

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Paranaque court denies Kazuo Okada's motion to quash grave coercion charges,  
says case is 'sufficient in offense charged and conspiracy'**

The Metropolitan Trial Court (MTC) of Paranaque Branch 91 has denied Japanese gaming tycoon Kazuo Okada's motion to quash the grave coercion charges filed against him and his cohorts for the violent and illegal takeover of Okada Manila in May.

In a resolution dated 18 October 2022, Paranaque MTC Branch 91 Presiding Judge Hon. Placido O. Garcia III ruled to deny Kazuo Okada and his cohort's motion, after finding that the allegations in the information are sufficient to constitute the criminal offense of grave coercion.

"The information in this case is sufficient as regards both the offense charged and the alleged circumstance of conspiracy amongst the accused in committing the offense charged," the resolution read.

All three elements of grave coercion were properly alleged in the information, according to the resolution, citing Article 286 of the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines, as amended.

The elements of grave coercion are as follows: that a person is prevented by another from doing something not prohibited by law; that the prevention or compulsion is effected by violence, threats, or intimidation; and that the restraint is not made under the authority of law or in the exercise of any lawful right.

Tiger Resort Leisure and Entertainment Inc. (TRLEI) officers James Lorenzana, Hajime Tokuda, and Michiaki Satate sued Kazuo Okada and his cohorts Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, Dindo Espeleta, and lawyer Florentino "Binky" Herrera, for grave coercion following the violent takeover of Okada Manila on 31 May 2022.

To recall, The Kazuo Okada Group brought roughly 50 armed men and officers to physically take over the integrated casino hotel, employing brute force and intimidation while citing a wrong interpretation of the status quo ante order (SQA) issued by the Supreme Court.

The Kazuo Okada Group also illegally installed themselves as members of the board of Okada Manila, forcibly removing Lorenzana, Tokuda, and Satate from their positions despite not having

any approval of the Supreme Court to allow Kazuo Okada's Group to physically take over Okada Manila.

By preventing Lorenzana, Tokuda, and Satate from performing their duties as officers of TRLEI, a Department of Justice (DOJ) panel found probable cause for the filing of grave coercion charges to Kazuo Okada, Cojuangco, Espeleta, and Herrera.

The legitimate board of TRLEI regained control over Okada Manila on 2 September 2022, as the regulator Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) ordered the removal of the self-instituted board that Kazuo Okada illegally constituted.

"All told, the information in this case is sufficient, and the motion to quash in the omnibus motion of the accused must necessarily fail. Considering that the allegations were sufficiently subscribed against the accused in this case, the next logical step for this court is to ascertain the veracity of said allegations in a full-blown trial to determine whether or not the accused are guilty of the offense charged in this case," the resolution read.

On Monday, Kazuo Okada was arrested by the Philippine National Police (PNP) Aviation Security Group (AVSEU) at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1, after he landed from Haneda, Japan at 5:40 a.m.

The MTC Branch 91 has set Kazuo Okada's arraignment and pre-trial for 28 October 2022 at 2 p.m. On the other hand, MTC Branch 90 has set Kazuo Okada's arraignment and pre-trial for 7 November 2022 and 5 December 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

Earlier this month, Cojuangco, Espeleta, and Herrera surrendered and were processed by the Paranaque MTC, voluntarily posting separate cash bonds each.

"The resolution issued by the Paranaque MTC simply reflects what the DOJ has said before: that there is sufficient evidence to sue Okada, Cojuangco, Espeleta and Herrera for grave coercion. Our legal team continues to study how the law can be applied to its full extent," concluded Atty. Winston Ginez, Legal Counsel for TLREI.

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