

**CONSTITUTION  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF PALAU**

**PALAU CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION**

**January 28 - April 2, 1979**

**Koror, Palau**

# **PALAU NATIONAL CODE ANNOTATED**

# **CONSTITUTION**

## **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF PALAU**

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# CONSTITUTION

## Preamble

**In exercising our inherent sovereignty,  
We, the people of Palau  
proclaim and reaffirm our immemorial right  
to be supreme in these islands of Palau, our homeland.**

**We renew our dedication  
to preserve and enhance our traditional heritage,  
our national identity and  
our respect for peace, freedom and justice for all mankind.**

**In establishing this Constitution  
of the sovereign Republic of Palau,  
We venture into the future  
with full reliance on our own efforts  
and the divine guidance of Almighty God.**

### Notes

In re Eriich, 1 ROP Intrm. 134, 143 (Tr. Div. 1984).

**ARTICLE I****TERRITORY**

Section 1. Palau shall have jurisdiction and sovereignty over its territory which shall consist of all of the islands of the Palauan archipelago, the internal waters, the territorial waters, extending to two hundred (200) nautical miles from a straight archipelagic baseline, the seabed, subsoil, water column, insular shelves, and airspace over land and water, unless otherwise limited by international treaty obligations assumed by Palau. The straight archipelagic baseline shall be drawn from the northernmost point of Ngeruangel Reef, thence east to the northernmost point of Kayangel Island and around the island to its easternmost point, south to the easternmost point of the Babeldaob barrier reef, south to the easternmost point of Helen's Reef, west from the southernmost point of Helen's Reef to the easternmost point of Tobi Island and then around the island to its westernmost point, north to the westernmost point of Fana Island, and north to the westernmost point of Ngeruangel Reef and then around the reef to the point of origin.

**Amended**

Article I, Section 1 was amended by the Twenty-Sixth Amendment. Article I Section 1, as amended by the 26th Amendment, is amended further by the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment by deleting subsection (b).

**Notes**

ROP v. Techur, 6 ROP Intrm. 340, 342 (Tr. Div. 1997).

ROP v. Ngiraboi, 2 ROP Intrm. 257, 276 (1991).

Gibbons v. Salii, 1 ROP Intrm. 333, 350 (1986).

Section 2. Each state shall have exclusive ownership of all living and non-living resources, except highly migratory fish, from the land to twelve (12) nautical miles seaward from the traditional baselines; provided, however, that traditional fishing rights and practices shall not be impaired.

**Amended**

Article I, Section 2 was amended by the Twenty-Sixth Amendment.

**Notes**

Kual v. Ngarchelong State Public Lands Authority, 20 ROP 232, 233 (2013).

Rteai Chiefs of Ngarchelong v. Ongidobel, 19 ROP 204, 207 (Tr. Div. 2010).

Ngarameketii v. Koror State Pub. Lands Auth., 18 ROP 59, 66 (2011).

Koror v. Blanco, 4 ROP Intrm. 208, 209 (1994).

Toribiong v. Gibbons, 3 ROP Intrm. 419, 420-22 (Tr. Div. 1993).

Section 3. The national government shall have the power to add territory and to extend jurisdiction.

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Section 4. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted to violate the right of innocent passage and the internationally recognized freedom of the high seas.

## Notes

Gibbons v. Sali, 1 ROP Intrm. 333, 349, (1986).

## ARTICLE II

### SOVEREIGNTY AND SUPREMACY

Section 1. This Constitution is the supreme law of the land.

## Notes

Republic of Palau v. Ngatpang State Pub. Lands Auth., 2023 Palau 7 ¶ 15.  
In re Rois Kebesang, 2021 Palau 38 (Tr. Div.) ¶¶ 12, 24.  
Omelau v. ROP Div. of Fish and Wildlife Prot., 16 ROP 319, 321 (Tr. Div. 2009).  
Airai State Gov't v. Ngkekiil Clan, 11 ROP 261, 263 (Tr. Div. 2004).  
Fritz v. Sali, 1 ROP Intrm. 521, 530, 531, 533 (1988).  
Governor of Kayangel v. Wilter, 1 ROP Intrm. 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 1985).  
Ngirausui v. ROP, 1 ROP Intrm. 185 (Tr. Div. 1985).  
Mechol v. Soalablai, 1 ROP Intrm, 62, 63 (Tr. Div. 1982).

Section 2. Any law, act of government, or agreement to which a government of Palau is a party, shall not conflict with this Constitution and shall be invalid to the extent of such conflict.

## Notes

In re Rois Kebesang, 2021 Palau 38 (Tr. Div.) ¶ 24.  
Ngatpang State Pub. Lands Auth. v. Whipps, 2020 Palau 17 ¶ 15.  
Republic of Palau v. Ngarchelong State Gov't., 2019 Palau 5 ¶ 22.  
Rengiil v. Ongos, 22 ROP 48, 51 (2015).  
Omelau v. ROP Div. of Fish and Wildlife Prot., 16 ROP 319, 321 (Tr. Div. 2009).  
Airai State Gov't v. Ngkekiil Clan, 11 ROP 261, 262 (Tr. Div. 2004).  
Francisco v. Chin, 10 ROP 44, 48 (2003).  
Skebong v. Election Commissioner, 1 ROP Intrm. 366, 370, 371, 372 (1986).  
Silmai v. Magistrate of Ngardmau, 1 ROP Intrm. 47, 51 (Tri. Div. 1982).

Section 3. Major governmental powers including but not limited to defense, security, or foreign affairs may be delegated by treaty, compact, or other agreement between the sovereign Republic of Palau and another sovereign nation or international organization, provided such treaty, compact or agreement shall be approved by not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau and by a majority of the votes cast in a nationwide referendum conducted for such purpose, provided, that any such agreement which authorizes use, testing, storage or disposal of nuclear, toxic chemical, gas or biological weapons intended for use

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in warfare shall require approval of not less than three-fourths (3/4) of the votes cast in such referendum.

### Amended

Article II, Section 3 was amended by the First Amendment §§ 14(a) and (b). Source: RPPL 3-76, § 3.

### Notes

Wong v. Nakamura, 4 ROP Intrm. 331, 333, 336-39, 341 (Tr. Div. 1994).

Wong v. Nakamura, 4 ROP Intrm. 243, 244 (1994).

Tell v. Rengiil, 4 ROP Intrm. 224, 226 (1994).

Gibbons v. Etpison, 4 ROP Intrm. 1, 11 (1993).

Gibbons v. Etpison, 3 ROP Intrm. 398, 407 (Tr. Div. 1993).

Fritz v. Saliij, 1 ROP Intrm. 521, 522, 525, 529, 539, 541 (1988).

Gibbons v. Saliij, 1 ROP Intrm. 333, 335, 337, 346, 350 (1986).

Gibbons v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 80, 81 (Tr. Div. 1983).

Koshiha v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 65, 69 (Tr. Div. 1983).

## ARTICLE III

### CITIZENSHIP

Section 1. A person who is a citizen of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands immediately prior to the effective date of this Constitution and who has at least one parent of recognized Palauan ancestry is a citizen of Palau.

### Notes

Aguon v. Aguon, 5 ROP Intrm. 122, 128 (1995).

Section 2. A person born of parents, one or both of whom are citizens of Palau is a citizen of Palau by birth, and shall remain a citizen of Palau so long as the person is not or does not become a citizen of any other nation.

### Repealed

Article III, Section 2 was repealed by the Seventeenth Amendment.

### Notes

See Second Amendment.

Aguon v. Aguon, 5 ROP Intrm. 122, 127, 128 (1995).

