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If tasked, DOJ ready to look into Imee Marcos' offshore trust — De Lima

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If ever she would be put to task, Justice Secretary Leila de Lima on Thursday said she would look into a report that Ma. Imelda "Imee" Marcos is beneficiary of a secret offshore trust in the Carribean.

"If it gets refered to us, it's our duty to preliminary look into that. Kapag me positive finding, that's the time to make a formal probe," De Lima told reporters.

However, she refused to further comment on the issue, saying: "Huwag niyo muna ako tanungin. Di ko pa nakita document. How can I comment? So lets see," she said.

Under Executive Order 643 issued in July 2007 by former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the Presidential Committee on Good Government was transferred under the DOJ from the Office of the President.

The almost 27-year-old PCGG was created through Executive Order No. 1, the first edict that the late President Corazon Aquino signed shortly after the Marcos regime was toppled in 1986.

According to a report of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Imee Marcos is one of the beneficiaries of the Sintra Trust, which financial records uncovered by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists show was formed in June 2002 in the British Virgin Islands.

The PCIJ report said that apart from Marcos, other beneficiaries are her adult sons with estranged husband Tomas Manotoc: Ferdinand Richard Michael Marcos Manotoc, Matthew Joseph Marcos Manotoc, and Fernando Martin Marcos Manotoc.

The PCIJ said that having offshore trust was "a primary way her father allegedly stashed away hidden wealth overseas."

In 1998, a portion of supposed ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses was transferred by the Swiss government to the Philippines after it was proven to have been stolen from government coffers. The Supreme Court, five years later, ordered that the money be transferred to the Philippine national treasury.

During last February's Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), De Lima blamed PCGG's failure to completely recover the Marcoses' ill-gotten wealth to the people running the commission.

"We are not very sure if the people tasked to do that were equipped with the wherewithal [and] the legal expertise, technical expertise to be able to successfully discharge this mandate [to recover ill-gotten wealth]," De Lima had said.

Recently, a House measure - House Bill 4049 - has been filed, seeking to transfer to the Department of Justice the powers and functions of investigations and prosecution of criminal cases exercised by the PCGG. The civil cases, meanwhile, will be handled by the Office of the Government Corporate

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The bill's explanatory note said the PCGG "has not produced significant accomplishments that would justify its continued existence" since it was created more than two decades ago.


But in a recent interview, PCGG chairman Andres Bautista was quoted as claiming that the PCGG to date has recovered \$4 billion or roughly P164 billion of the \$10 billion worth of real estate, investment bank accounts, and shareholdings said to be stolen by the Marcoses. — [Mark Merueñas/RSJ, GMA News](#)

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