

Presidential Decree No. 532, s. 1974

Signed on August 8, 1974 (<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1974/08/08/presidential-decree-no-532-s-1974/>)

**MALACAÑANG
MANILA**

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE No. 532

ANTI-PIRACY AND ANTI-HIGHWAY ROBBERY LAW OF 1974

WHEREAS, reports from law-enforcement agencies reveal that lawless elements are still committing acts of depredations upon the persons and properties of innocent and defenseless inhabitants who travel from one place to another, thereby distributing the peace, order and tranquility of the nation and stunting the economic and social progress of the people;

WHEREAS, such acts of depredations constitute either piracy or highway robbery/brigandage which are among the highest forms of lawlessness condemned by the penal statutes of all countries; and,

WHEREAS, it is imperative that said lawless elements be discouraged from perpetrating such acts of depredations by imposing heavy penalty on the offenders, with the end in view of eliminating all obstacles to the economic, social, educational and community progress of the people;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution and pursuant to proclamation No. 1081, dated September 21, 1972 and No. 1104, dated January 17, 1973 and General Order No. 1, dated September 22, 1972, do hereby order and decree as part of the law of the land the following:

Section 1. Title. This Decree shall be known as the Anti-Piracy and Anti-Highway Robbery Law of 1974.

Section 2. *Definition of Terms.* The following terms shall mean and be understood, as follows:

a. **Philippine Waters.** It shall refer to all bodies of water, such as but not limited to, seas, gulfs, bays around, between and connecting each of the Islands of the Philippine Archipelago, irrespective of its depth, breadth, length or dimension, and all other waters belonging to the Philippines by historic or legal title, including territorial sea, the sea-bed, the insular shelves, and other submarine areas over which the Philippines has sovereignty or jurisdiction.

b. **Vessel.** Any vessel or watercraft used for transport of passengers and cargo from one place to another through Philippine Waters. It shall include all kinds and types of vessels or boats used in fishing.

c. **Philippine Highway.** It shall refer to any road, street, passage, highway and bridges or other parts thereof, or railway or railroad within the Philippines used by persons, or vehicles, or locomotives or trains for the movement or circulation of persons or transportation of goods, articles, or property or both.

d. **Piracy.** Any attack upon or seizure of any vessel, or the taking away of the whole or part thereof or its cargo, equipment, or the personal belongings of its complement or passengers, irrespective of the value thereof, by means of violence against or intimidation of persons or force upon things, committed by any person, including a passenger or member of the complement of said vessel, in Philippine waters, shall be considered as piracy. The offenders shall be considered as pirates and punished as hereinafter provided.

e. **Highway Robbery/Brigandage.** The seizure of any person for ransom, extortion or other unlawful purposes, or the taking away of the property of another by means of violence against or intimidation of person or force upon things of other unlawful means, committed by any person on any Philippine Highway.

Section 3. *Penalties.* Any person who commits piracy or highway robbery/brigandage as herein defined, shall, upon conviction by competent court be punished by:

a. **Piracy.** The penalty of reclusion temporal in its medium and maximum periods shall be imposed. If physical injuries or other crimes are committed as a result or on the occasion thereof, the penalty of reclusion perpetua shall be imposed. If rape, murder or homicide is committed as a result or on the

occasion of piracy, or when the offenders abandoned the victims without means of saving themselves, or when the seizure is accomplished by firing upon or boarding a vessel, the mandatory penalty of death shall be imposed.

b. Highway Robbery/Brigandage. The penalty of reclusion temporal in its minimum period shall be imposed. If physical injuries or other crimes are committed during or on the occasion of the commission of robbery or brigandage, the penalty of reclusion temporal in its medium and maximum periods shall be imposed. If kidnapping for ransom or extortion, or murder or homicide, or rape is committed as a result or on the occasion thereof, the penalty of death shall be imposed.

Section 4. *Aiding pirates or highway robbers/brigands or abetting piracy or highway robbery/brigandage.* Any person who knowingly and in any manner aids or protects pirates or highway robbers/brigands, such as giving them information about the movement of police or other peace officers of the government, or acquires or receives property taken by such pirates or brigands or in any manner derives any benefit therefrom; or any person who directly or indirectly abets the commission of piracy or highway robbery or brigandage, shall be considered as an accomplice of the principal offenders and be punished in accordance with the Rules prescribed by the Revised Penal Code.

It shall be presumed that any person who does any of the acts provided in this Section has performed knowingly, unless the contrary is proven.

Section 5. *Repealing Clause.* Pertinent portions of Act No. 3815, otherwise known as the Revised Penal Code; and all laws, decrees, or orders or instructions, or parts thereof, insofar as they are inconsistent with this Decree are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 6. *Effectivity.* This Decree shall take effect upon approval.

Done in the City of Manila, this 8th day of August, in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and seventy-four.

(Sgd.) **FERDINAND E. MARCOS**

By the President:

(Sgd.) **ALEJANDRO MELCHOR**

Executive Secretary