Section 3. A citizen of Palau who is a citizen of another nation shall, within three (3) years after his eighteenth (18) birthday, or within three (3) years after the effective date of this Constitution, whichever is later, renounce his citizenship of the other nation and register his

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# Article IV

intent to remain a citizen of Palau. If he fails to comply with this requirement, he shall be deprived of Palauan citizenship.

### Repealed

Article III, Section 3 was repealed by the Seventeenth Amendment.

### Notes

*See* the Second Amendment.

Aguon v. Aguon, 5 ROP Intrm. 122, 127, 128 (1995).

Section 4. A person born of parents, one or both of whom are of recognized Palauan ancestry, shall have the right to enter and reside in Palau and to enjoy other rights and privileges as provided by law, which shall include the right to petition to become a naturalized citizen of Palau; provided, that prior to becoming a naturalized citizen, a person must renounce his citizenship of another nation. There shall be no citizenship by naturalization except pursuant to this section.

### Amended

Article III, Section 4 was amended by the Second Amendment enacted November 6, 2004. Amended again by the Seventeenth Amendment enacted November 19, 2008.

Section 5. The Olbiil Era Kelulau shall adopt uniform laws for admission and exclusion of noncitizens of Palau.

## ARTICLE IV

### FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Section 1. The government shall take no action to deny or impair the freedom of conscience or of philosophical or religious belief of any person nor take any action to compel, prohibit or hinder the exercise of religion. The government shall not recognize or establish a national religion, but may provide assistance to private or parochial schools on a fair and equitable basis for nonreligious purposes.

Section 2. The government shall take no action to deny or impair the freedom of expression or press. No bona fide reporter may be required by the government to divulge or be jailed for refusal to divulge information obtained in the course of a professional investigation.

### Notes

Sobahan v. ROP, 2017 Palau 6 ¶ 6.  
Ridep v. Uchau, 2017 Palau 1 ¶ 18 n.4.

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Uchau v. Napoleon, 19 ROP 1, 4, 5, 8 (2011).

Section 3. The government shall take no action to deny or impair the right of any person to peacefully assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances or to associate with others for any lawful purpose including the right to organize and to bargain collectively.

### Notes

Sobahan v. ROP, 2017 Palau 6 ¶ 6.

Section 4. Every person has the right to be secure in his person, house, papers and effects against entry, search and seizure.

### Notes

ROP v. Cayetano, 2020 Palau 32 (C.C.P.) ¶¶ 1, 4, 5, 6.  
ROP v. S.S. Enterprises, Inc., 9 ROP 48, 51 (2002).  
ROP v. Olkeriil, 6 ROP Intrm. 361, 361 (Tr. Div. 1997).  
ROP v. Rafael, 6 ROP Intrm. 305, 309, 312 (Tr. Div. 1996).  
King v. ROP, 6 ROP Intrm. 131, 138-39 (1997).  
Ngerur v. Supreme Court, 4 ROP Intrm. 134, 135, 138 (1994).  
ROP v. Gibbons, 1 ROP Intrm. 547A, 547P-S (1988).  
In Re Eriich, 1 ROP Intrm. 134, 136 (Tr. Div. 1984).

Section 5. Every person shall be equal under the law and shall be entitled to equal protection. The government shall take no action to discriminate against any person on the basis of sex, race, place of origin, language, religion or belief, social status or clan affiliation except for the preferential treatment of citizens, for the protection of minors, elderly, indigent, physically or mentally handicapped, and other similar groups, and in matters concerning intestate succession and domestic relations. No person shall be treated unfairly in legislative or executive investigations.

### Notes

Tulop v. ROP, 2021 Palau 9 ¶ 13.  
In re Angelino, 22 ROP 183, 189 (Tr. Div. 2014).  
ROP v. Diaz, 21 ROP 105, 113 (Tr. Div. 2013).  
Llecholch v. ROP, 21 ROP 70, 77 (2014).  
Hanpa Indus. Dev. Corp. v. ROP, 21 ROP 16, 18, 20 (2013).  
Republic of Palau v. Carreon, 19 ROP 66, 68, 71, 72, 76 (2012).  
Uchau v. Napoleon, 19 ROP 1, 7, 8 (2011).  
Children of Merep v. Youlbeluu Lineage, 12 ROP 25, 28 (2004).  
Perrin v. Remengesau, 11 ROP 266, 269 (Tr. Div. 2004).  
Francisco v. Chin, 10 ROP 44, 53 (2003).  
ROP v. Olkeriil, 6 ROP Intrm. 361, 370 (Tr. Div. 1997).  
Kruger v. Social Sec. Bd., 5 ROP Intrm. 91, 92, 93 (1995).  
Ngerur v. Supreme Court, 4 ROP Intrm. 134, 137 (1994).  
Gibbons v. Etpison, 4 ROP Intrm. 1, 5, 11-12 (1993).  
Yano v. Kadoi, 3 ROP Intrm. 174, 178, 184, 189 (1992).

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ROP v. Gibbons, 1 ROP Intrm. 547A, 547Q (1988).  
Alik v. Amalei, 1 ROP Intrm. 513A, 513C (1988).  
Skebong v. Election Commissioner, 1 ROP Intrm. 366, 370, 371, 372, 375 (1986).  
ROP v. Santos, 1 ROP Intrm. 274, 275 (1985).  
Governor of Kayangel v. Wilter, 1 ROP Intrm. 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 1985).  
In Re Eriich, 1 ROP Intrm. 134, 136 (Tr. Div. 1984).

**Section 6.** The government shall take no action to deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law nor shall private property be taken except for a recognized public use and for just compensation in money or in kind. No person shall be held criminally liable for an act which was not a legally recognized crime at the time of its commission, nor shall the penalty for an act be increased after the act was committed. No person shall be placed in double jeopardy for the same offense. No person shall be found guilty of a crime or punished by legislation. Contracts to which a citizen is a party shall not be impaired by legislation. No person shall be imprisoned for debt. A warrant for search and seizure may not issue except from a justice or judge on probable cause supported by an affidavit particularly describing the place, persons, or things to be searched, arrested, or seized.

## Notes

Yoshiwo v. Republic of Palau, 2023 Palau 12 ¶ 7.  
Ada v. Republic of Palau, 2023 Palau 6 ¶ 11.  
Iyechad v. Republic of Palau, 2022 Palau 25 ¶ 9.  
Rengulbai v. ROP, 2022 Palau 14 ¶ 25.  
Ellender Ngirameketii v. Republic of Palau, 2022 Palau 9 ¶ 17.  
Tulop v. ROP, 2021 Palau 9 ¶ 23.  
Koror State Legislature v. KSPLA III, 2020 Palau 15 ¶ 7.  
Blailles v. ROP, 2020 Palau 9 ¶ 7.  
Xiao v. ROP, 2020 Palau 4 ¶ 30.  
Esuroi Clan v. Roman Tmetuchl Family Trust, 2019 Palau 31 ¶ 42.  
Olsuchel Lineage v. Ueki, 2019 Palau 3 ¶ 34.  
Buck v. ROP, 2018 Palau 27 ¶ 11.  
Koror State Legislature v. KSPLA, 2017 Palau 28 ¶ 35.  
ROP v. Saliij, 2017 Palau 20 ¶¶ 10, 11.  
ROP v. Kodep, 22 ROP 249, 252 (Tr. Div. 2015).  
Diaz v. ROP, 21 ROP 62, 65 (2014).  
Gideon v. Republic of Palau, 20 ROP 153, 163 (2013).  
Rengiil v. Republic of Palau, 20 ROP 141, 146 (2013).  
Bechab v. Anastacio, 20 ROP 56, 60, 63 (2013).  
Sugiyama v. Airai State Pub. Lands Auth., 19 ROP 99, 102 (2012).  
Omelau v. ROP Div. of Fish and Wildlife Prot., 16 ROP 319, 321 (Tr. Div. 2009).  
In re Shadel, 16 ROP 269, 279 (2009).  
Pamintuan v. ROP, 16 ROP 32, 36, 40, 41 (2008).  
In re Cadastral Lots 050 b 02, et al., 14 ROP 191, 192 (Tr. Div. 2007).  
Aquino v. Nestor, 11 ROP 278, 279 (Tr. Div. 2004).  
Perrin v. Remengesau, 11 ROP 266, 268 (Tr. Div. 2004).

