, which indorsement was received on 30 April 2025.

Following receipt, the case underwent the customary internal routing, records verification, committee referral processes, and agenda preparation procedures attendant to matters requiring legislative disciplinary action, after which the Blue Ribbon Committee proceeded with preliminary evaluation in accordance with due-process standards and applicable rules of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan.

II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Based on the Complaint-Affidavit and accompanying submissions:

1. Barangay Combis allegedly experienced road damage, disturbance, and public inconvenience due to sand and gravel hauling activities traversing barangay roads.
2. The Barangay enacted a regulatory ordinance transmitted to the Sangguniang Bayan, which allegedly was not acted upon within the statutory period, resulting in its effectivity pursuant to the Local Government Code.
3. Respondent Atty. Belleza was alleged to have:
 - o Intervened in barangay enforcement activities;
 - o Asserted participation or interest in hauling-related operations;
 - o Acted in a manner perceived as undermining barangay regulatory implementation.
4. A confrontation on 1 August 2024 at a barangay checkpoint allegedly involved forcible removal of a barrier and verbal threats, which the complainant characterizes as direct assault, oppression, and abuse of authority.
5. Subsequent complaints filed by respondent Belleza were alleged to contain false statements, forming the basis of the complainant's claim of perjury.

III. ISSUES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE DETERMINATION

1. Whether respondent Belleza incurred administrative liability for abuse of authority, oppression, misconduct, or conduct prejudicial to the service.
2. Whether the alleged acts demonstrate use of official position to advance private interests.
3. Whether the matters relating to perjury and direct assault fall within administrative disciplinary jurisdiction.
4. Whether Sofio Reas Beloy, Jr., being a private individual, may be subjected to SP administrative discipline.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Scope of Administrative Jurisdiction

The Ombudsman referral pertains solely to the administrative aspect involving a public official. Accordingly:

- Administrative jurisdiction properly attaches to respondent Belleza.
- No disciplinary jurisdiction exists over private respondent Beloy in the absence of public office. Even the Ombudsman Indorsement referred only to respondent Belleza and not to respondent Beloy.

B. Procedural Posture and Due-Process Considerations

The Committee's review at this stage is preliminary in character and limited to determining:

- Sufficiency of the complaint in form and substance;
- Presence of administratively cognizable allegations;
- Necessity of formal investigation prior to any finding of liability.

Administrative liability requires substantial evidence, which can only be assessed after:

- Filing of a Verified Answer;
- Reception and authentication of evidence;
- Opportunity for both parties to be heard.

Premature adjudication without these steps would contravene fundamental due-process requirements.

C. Nature of Criminal Allegations

Allegations of perjury and direct assault are criminal in character and fall within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman or regular courts, and may be considered administratively only insofar as they relate to conduct unbecoming or abuse of authority, subject to proof.

D. Evidentiary Considerations

The Complaint-Affidavit contains serious factual allegations, including:

- Interference with official barangay functions;
- Intimidation and forcible conduct at a checkpoint;
- Possible conflict of interest in sand and gravel operations.

However, the records presently before the Committee consist primarily of:

- Uncorroborated testimonial allegations of the complainant;
- References to video evidence and documents not yet formally presented or authenticated in administrative proceedings.

Administrative liability must be supported by substantial evidence, defined as relevant evidence a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to justify a conclusion.

At this stage, the Committee finds that:

- The factual issues remain disputed;
- Due process requires reception of respondent's Answer and evidence;
- Immediate determination of liability would be premature.

V. FINDINGS

Upon preliminary evaluation, the Committee finds that:

1. The complaint is sufficient in form and presents administratively reviewable allegations against respondent Atty. Erwin Belleza.
2. Determination of liability necessarily requires formal investigation and evidentiary reception consistent with due process.
3. Administrative jurisdiction is absent with respect to Sofio Reas Beloy, Jr.
4. Institutional handling of the matter from receipt through committee evaluation reflects procedural processing consistent with legislative disciplinary functions, and the case is now ripe for formal investigative proceedings.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

WHEREFORE, premises considered, the Blue Ribbon Committee respectfully recommends that the Honorable Sangguniang Panlalawigan:

1. **TAKE COGNIZANCE** of the administrative complaint against **Atty. Erwin Belleza** and **GIVE DUE COURSE** thereto;
2. **DIRECT** respondent Belleza to **FILE A VERIFIED ANSWER** within the reglementary period from receipt of notice;
3. **DISMISS**, for **lack of administrative jurisdiction**, the complaint against **Sofio Reas Beloy, Jr.**, without prejudice to actions before the proper forum.

VII. RESPECTFUL SUBMISSION

Submitted to the **Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Leyte** for appropriate deliberation and final action.


ATTY. MILDRED JOY QUE, CPA
 Chairperson, Blue Ribbon Committee
 Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Province of Leyte

With our concurrence:


HON. ATTY. RONNAN CHRISTIAN M. REPOSAR
Vice- Chairperson


HON. ALAN P. ANG
Member


HON. ATTY. CARLO P. LORETO
Member


HON. FLAVIANO C. CENTINO, JR.
Member

