



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Office of the Court Administrator
Manila

OCA CIRCULAR NO. 161-2020

TO : ALL CONCERNED LITIGANTS, JUDGES, AND COURT PERSONNEL OF FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS

SUBJECT : AUTHORITY OF ALL OTHER FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS TO CONDUCT VIDEOCONFERENCING HEARINGS

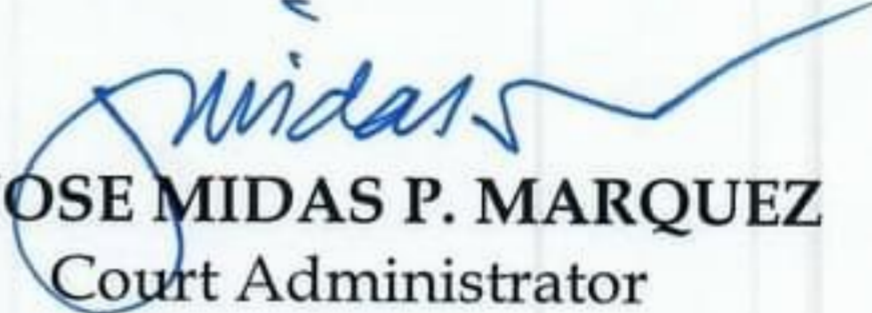
Pursuant to A.C. No. 37-2020, all courts in the National Capital Judicial Region and in key cities of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao were authorized to pilot-test the videoconferencing hearings of urgent matters in cases involving persons deprived of liberty. A.C. Nos. 39-2020 and 40-2020 expanded this authority to cover "ALL matters pending before (them), in both criminal and civil cases, whether newly filed or pending, regardless of the stage of trial." In OCA Circular Nos. 96-2020, 100-2020, and 130-2020, additional courts nationwide were granted authority to conduct videoconferencing hearings, while in OCA Circular 92-2020, all first and second level courts were provided with official Philippine Judiciary 365 Accounts.

Considering the successful conduct of videoconferencing hearings and the fact that all courts are already capable of conducting videoconferencing hearings through their respective Philippine Judiciary 365 Accounts, there is a need to authorize ALL other first and second level courts not yet authorized to conduct videoconferencing hearings to do so, in order to avoid any further delay of court action on pending cases before them.

In view of the foregoing, upon approval of Chief Justice Diosdado M. Peralta, all other first and second level courts not yet authorized to conduct videoconferencing hearings are hereby now AUTHORIZED to do so, on all matters pending before them, in both criminal and civil cases regardless of the stage of the trial, in accordance with existing circulars and guidelines.

For the information, guidance, and immediate implementation of all concerned.

24 September 2020


JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ
Court Administrator