- An Guiling v. ROP, 11 ROP 132, 135 (2004).  
Masami v. Kesolei, 10 ROP 213, 214, 215 (Tr. Div. 2003).  
ROP v. Siang, 10 ROP 202, 203 (Tr. Div. 2002).  
ROP v. Kumangai, 10 ROP 176, 177 (Tr. Div. 2001).  
Remengesau v. Senate, 10 ROP 173, 175 (Tr. Div. 2001).  
Scott v. ROP, 10 ROP 92, 96 (2003).  
ROP v. S.S. Enterprises, Inc., 9 ROP 48, 51 (2002).  
Mechol v. ROP, 9 ROP 17, 19 (2001).  
Carlos v. Ngarchelong SPLA, 8 ROP Intrm. 270, 271 (2001).  
Ngiraiuelenguul v. Ngchesar State Gov't, 8 ROP Intrm. 342, 346 (Tr. Div. 1999).  
Gotina v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 56, 57 (1999).  
Ngirengkoi v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 41, 42 (1999).  
Micronesia Yachts Co., LTD v. Palau Foreign Investment Board, 7 ROP Intrm. 128, 129 (1998).  
Malsol v. Ngiratechekii, 7 ROP Intrm. 70, 71 (1998).  
ROP v. Tomei, 7 ROP Intrm. 25, 26 (1998).  
ROP v. Olkeriil, 6 ROP Intrm. 361, 361 (Tr. Div. 1997).  
ROP v. Rafael, 6 ROP Intrm. 305, 307 (Tr. Div. 1996).  
Ngiraked v. ROP, 5 ROP Intrm. 159, 165 (1996).  
Kruger v. Social Sec. Bd., 5 ROP Intrm. 91, 92 (1995).  
Richmond Wholesale Meat Co. v. Ngiraklsong, 2 ROP Intrm. 292, 298 (1991).  
Klai Clan v. Bedechel Clan, 2 ROP Intrm. 84, 85 (1990).  
ROP v. Tmetuchl, 1 ROP Intrm. 443, 504, 507 (1988).  
ROP v. Gibbons, 1 ROP Intrm. 547A, 547F, 547P, 547Q, 547R (1988).  
Skebong v. Election Commissioner, 1 ROP Intrm. 366, 371, (1986).  
Governor of Kayangel v. Wilter, 1 ROP Intrm. 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 1985).  
Akiwo v. Supreme Court, 1 ROP Intrm. 96, 98, 99, 107 (1984).

Section 7. A person accused of a criminal offense shall be presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt and shall enjoy the right to be informed of the nature of the accusation and to a speedy, public and impartial trial. He shall be permitted full opportunity to examine all witnesses and shall have the right of compulsory process for obtaining witnesses and evidence on his behalf at public expense. He shall not be compelled to testify against himself. At all times the accused shall have the right to counsel. If the accused is unable to afford counsel, he shall be assigned counsel by the government. Accused persons lawfully detained shall be separated from convicted criminals and on the basis of sex and age. Bail may not be unreasonably excessive nor denied those accused and detained before trial. The writ of habeas corpus is hereby recognized and may not be suspended. The national government may be held liable in a civil action for unlawful arrest or damage to private property as prescribed by law. Coerced or forced confessions shall not be admitted into evidence nor may a person be convicted or punished solely on the basis of a confession without corroborating evidence.

#### Notes

- Olkeriil v. Republic of Palau, 2023 Palau 4 ¶¶ 7, 11.  
Yoshiwo v. Republic of Palau, 22 Palau 15 ¶¶ 17, 19, 30.  
Rengulbai v. ROP, 2022 Palau 14 ¶ 23.

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Tulop v. ROP, 2021 Palau 9 ¶ 18.  
Blailles v. ROP, 2020 Palau 9 ¶ 7.  
Xiao v. ROP, 2020 Palau 4 ¶¶ 22, 27.  
Republic of Palau v. Kangichi, 2019 Palau 2 ¶ 13.  
Uchau v. ROP, 2017 Palau 34 ¶ 21.  
Dulei v. ROP, 2017 Palau 29 ¶¶ 2, 3, 6, 10 n.2, 12.  
Mengeolt v. ROP, 2017 Palau 17 ¶ 5.  
ROP v. Suzuky, 22 ROP 208, 213, 216 (Tr. Div. 2015).  
In re Angelino, 22 ROP 183, 190 (Tr. Div. 2014).  
Diaz v. ROP, 21 ROP 62, 65 (2014).  
Republic of Palau v. Mesubed, 20 ROP 219, 224, 227, 228, 230, 231 (Tr. Div. 2013).  
Rengiil v. Republic of Palau, 20 ROP 141, 145 (2013).  
In re Shadel, 16 ROP 254, 258 (2009).  
Pamintuan v. ROP, 16 ROP 32, 44 (2008).  
Rechucher v. ROP, 12 ROP 51, 56 (2005).  
An Guiling v. ROP, 11 ROP 132, 135 (2004).  
ROP v. Recheluul, 10 ROP 205, 206 (Tr. Div. 2002).  
ROP v. Wolff, 10 ROP 180, 181 (Tr. Div. 2002).  
Ueki v. ROP, 10 ROP 153, 161 (2003).  
Oiterong v. ROP, 9 ROP 195, 198 (2002).  
Wolff v. Ngiraklsong, 9 ROP 20 (2001).  
Saunders v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 90, 90 (1999).  
Gotina v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 56, 57 (1999).  
Ngirengkoi v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 41, 42 (1999).  
Secharaimul v. Palau Election Commission, 7 ROP Intrm. 246, 248 (Tr. Div. 1998).  
Orrukem v. ROP, 5 ROP Intrm. 256, 257 (1996).  
Ngiraked v. ROP, 5 ROP Intrm. 159, 165, 170 (1996).  
Tell v. Rengiil, 4 ROP Intrm. 224, 229 (1994).  
ROP v. Sisor, 4 ROP Intrm. 152, 154 (1994).  
ROP v. Decherong, 2 ROP Intrm. 170, 171 (1990).  
ROP v. Decherong, 2 ROP Intrm. 152, 163, 168 (1990).  
ROP v. Decherong, 1 ROP Intrm. 438, 439 (1988).  
ROP v. Tmetuchl, 1 ROP Intrm. 296, 297 (1986).  
ROP v. Santos, 1 ROP Intrm. 274, 275 (1985).  
Renguul v. Ililau, 1 ROP Intrm. 188, 190 (Tr. Div. 1985).  
Ngirausui v. ROP, 1 ROP Intrm. 185, 186 (Tr. Div. 1985).

Section 8. A victim of a criminal offense may be compensated by the government as prescribed by law or at the discretion of the court.

Section 9. A citizen of Palau may enter and leave Palau and may migrate within Palau.

## Notes

In re Angelino, 22 ROP 183, 189 (Tr. Div. 2014).

Section 10. Torture, cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment, and excessive fines are prohibited.

