

# Lot owners in C-5 expropriation case must get 'just compensation'

**MANILA** -- The Supreme Court (SC) has ordered the government to give 'just compensation' to the owners of a property expropriated more than a decade ago for the construction of the C-5 Northern Link Project, Segment 8.1, from Mindanao Avenue in Quezon City to the North Luzon Expressway, in Valenzuela City.

In an 11-page decision penned by Associate Justice Diosdado M. Peralta, the High Court's Third Division upheld the August 12, 2016 decision of the Court of Appeals (CA), which affirmed with modification the March 6, 2015 decision of the Valenzuela City Regional Trial Court (RTC), setting the "just compensation for the 3,045-square meter of the expropriated property is PHP5,000 per square meter".

The case stemmed from a complaint for expropriation dated October 11, 2007 filed by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in the exercise of its power of eminent domain under RA 8974.

In its complaint filed with the lower court, the government sought to expropriate a lot located in Barangay Ugong, Valenzuela City owned by Aurora and Rogelio Silvestre.

The Silvestres prayed that the government be directed to pay them PHP2,150 per square meter as just compensation. The DPWH, however, alleged that the property's zonal value is only PHP1,200 per square meter.

Both the RTC and CA fixed the amount of just compensation of the subject property as PHP5,000 per square meter following the recommendation of the Board of Commis-

sioners (BOC) appointed by the RTC.

The Court found no error on the part of the RTC and CA in finding that there was nothing arbitrary about the pegged amount of PHP5,000 per square meter, recommended by the BOC as it was reached in consideration of the property's size, location, accessibility, as well as the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) zonal valuation, among other things.

The Court ruled as "plain and simplistic" the DPWH's claim that the subject property must be valued at a significantly lower price because it was occupied by informal settlers and per opinion of a certain Fe Pesebre. The Court explained that "just compensation, in expropriation cases, is defined as the full and fair equivalent of the loss of the prop-

erty taken from its owner by the expropriator. Its true measure is not the taker's gain, but the owner's loss. The word 'just' is used to modify the meaning of the word 'compensation' to convey the idea that the equivalent to be given for the property to be taken shall be real, substantial, full and ample."

It held that "no cogent reason to reverse the findings of the CA, insofar as the amount of just compensation is concerned. In the absence, moreover, of any legal basis to the contrary, or any objection from the parties, the Court further affirms the appellate court's imposition of legal interest, as well as its deletion of the payment of commissioner's fee and the award of attorney's fees for being in accord with applicable law and recent jurisprudence." (PNA)

## Pompeo visit, chance for US to understand PH foreign policy

**MANILA** -- The first visit of State Secretary Michael Pompeo to Manila poses a good opportunity for the United States to better understand the country's independent foreign policy, a political analyst said Thursday.

"It's more of understanding each other well, a better understanding of what the Philippine independent foreign policy means for the US," Ramon Casiple told the Philippine News Agency (PNA) on the sidelines of a forum on Philippine-US relations in Quezon City. "There are still so many questions that could be clarified here (in the upcoming meeting). I think that's the outcome that we could see after unless the US has other things in its mind," he added.

Pompeo is expected to arrive in the Philippines on February 28 to meet with Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. and pay a courtesy call on President Rodrigo R. Duterte.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo earlier said the two secretaries would discuss issues of mutual interest with the possibility of tackling the proposed review of the 67-year-old Mutual Defense Treaty between Manila and Wash-

ington.

With the expanding immigration concerns in the US, Casiple said Manila should also take advantage of the visit to clarify how Filipinos in America are affected by these issues.

Moreover, the country should also seek for a categorical answer on where the US stands in the South China Sea

issue, as well as on the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, he said.

"(On our part) we are really not in the position to offer something big," he noted as he stressed that the administration's position since 2016 has been clear, as stated in the framework of its independent foreign policy.

"Kumbaga nangyari na like our closer ties with China, ano pang sasabihin ng (US) doon? Unless sabihin ng presidente na iatras lahat 'yan at bumalik sa US, huli, meaning 'yong special relations, which I don't think will happen (That is to say we have already implemented our independent foreign policy like our closer ties with China, what can the US say against that? Unless the president pulls out and say we return to US, in terms of special relations, I don't think that will happen)," he said. (PNA)

## Monitor kids' online activity amid 'Momo' challenge: solon

**MANILA** -- Senator Nancy Binay on Thursday urged parents to keep track of their children's online activities to protect them from cyber dangers, such as the creepy suicide game "Momo challenge" that is viral on social media.

"As a parent, number one, tingnan natin kung ano sine-search ng mga anak sa gadgets. Huwag na i-share para 'di na maging viral (As a parent, the first thing we should do is to monitor what our kids search [over the internet] on their gadgets. We should avoid sharing [the Momo challenge] so that it would no longer be viral)," Binay said in a media forum.

The "Momo challenge", which has been spreading on online applications such as Facebook and YouTube, encourages users to harm others or themselves.

Binay, a parent of 10-year-old twins, said parenting now involves raising kids in the age of technology.

She called on the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to coordinate with social media platforms to regulate or take down the disturbing video.

"On the part of government, tingnan ng DICT kung may kakayahan na tanggalin (the DICT should look if it has capacity to remove), coordinate with FB or YouTube kung kayang i-down yung video (if it could take down the video)," Binay said.

She also noted that the Department of Education, Department of Social Welfare and Development and DICT could conduct a seminar or program on parenting in the age of digital technology. (PNA)

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### Prayer for Healing

**JESUS**, may Your pure and healthy blood circulate in my ailing organism, and may Your pure and healthy body transform my weak body, and may a healthy and vigorous life throb within me, if it is truly Your holy will. Amen.

O BLOOD AND WATER WHICH FLOWED OUT FROM THE HEART OF JESUS AS A FOUNTAIN OF MERCY FOR US, I TRUST IN YOU!



*Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, Have Mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.*

### 3 O'CLOCK PRAYER

"You died Jesus, but the source of life flowed out for souls and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fountain of Life immeasurable Divine Mercy, cover the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us."

"O Blood and Water which flowed out from the heart of Jesus as a Fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in you!"

"Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One have mercy on us and on the whole world." (3x) Amen.

Jesus, King of Mercy, I trust in you!

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