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Police arrests Kazuo Okada for grave coercion

Japanese gaming tycoon Kazuo Okada was arrested by Philippine authorities Monday in relation to the grave coercion cases lodged against him by the board of Tiger Resort Leisure and Entertainment Inc. (TRLEI) officers James Lorenzana, Hajime Tokuda, and Michiaki Satate.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) Aviation Security Group (AVSEU) arrested Kazuo Okada at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 1, after he landed from Haneda, Japan at 5:40 a.m. on Monday, 17 October 2022.

Kazuo Okada, along with his cohorts Antonio “Tonyboy” Cojuangco, Dindo Espeleta, and lawyer Florentino “Binky” Herrera, are facing criminal charges for grave coercion, following their illegal and violent takeover of integrated casino resort Okada Manila on 31 May 2022.

Metropolitan Trial Court (MTC) of Paranaque Branch 90 and Branch 91 issued warrants of arrest against Kazuo Okada on 11 October 2022.

It could be recalled that The Kazuo Okada Group stormed Okada Manila on 31 May 2022, bringing in no less than 50 armed men and officers to physically take over the integrated casino hotel. They cited a wrong interpretation of the status quo ante order (SQA) issued by the Supreme Court for violently taking over the Okada Manila premises.

Cojuangco and Espeleta, as assisted by their legal counsel Herrera, physically represented The Kazuo Okada Group during the takeover, employing brute force and intimidation that resulted in physical injuries to the victims.

They 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, the DOJ panel found probable cause for the filing of grave coercion charges to Kazuo Okada, Cojuangco, Espeleta, and Herrera.

Led by Byron Yip and TRAL representatives Takako Okada and Kenshi Asano, 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.

Kazuo Okada is temporarily part of the TRLEI board, as the company complies with the SQAQ pending the resolution of the intra-corporate dispute in the Supreme Court.

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.

"We are grateful to the Philippine authorities for their swift arrest of Kazuo Okada. We will continue to work with the law enforcement units to bring Kazuo Okada to justice, as we have done in the past in other jurisdictions," Tiger Resort Asia Ltd. Director and Representative to TRLEI Kenshi Asano said. "As we wrap things up in fixing the mess that The Kazuo Okada Group brought to Okada Manila, we are optimistic that the intra corporate dispute will soon be resolved by the Philippine courts."

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