**Notes**

- Ada v. Republic of Palau, 2023 Palau 6 ¶ 14.  
Rengulbai v. ROP, 2022 Palau 14 ¶ 24.  
Ellender Ngirameketii v. Republic of Palau, 2022 Palau 9 ¶ 42.  
Tulop v. ROP, 2021 Palau 9 ¶ 2.  
Kloulubak v. ROP, 2018 Palau 3 ¶ 8.  
Whipps v. Inglai, 2017 Palau 24 ¶ 12 n.4.  
In re Angelino, 22 ROP 183, 190 (Tr. Div. 2014).  
Ueki v. ROP, 10 ROP 153, 161 (2003).  
Silmai v. ROP, 10 ROP 139, 140, 141 (2003).  
Eller v. ROP, 10 ROP 122, 123, 129, 130, 131 (2003).  
Flaga v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 79, 80 (1999).  
Gotina v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 65, 66 (1999).  
Kotaro v. ROP, 7 ROP Intrm. 57, 62, (1998).  
ROP v. Ngiraboi, 2 ROP Intrm. 257, 268 (1991).  
ROP v. M/V Aesarea, 1 ROP Intrm. 429, 434 (1988).  
Kazuo v. ROP, 1 ROP Intrm. 154, 162, 176 (1988).

**Section 11.** Slavery or involuntary servitude is prohibited except to punish crime. The government shall protect children from exploitation.

**Section 12.** A citizen has the right to examine any government document and to observe the official deliberations of any agency of government.

**Notes**

*See* RPPL 4-59 § 6, stating that the bridge contract file addressing emergency measures regarding collapse of K-B bridge “shall be open to public inspection.”

- Akitaya v. Obichang, 2019 Palau 8 ¶ 17 n.6.  
In re Angelino, 22 ROP 183, 189 (Tr. Div. 2014).

**Section 13.** The government shall provide for marital and related parental rights, privileges and responsibilities on the basis of equality between men and women, mutual consent and cooperation. Parents or individuals acting in the capacity of parents shall be legally responsible for the support and for the unlawful conduct of their minor children as prescribed by law.

**Amended**

Article IV, Section 13 was amended by the Twenty-Second Amendment.

**Additional Sections Added by Amendments**

Sections 14, 15, and 16 were added by the Ninth Amendment, Sixteenth Amendment, and Twenty-Fourth Amendment.

**Notes**

- In re Alleged Juvenile Delinquent, 2021 Palau 39 (Tr. Div.) ¶ 2.

ARTICLE V

TRADITIONAL RIGHTS

Section 1. The government shall take no action to prohibit or revoke the role or function of a traditional leader as recognized by custom and tradition which is not inconsistent with this Constitution, nor shall it prevent a traditional leader from being recognized, honored, or given formal or functional roles at any level of government.

**Notes**

- Rengiil v. Ongos, 22 ROP 48, 51, 53, 54 (2015).  
HOTL, et al., v. 7<sup>th</sup> Koror State Legislature, et al., 14 ROP 52, 54, 57 (2007).  
Ysaol v. Eriu Family, 9 ROP 146, 149 (2002).  
Olikong v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 250, 253, 255 (2000).  
Ngara-Irrai v. Airai, 6 ROP Intrm. 198, 199, 202 (1997).  
Espangel v. Diaz, 3 ROP Intrm. 240, 242 (1992).

Section 2. Statutes and traditional law shall be equally authoritative. In case of conflict between a statute and a traditional law, the statute shall prevail only to the extent it is not in conflict with the underlying principles of the traditional law.

**Additional Section Added by Amendment**

Article V, Section 3 was added by the Twenty-First Amendment.

**Notes**

- Francisco v. Ngeuch Clan by Omuik, 2022 Palau 22 ¶¶ 12, 22, 23, 24.  
Ngiraterang v. Ngarchelong State Assembly, 2021 Palau 18 ¶ 86.  
Kiuluul v. Elilai Clan, 2017 Palau 14 ¶ 13.  
Yano v. Yano, 20 ROP 190, 200 (2013).  
Beouch v. Sasao, 20 ROP 41, 46, 47, 48 (2013).  
Rteai Chiefs of Ngarchelong v. Ongidobel, 19 ROP 204, 207 (Tr. Div. 2010).  
Tkel v. Ngirous, 12 ROP 10, 15 (2004).  
Bandarii v. Ngerusebek Lineage, 11 ROP 83, 88C (2004).  
Ngirchokebai v. Reklai, 8 ROP Intrm. 151, 152 (2000).  
Nakamura v. Markub, 8 ROP Intrm. 39, 40 (1999).  
Morei v. Ngetchuang Lineage, 5 ROP Intrm. 292, 293 (Tr. Div. 1995).  
Kumangai v. Isechal, 1 ROP Intrm. 587, 590 (1989).  
In Re Eriich, 1 ROP Intrm. 134, 143 (Tr. Div. 1984).

## Article VI PALAU NATIONAL CODE ANNOTATED

### ARTICLE VI

#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The national government shall take positive action to attain these national objectives and implement these national policies: conservation of a beautiful, healthful and resourceful natural environment; promotion of the national economy; protection of the safety and security of persons and property; promotion of the health and social welfare of the citizens through the provision of free or subsidized health care; and provision of public education for citizens which shall be free and compulsory as prescribed by law.

#### Amended

Article VI was amended by the Twenty-Third Amendment.

#### Notes

Yobech v. Ililau, 2021 Palau 11 ¶ 16.

Nakatani v. Nishizono, 1 ROP Intrm. 289, 295 (Tri. Div. 1985).

Kazuo v. ROP, 1 ROP Intrm. 154, 177 (1984).

### ARTICLE VII

#### SUFFRAGE

A citizen of Palau eighteen (18) years of age or older may vote in national and state elections. The Olbiil Era Kelulau shall prescribe a minimum period of residence and provide for voter registration for national elections. Each state shall prescribe a minimum period of residence and provide for voter registration for state elections. A citizen who is in prison, serving a sentence for a felony, or mentally incompetent as determined by a court may not vote. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

#### Amended

Article VII was amended by the Eighteenth Amendment.

#### Notes

Nicholas v. Palau Election Comm'n, 16 ROP 235, 239 (2009).

The Ngaimis v. ROP, 16 ROP 26, 28 (2008).

Yano v. Kadoi, 3 ROP Intrm. 174, 184 (1992).

Teriong v. Airai, 1 ROP Intrm. 664, 674-75, 681 (1987).

Olikong v. Saliij, 1 ROP Intrm. 406, 412 (1987).

Skebong v. Election Commissioner, 1 ROP Intrm. 366, 371 (1986).

Koshiha v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 65, 70 (Tr. Div. 1983).

Mechol v. Soalablai, 1 ROP Intrm. 62, 63 (Tr. Div. 1982).

ARTICLE VIII

EXECUTIVE

Section 1. The President shall be the chief executive of the national government.

**Notes**

Rengiil v. Ongos, 22 ROP 48, 51, 53, 54 (2015).

Section 2. The Vice President shall serve as a member of the cabinet and have such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the President.

**Notes**

Remeliik v. Senate, 1 ROP Intrm. 1, 2-10 (High Ct. Aug. 1981).

Section 3. Any citizen of Palau who is not less than thirty-five (35) years of age and has been a resident of Palau for the five (5) years immediately preceding the election shall be eligible to hold the office of President or Vice President.

**Amended**

Article VIII, Section 3 was amended by the Sixth Amendment.

**Notes**

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).

Section 4. The President and Vice President shall be elected in a nationwide election for a term of four years. A person may not serve as President for more than two consecutive terms.

**Amended**

Article VIII, Section 4 was amended by the Eighth Amendment with an additional one sentence paragraph.

**Notes**

*See* the Third Amendment, the Seventh Amendment, and the Eighth Amendment.

