

The Sounds of Sirens: Renewed Interest in Presidential Decree No. 96 and Other Related Issuances

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Presidential Decree (P.D.) No. 96 was thrust into the spotlight after the inaugural address of President Benigno S. Aquino III when he made use of sirens or wang-wangs, illegally placed on motor vehicles, as a symbol of arrogance and abuse of power.

In this Essay, the Author reviews Presidential Decree (P.D.) 96 and other related statutes and issuances (e.g., Republic Act 4136 and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Regulation No. 03-005) with regard to the use of sirens and other vehicular accessories of a similar nature. The prohibitions, the respective penalties for violations of the said statutes or issuances, and any exceptions with regard to their application are discussed. However, despite the presence such laws and issuances, limitations with regard to the observance and enforcement of P.D. 96 is noted, particularly with the presence of “traffic sweepers” and the unregulated possession and sale of sirens and other similar devices.

The Author furthermore observes that sirens as a symbol of abuse of power and privilege in the inaugural address of President Aquino III was effective in building trust and political will with the Filipino people.

The Article concludes that abuse of power and privilege, even in something as commonplace as traffic rules and regulations, is something that Filipinos could easily relate to and, thus, the effective enforcement of P.D. 96 and other related issuances is a step towards strengthening the faith and trust of Filipinos in the government.