

Ronald Singson's trial in HK adjourned anew

Written by Special to the Filipino Reporter
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Ilocos Sur. Rep. Ronald Singson in an undated photo.

HONG KONG — The district court handling the drug trafficking case of Ilocos Sur Rep. Ronald Singson adjourned the hearing for the third time following the appeal of the prosecution for more time to prepare the case.

Prosecutor Virginia Lau asked the Wan Chai District Court for more time to prepare for the case, saying they had yet to receive a copy of Singson's medical report.

"The prosecution is not in a position to respond to that representation (given to Hong Kong's

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Department of Justice)," Singson's counsel John Reading told District Court Judge Stanley Chan, who later ordered the adjournment of the hearing to Dec. 14.

Reading earlier moved for an adjournment of the case, citing Singson's "medical condition" but did not elaborate.

On Oct. 19, Reading again asked the court for more time to complete the medical report.

Singson, for his part, admitted his frustration to reporters outside the court, saying he has yet to enter his plea.

Singson said he is already getting impatient.

Singson, however, expressed relief that he is no longer detained.

Singson's lawyers urged the Justice Department to reduce the drug trafficking charge to a mere drug possession case.

The lawyers pointed out the small quantity of drugs seized from Singson, pointing out similar cases that allowed amendment or lowering of the charges.

Ody Lai, the only Filipino barrister in Hong Kong, said if the drug trafficking charge will push through and Singson will plead guilty to the offense, the jail sentence of three years and nine months will be given the standard one-third discount as provided by law.

Lai added good behavior would mean an additional discount of nine months from the jail term.

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And since Singson has already been detained for 40 days, his jail term would approximately reach a year-and-a-half.

Singson said it was the second time his lawyers requested for an amendment of the charges.

He said the first request was denied because under Hong Kong laws, bringing in prohibited drugs is already considered trafficking.

Singson spent his birthday in Hong Kong on Nov. 18 while awaiting the ruling on his case.

While out on bail, the Ilocos Sur lawmaker took the opportunity to visit Filipino community gatherings, particularly those belonging to his constituency.

Singson faced the Tsuen Wan Court on Aug. 19 where he was granted temporary liberty after posting a HK\$2-million bail.

Tsuen Wan Principal Magistrate Ernest Lin allowed Singson to post a HK\$1-million bail, while two of his friends in Hong Kong each shelled out HK\$500,000 in surety bond.

Singson was apprehended on July 11 at the customs arrival hall of the Hong Kong International Airport for allegedly bringing in 26.1 grams of cocaine and two tablets of Diazepam, a generic form of Valium.