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).

Section 5. The cabinet shall consist of the heads of the major executive departments created by law. The cabinet members shall be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate and shall serve at the will of the President. No person may serve in a legislature and the cabinet at the same time.

**Notes**

Kotaro v. ROP, 7 ROP Intrm. 57, 59 (1998).

## Article VIII PALAU NATIONAL CODE ANNOTATED

ROP v. Eptison, 5 ROP Intrm. 313, 316 (Tr. Div. 1995).  
Remeliik v. Senate, 1 ROP Intrm. 1, 2-10 (High Ct. Aug. 1981).

**Section 6.** A Council of Chiefs composed of a traditional chief from each of the states shall advise the President on matters concerning traditional laws, customs and their relationship to this Constitution and the laws of Palau. No person shall be a member of the Council of Chiefs unless he has been appointed and accepted as a chief in a traditional manner, and is recognized as such by the traditional council of chiefs of his state. No chief shall serve in the Council of Chiefs while serving as a member of the Olbiil Era Kelulau or the cabinet.

### Notes

Eklbai Clan v. Imeong, 12 ROP 17, 22 (2004).  
Filibert v. Ngirmang, 8 ROP Intrm. 273 (2001).  
Olikong v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 250, 255 (2000).  
Ngara-Irrai v. Airai, 6 ROP Intrm. 198, 204 (1997).  
Espangel v. Diaz, 3 ROP Intrm. 240, 242 (1992).

**Section 7.** The President shall have all the inherent powers and duties of a national chief executive, including, but not limited to the following:

- 1) to enforce the law of the land;

### Notes

Kotaro v. ROP, 7 ROP Intrm. 57, 58 (1998).

- 2) to conduct negotiations with foreign nations and to make treaties with the advice and consent of the Olbiil Era Kelulau;

### Notes

ROP v. Carreon, 19 ROP 66, 79, (2012).

- 3) to appoint ambassadors and other national officers with the advice and consent of the Senate;

- 4) to appoint judges from a list of nominees submitted to him by the Judicial Nominating Commission;

- 5) to grant pardons, commutations and reprieves subject to procedures prescribed by law and to suspend and remit fines and forfeitures, provided this power shall not extend to impeachment;

### Notes

ROP v. Diaz, 21 ROP 105, 109 (Tr. Div. 2013).  
Llecholch v. ROP, 21 ROP 70, 71, 74, 76, 78 (2014).

6) to spend money pursuant to appropriations and to collect taxes;

**Notes**

Remengesau v. Senate, 10 ROP 173, 176 (Tr. Div. 2001).  
The Senate v. Nakamura, 8 ROP Intrm. 190, 194 (2000).  
The Senate v. Nakamura, 7 ROP Intrm. 212, 213 (1999).

7) to represent the national government in all legal actions; and

8) to propose an annual budget.

**Notes**

Airai State Gov't v. Ngkekiil Clan, 11 ROP 261, 262 (Tr. Div. 2004).  
The Senate v. Nakamura, 8 ROP Intrm. 190, 194 (2000).  
Foreign Investment Board v. OEK, 5 ROP Intrm. 344, 346 (Tr. Div. 1996).  
ROP v. Etpison, 5 ROP Intrm. 313, 318 (Tr. Div. 1995).  
Fritz v. ROP, 4 ROP Intrm. 264, 273 (Tr. Div. 1993).  
ROP v. Sisor, 4 ROP Intrm. 152, 160 (1994).  
ROP v. Sisor, 3 ROP Intrm. 376, 378-84 (Tr. Div. 1991).  
Tulmau v. R.P. Calma & Co., 3 ROP Intrm. 205, 209 (1992).  
Gibbons v. Sali, 1 ROP Intrm. 333, 354 (1986).  
Governor of Kayangel v. Wilter, 1 ROP Intrm. 206, 207 (Tr. Div. 1985).  
Koshiba v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 65, 75 (Tr. Div. 1983).

Section 8. The compensation of the President and Vice President shall be established by law.

Section 9. The President or Vice President may be impeached and removed from office for treason, bribery, or other serious crimes by a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau.

Section 10. The President or Vice President may be removed from office by a recall. A recall is initiated by a resolution adopted by not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the state legislatures in not less than three-fourths (3/4) of the states. Upon receipt by the presiding officers of the Olbiil Era Kelulau of the required number of certified resolutions, the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall establish a special election board to supervise a nationwide recall referendum to be held not less than thirty (30) days nor more than sixty (60) days, after receipt of the required number of certified resolutions.

**Notes**

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).  
KSPLA v. Meriang Clan, 6 ROP Intrm. 10, 11 (1996).

## Article VIII PALAU NATIONAL CODE ANNOTATED

Section 11. The Vice President shall succeed to the office of President if it becomes vacant. If the vacancy occurs due to death, resignation or disability and more than one hundred and eighty (180) days remain in the term, a national election for the offices of the President and Vice President for the remaining term shall be held within two months of such vacancy. In the event that the offices of both the President and Vice President become vacant, the order of succession to the presidency shall be as follows: presiding officer of the Senate, presiding officer of the House of Delegates, and then as provided by law.

### Notes

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).

Section 12. The President may introduce legislative measures in the Olbiil Era Kelulau.

Section 13. The President shall make an annual report to the Olbiil Era Kelulau on the progress of his administration.

Section 14. Whenever war, external aggression, civil rebellion or natural catastrophe threatens the lives or property of a significant number of people in Palau, the President may declare a state of emergency and temporarily assume such legislative powers as may be necessary to afford immediate and specific relief to those lives or property so threatened. At the time of the declaration of a state of emergency, the President shall call a meeting of the Olbiil Era Kelulau to confirm or disapprove the state of emergency. The President shall not exercise emergency powers for a period of more than ten (10) days without the express and continuing consent of the Olbiil Era Kelulau.

### Notes

KSPLA v. Rubekul a Meyuns, 2017 Palau 7 ¶ 30.  
Seid v. ROP, 23 ROP 21, 22, 24, 25, 26 (Tr. Div. 2014).  
Toribiong v. Seid, 23 ROP 1, 2 (2015).

## ARTICLE IX

### OLBIIL ERA KELULAU

Section 1. The legislative power of Palau shall be vested in the Olbiil Era Kelulau which shall consist of two houses, the House of Delegates and the Senate.

### Notes

The Senate v. Nakamura, 8 ROP Intrm. 190, 191, 194 (2000).  
The Senate v. Nakamura, 7 ROP Intrm. 212, 213, 220 (1999).  
Ngara-Irrai v. Airai, 6 ROP Intrm. 198, 199 (1997).

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Application of Won, 1 ROP Intrm. 311, 312 (Tr. Div. May 1986).  
Senate v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 90, 94 (Tr. Div. Nov. 1983).

Section 2. Senators and Delegates shall be elected for a term of four (4) years.

### Notes

Francisco v. Chin, 10 ROP 44, 53 (2003).  
Senate v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 90, 94 (Tr. Div. Nov. 1983).

The Fourth Amendment to the Constitution limits the number of terms to three.

Section 3. The House of Delegates shall be composed of one delegate to be popularly elected from each of the states of Palau. The Senate shall be composed of the number of senators prescribed from time to time by the reapportionment commission as provided by law.

### Notes

Congressional Reapportionment Commission v. Bultedaob, 2016 Palau 26 ¶ 12.  
Tellames v. Congressional Reapportionment Comm'n, 8 ROP Intrm. 142, 145 (2000).  
Senate v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 90, 94 (Tr. Div. Nov. 1983).

Section 4.

(a) A reapportionment commission shall be constituted every eight (8) years not less than one hundred eighty (180) days before the next regular general election. Not less than one hundred twenty (120) days before the regular general election, the commission shall publish a reapportionment or redistricting plan for the Senate based on population, which shall become law upon publication.

### Notes

Congressional Reapportionment Commission v. Bultedaob, 2016 Palau 26 ¶¶ 2, 6, 9, 10, 16.  
Congressional Reapportionment Committee v. Bultedaob, 2016 Palau 22 ¶¶ 3, 4.  
Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).  
Tellames v. Congressional Reapportionment Comm'n, 8 ROP Intrm. 142, 143, 144, 145, 146 (2000).

(b) A member of the reapportionment commission shall not be eligible to become a candidate for election to the Senate in the next regular general election under a reapportionment or redistricting plan prepared by the commission.

### Notes

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).

(c) Upon the petition of any voter within sixty (60) days after the promulgation of a plan by the reapportionment commission, the Supreme Court shall have original jurisdiction to review the plan and to amend it to comply with the requirements of this Constitution. If a

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reapportionment or redistricting plan for the Senate is not published before the applicable 120-day period, the Supreme Court shall promulgate within ninety (90) days before the next regular general election, a reapportionment or redistricting plan.

### Notes

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).  
Yano v. Kadoi, 3 ROP Intrm. 174, 176, 178, 179-80, 181, 185, 187, 190 (1992).  
In Re Eriich, 1 ROP Intrm. 134-35, 138, 140 (Tr. Div. Sept. 1984).

Section 5. The Olbiil Era Kelulau shall have the following powers:

- 1) to levy and collect taxes, duties and excises, which shall be uniformly applied throughout the nation;
- 2) to borrow money on the credit of the national government to finance public programs or to settle public debt;
- 3) to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several states;
- 4) to regulate immigration and establish a uniform system of naturalization;
- 5) to establish uniform laws on the subject of bankruptcy;
- 6) to provide a monetary and banking system and to create or designate a national currency;
- 7) to ratify treaties by a vote of a majority of the members of each house;
- 8) to approve presidential appointment by a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Senate;
- 9) to establish diplomatic immunities;
- 10) to regulate banking, insurance, and issuance and use of commercial paper and securities, and patents and copyrights;
- 11) to provide for a national postal system;
- 12) to regulate the ownership, exploration and exploitation of natural resources;

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- 13) to regulate navigation, shipping, and the use of navigable waters;
- 14) to regulate the use of air space;
- 15) to delegate authority to the states and administrative agencies;
- 16) to impeach and remove the President, Vice President, and Justices of the Supreme Court by a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each house;
- 17) to provide for the national defense;
- 18) to create or consolidate states with the approval of the states affected;

### Notes

Ngermelngui State Government v. Ngardmau State Government, 2016 Palau 24 ¶ 45.

- 19) to confirm or disapprove a state of emergency declared by the President;
- 20) to provide for the general welfare, peace and security; and
- 21) to enact any laws which shall be necessary and proper for exercising the foregoing powers and all other inherent powers vested by this Constitution in the government of Palau.

### Notes

ROP v. Carreon, 19 ROP 66, 68, 70, 79, 80, 81, 82 (2012).

Peleliu v. Koror, 6 ROP Intrm. 91, 93 (1997).

Fritz v. ROP, 4 ROP Intrm. 264, 173 (Tr. Div. 1993).

Toribiong v. Gibbons, 3 ROP Intrm. 419, 421 (Tr. Div. 1993).

Gibbons v. Salii, 1 ROP Intrm. 333, 334, 354 (1986).

ROP v. M/V Aesarea, 1 ROP Intrm. 244, 251 (Tr. Div. 1985).

Section 6. To be eligible to hold office in the Olbiil Era Kelulau, a person must be:

### Notes

Nicholas v. Palau Election Comm'n, 16 ROP 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241, 242 (2009).

Francisco v. Chin, 10 ROP 44, 45, 50, 51, 52, 55 (2003).

- 1) a citizen;

### Notes

Nicholas v. Palau Election Comm'n, 16 ROP 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241, 242 (2009).

Ngerul v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 295, 296, 299 (2001).

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- 2) not less than twenty-five (25) years of age;
  - 3) a resident of Palau for not less than five (5) years immediately preceding the election;
- and

### Notes

Nicholas v. Palau Election Comm'n, 16 ROP 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241, 242 (2009).

Francisco v. Chin, 10 ROP 44, 51 (2003).

Ngerul v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 295, 296, 298, 299 (2001).

Ngerul v. Chin, 8 ROP Intrm. 263, 264 (2001).

- 4) a resident of the district in which he wishes to run for office for not less than one (1) year immediately preceding the election.

### Amended

Article IX, Section 6, subsection 1 was amended by the Tenth Amendment.

### Notes

Ngirturong v. Palau Election Commission, 20 ROP 74, 75, 76, 77, 78 (2013).

Kasiano v. Palau Election Comm'n, 18 ROP 10, 14 (Tr. Div. 2010).

Mario v. Palau Election Comm'n, 16 ROP 313, 314, 316, 317 (Tr. Div. 2009).

Francisco v. Chin, 10 ROP 44, 45, 50, 51, 52, 55 (2003).

Elbelau v. Election Commission, 3 ROP Intrm. 426, 432-34 (Tr. Div. 1993).

Section 7. A vacancy in the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall be filled for the unexpired term by a special election to be held in accordance with law. If less than one hundred eighty (180) days remain in the unexpired term, the seat will remain vacant until the next regular general election.

### Notes

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).

Section 8. The compensation of the members of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall be determined by law. No increase in compensation shall apply to the members of the Olbiil Era Kelulau during the term of enactment, nor may an increase in compensation be enacted in the period between the date of a regular general election and the date a new Olbiil Era Kelulau takes office.

### Amended

Article IX, Section 8 was amended by the Eleventh Amendment.

### Notes

See the Fifth Amendment and the Eleventh Amendment.

House of Delegates v. ROP, 16 ROP 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 (2008).

Palau Chamber of Commerce v. Uherbelau, 12 ROP 183, 186 (Tr. Div. 2005).

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ROP v. Akiwo, 6 ROP Intrm. 297, 299 (1996).  
ROP v. Akiwo, 6 ROP Intrm. 283, 285, 295 (Tr. Div. 1996).  
Akiwo v. ROP, 6 ROP Intrm. 105, 110 (1997).  
Palau Chamber of Commerce v. Ucherbelau, 5 ROP Intrm. 300, 301, 303 (Tr. Div. 1995).

**Section 9.** No member of either house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall be held to answer in any other place for any speech or debate in the Olbiil Era Kelulau. The members of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall be privileged, in all cases except treason, felony, or breach of peace, from arrest during their attendance at the sessions of the Olbiil Era Kelulau and in going to and from the sessions.

### Notes

Francisco v. Chin, 10 ROP 44, 47 (2003).  
Olikong v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 250, 255 (2000).  
ROP v. Akiwo, 6 ROP Intrm. 283, 292 (Tr. Div. 1996).  
Akiwo v. ROP, 6 ROP Intrm. 105, 113 (1997).  
Salii v. House of Delegates, 3 ROP Intrm. 351, 360 (Tr. Div. 1989).  
Salii v. House of Delegates, 1 ROP Intrm. 708, 710 (1989).

**Section 10.** Each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall be the sole judge of the election and qualifications of its members, may discipline a member, and, by a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of its members may suspend or expel a member. A member may not hold any other public office or public employment while a member of the Olbiil Era Kelulau.

### Notes

Singeo v. Rekemel, 2023 Palau 8 ¶ 15.  
ROP v. Oilouch, 20 ROP 109, 110 (2013).  
Mario v. Palau Election Comm'n, 16 ROP 313, 315 (Tr. Div. 2009).  
Louis v. Nakamura, 16 ROP 144, 147 (2009).  
Obeketang v. Sato, 12 ROP 210, 214, 215 (Tr. Div. 2005).  
Tulop v. Palau Election Comm'n, 12 ROP 100, 103 (2005).  
Francisco v. Chin, 10 ROP 44, 49, 53 (2003).  
Melaitau v. Lakobong, 9 ROP 165, 168 (2002).  
Ngerul v. Chin, 8 ROP Intrm. 263, 264 (2001).  
Koshiba v. KSPLA, 8 ROP Intrm. 356, 359 (Tr. Div. 2000).  
Olikong v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255 (2000).  
Elbelau v. Election Commission, 3 ROP Intrm. 426, 426-28 (Tr. Div. 1993).  
Salii v. House of Delegates, 3 ROP Intrm. 351, 357 (Tr. Div. 1989).  
Becheserrak v. Koror, 3 ROP Intrm. 53, 56 (1991).  
Toribiong v. Election Commissioner, 1 ROP Intrm. 265, 266 (1985).  
Akiwo v. Supreme Court, 1 ROP Intrm. 96, 97 (1984).  
Silmai v. Magistrate of Ngardmau, 1 ROP Intrm. 47, 51 (Tr. Div. 1982).

**Section 11.** Each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall convene its meeting on the second Tuesday in January following the regular general election and may meet regularly for four (4)

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years. Either house may be convened at any time by the presiding officer, or at the written request of the majority of the members, or by the President.

### Amended

Article IX, Section 11 was amended by the Twelfth Amendment.

### Notes

Francisco v. Chin, 10 ROP 44, 53 (2003).

Section 12. Each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall promulgate its own rules and procedures not inconsistent with this Constitution and the laws of Palau, and may compel the attendance of absent members. A majority of the members of each house shall constitute a quorum to do business. Each house, with the approval of a majority of its members, may compel the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of books and papers before that house or its committees.

### Notes

House of Delegates v. ROP, 16 ROP 13, 17, 18 (2008).

Section 13. Each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall elect a presiding officer by a majority of the members of that house. Each house shall elect such other officers and employ such staff as it deems necessary and appropriate.

Section 14. The Olbiil Era Kelulau may enact no law except by bill. Each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall establish a procedure for the enactment of bills into law. No bill may become a law unless it has been adopted by a majority of the members of each house present on three (3) separate readings, each reading to be held on a separate day. No bill may become a law unless it contains the following enacting clause: THE PEOPLE OF PALAU REPRESENTED IN THE OLBIIIL ERA KELULAU DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:.

Section 15. A bill adopted by each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall be presented to the President and shall become law when signed by the President. If the President vetoes a bill, it shall be returned to each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau within fifteen (15) calendar days with a statement of reasons for the veto. The President may reduce or veto an item in an appropriation bill and sign the remainder of the bill, returning the item reduced or vetoed to each house within fifteen (15) calendar days together with the reason for his action; or refer a bill to each house with recommendations for amendment. A bill not signed, vetoed, or referred within fifteen (15) calendar days of presentation to the President shall become law. A bill or item of a bill vetoed or reduced by the President may be considered by each house within thirty (30) calendar days of its return and shall become law as originally adopted upon approval of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each house. The Olbiil Era Kelulau, by the approval of a majority of the

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members present of each house, may pass a bill referred by the President in accordance with the President's recommendation for change and return it to the President for reconsideration. The President may not refer a bill for amendment a second time.

### Notes

Remengesau v. Senate, 10 ROP 173, 174 (Tr. Div. 2001).  
The Senate v. Nakamura, 8 ROP Intrm. 190, 191, 194 (2000).  
Governor of Kayangel v. Wilter, 1 ROP Intrm. 206, 210 (Tr. Div. 1985).

Section 16. The Olbiil Era Kelulau, with the approval of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each house, may release funds appropriated by the Olbiil Era Kelulau but impounded by the President.

### Notes

Gibbons v. Seventh Koror State Legislature, 11 ROP 97, 108 (2004).  
Governor of Kayangel v. Wilter, 1 ROP Intrm. 206, 207 (Tr. Div. 1985).

Section 17. The people may recall a member of the Olbiil Era Kelulau from office. A recall is initiated by a petition which shall name the member sought to be recalled, state the grounds for recall, and be signed by not less than twenty-five percent (25%) of the number of persons who voted in the most recent election for that member of the Olbiil Era Kelulau. A special recall election shall be held not later than sixty (60) calendar days after the filing of the recall petition. A member of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall be removed from office only with the approval of a majority of the persons voting in the election, and such vacancy shall be filled by a special election to be held in accordance with law. A recall may be sought against an individual member of the Olbiil Era Kelulau no more than once per term. No recall shall be permitted against a member who is serving the first year of his first term in the Olbiil Era Kelulau.

### Notes

Eberdong v. Borja, 10 ROP 227, 229, 230, 232 (Tr. Div. 2003).  
Andres v. Palau Election Commission, 9 ROP 289, 291 (Tr. Div. 2002).

## ARTICLE X

### JUDICIARY

Section 1. The judicial power of Palau shall be vested in a unified judiciary, consisting of a Supreme Court, a National Court, and such inferior courts of limited jurisdiction as may be established by law. All courts except the Supreme Court may be divided geographically and functionally as provided by law, or judicial rules not inconsistent with law.

**Notes**

- In re Rois Kebesang, 2021 Palau 38 (Tr. Div.) ¶ 10.  
Techeboet Lineage v. Baules, 2019 Palau 21 ¶ 16.  
Aimeliik State Pub. Lands Auth. v. Teltull, 2018 Palau 6 ¶ 17.  
Toribiong v. Tmetbab Clan, 22 ROP 116, 119 (2015).  
Rengulbai v. Klai Clan, 22 ROP 56, 60 (2015).  
ROP v. Carreon, 19 ROP 66, 75 (2012).  
In re Mesei, 16 ROP 338, 342 (Land Ct. 2009).  
Feichtinger v. Udui, 16 ROP 173, 177 (2009).  
Ngatpang State v. Rebluud, 11 ROP 48, 50 (2004).  
In re Perrin, 10 ROP 132, 133 (2003).  
ROP v. Kruger, 8 ROP Intrm. 347, 348 (Tr. Div. 2000).  
The Senate v. Nakamura, 8 ROP Intrm. 190, 193 (2000).  
Skebong v. EQPB, 8 ROP Intrm. 80, 84 (1999).  
Rebluud v. Palau Land Court, 7 ROP Intrm. 249, 250 (Tr. Div. 1998).  
Dalton v. Heirs of Borja, 5 ROP Intrm. 95, 103 (1995).  
Kruger v. Dean Worldwide, Inc., 4 ROP Intrm. 282, 284 (Tr. Div. 1994).  
ROP v. Wolff, 4 ROP Intrm. 278, 280 (Tr. Div. 1993).  
In re Webster, 4 ROP Intrm. 198, 199 (1994).  
KSPLA v. Diberdii Lineage, 3 ROP Intrm. 305, 307 (1993).  
Brikul v. Rengechel, 3 ROP Intrm. 195, 196-97 (1992).  
Otiwii v. Iyebukel Hamlet, 3 ROP Intrm. 159, 161-64, 168, 172 (1992).  
ROP v. Kikuo, 1 ROP Intrm. 254, 258 (1985).  
Senate v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 90, 91 (Tr. Div. 1983).

Section 2. The Supreme Court is a Court of Record consisting of an appellate division and a trial division. The Supreme Court shall be composed of a Chief Justice and not less than three (3) nor more than six (6) Associate Justices, all of whom shall be members of both divisions. All appeals shall be heard by at least three justices. Matters before the trial division may be heard by one justice. No justice may hear or decide an appeal of a matter heard by him in the trial division.

**Amended**

Article X, Section 2 was amended by the Fourteenth Amendment.

**Notes**

- In re Rois Kebesang, 2021 Palau 38 (Tr. Div.) ¶ 7.  
Ngiraterang v. Ngarchelong State Assembly, 2021 Palau 18 ¶ 59.  
Toribiong v. Tmetbab Clan, 22 ROP 116, 119 (2015).  
Airai State Gov't v. Ngkekiil Clan, 11 ROP 261, 262, 263 (Tr. Div. 2004).  
ROP v. Airai State Pub. Lands Auth., 11 ROP 258, 259 (Tr. Div. 2004).  
In re Gotina, 9 ROP 1, 2 (1999).  
Ngerketiit Lineage v. Ngirarsaol, 8 ROP Intrm. 50, 51 (1999).  
Dalton v. Heirs of Borja, 5 ROP Intrm. 95, 103-04 (1995).  
ROP v. Kikuo, 1 ROP Intrm. 254, 258 (1985).  
ROP v. Santos, 1 ROP Intrm. 274, 275, 276 (1985).

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Section 3. If the Chief Justice is unable to perform his duties, he shall appoint an Associate Justice to act in his place. If the office of Chief Justice becomes vacant and the Chief Justice has failed to appoint an Acting Chief Justice to act in his place, the President shall appoint an Associate Justice to act as Chief Justice until the vacancy is filled or the Chief Justice resumes his duties.

Section 4. The National Court shall consist of a presiding judge and such other judges as may be provided by law.

Section 5. The judicial power shall extend to all matters in law and equity. The trial division of the Supreme Court shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction over all matters affecting Ambassadors, other Public Ministers and Consuls, admiralty and maritime cases, and those matters in which the national government or a state government is a party. In all other cases, the National Court shall have original and concurrent jurisdiction with the trial division of the Supreme Court.

## Notes

- Rexid v. Becheserrak, 2023 Palau 10 ¶ 9.  
Ngiraterang v. Ngarchelong State Assembly, 2021 Palau 18 ¶¶ 9, 10, 44.  
Yobech v. ROP, 2020 Palau 26 ¶¶ 4, 5, 6, 8, 9.  
Ngatpang State Pub. Lands Auth. v. Whipps, 2020 Palau 17 ¶ 7n.8.  
Koror State Legis. v. KSPLA, 2019 Palau 38 ¶ 3.  
Koror State Legislature v. KSPLA, 2017 Palau 28 ¶¶ 8, 10, 16, 20, 22, 24, 33.  
Obak v. Ngirturong, 2017 Palau 11 ¶ 10.  
ROP v. Diaz, 21 ROP 105, 106 (Tr. Div. 2013).  
Henry v. Shizushi, 21 ROP 52, 54 (2014).  
ROP v. Carreon, 19 ROP 66, 75 (2012).  
In re Mesei, 16 ROP 338, 342 (Land Ct. 2009).  
Feichtinger v. Udui, 16 ROP 173, 177 (2009).  
Ringang v. Chiang, 16 ROP 129, 131 (2009).  
Taro v. ROP, 12 ROP 175, 176 (Tr. Div. 2004).  
Nakamura v. Sablan, 12 ROP 81, 85, 86 (2005).  
Dalton v. Borja, 12 ROP 65, 72 (2005).  
Roman Tmetuchl Family Trust, v. Ordome Hamlet, 11 ROP 158, 159, 160 (2004).  
Gibbons v. Seventh Koror State Legislature, 11 ROP 97, 104 (2004).  
Ngatpang State v. Ngiradilubech, 11 ROP 89, 91, 92 (2004).  
Rechetuker v. MOJ, 11 ROP 31, 33 (2003).  
Town House, Inc. v. Kanai, 9 ROP 286, 287 (Tr. Div. 2002).  
Matlab v. Melimarang, 9 ROP 93, 98 (2002).  
Ngerul v. Chin, 8 ROP Intrm. 263, 264 (2001).  
ROP v. Kruger, 8 ROP Intrm. 347, 348 (Tr. Div. 2000).  
ROP v. Koshiba, 8 ROP Intrm. 243, 244 (2000).  
The Senate v. Nakamura, 8 ROP Intrm. 190, 193 (2000).  
Skebong v. EQPB, 8 ROP Intrm. 80, 82, 86 (1999).  
Bank of Palau v. Bank of Micronesia Corp., 7 ROP Intrm. 275, 276 (Tr. Div. 1999).

- Rebluud v. Palau Land Court, 7 ROP Intrm. 249, 251 (Tr. Div. 1998).  
Ngiraingas v. KSPLA, 7 ROP Intrm. 206, 207 (1999).  
The Senate v. Nakamura, 7 ROP Intrm. 8, 9 (1998).  
KSPLA v. Meriang Clan, 6 ROP Intrm. 10, 12 (1996).  
Becheserrak v. ROP, 5 ROP Intrm. 63, 66 (1995).  
Kruger v. Dean Worldwide, Inc., 4 ROP Intrm. 282, 284 (Tr. Div. 1994).  
Tell v. Rengiil, 4 ROP Intrm. 224, 228 (1994).  
KSPLA v. Diberdii Lineage, 3 ROP Intrm. 305, 305-13 (1993).  
Espangel v. Diaz, 3 ROP Intrm. 240, 242-43 (1992).  
Otiwi v. Iyebukel Hamlet, 3 ROP Intrm. 159, 161 (1992).  
Yalap v. ROP, 3 ROP Intrm. 61, 63-65 (1992).  
Becheserrak v. Koror, 3 ROP Intrm. 53, 55 (1991).  
Koror v. W.C.T.C., 2 ROP Intrm. 306, 307, 311-12 (1991).  
ROP v. Decherong, 2 ROP Intrm. 152, 159 (1990).  
Gibbons v. ROP, 1 ROP Intrm. 634, 637 (1989).  
Tehekii Clan v. Paulus, 1 ROP Intrm. 514, 517 (1988).  
Blesam v. Tamakong, 1 ROP Intrm. 547AA, 547CC (1988).  
ROP v. Singeo, 1 ROP Intrm. 428A, 428D (1987).  
Gibbons v. Sali, 1 ROP Intrm. 333, 336 (1986).  
Skebong v. Election Commissioner, 1 ROP Intrm. 366, 370, 375 (1986).  
Teriong v. Airai, 1 ROP Intrm. 664, 669 (1984).  
Senate v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 90, 91 (Tr. Div. 1983).  
Remeliik v. Senate, 1 ROP Intrm. 1, 5 (High Ct. Aug. 1981).

Section 6. The appellate division of the Supreme Court shall have jurisdiction to review all decisions of the trial division and all decisions of lower courts.

#### Notes

- Nayem v. Sengebau, 2017 Palau 35 ¶ 4.  
Idid Clan v. PPLA & KSPLA, 2016 Palau 7 ¶ 8.  
First Commercial Bank v. Wong, 20 ROP 132, 136 (2013).  
Feichtinger v. Udui, 16 ROP 173, 174 (2009).  
In re Perrin, 10 ROP 132, 133 (2003).  
Heirs of Drairoro v. Yangilmau, 10 ROP 116, 117 (2003).  
Wolff v. Ngiraklsong, 9 ROP 78, 79 (2002).  
In re Gotina, 9 ROP 1, 2 (1999).  
Uchel v. Deluus, 8 ROP Intrm. 120, 121 (2000).  
ROP v. Udui, 8 ROP Intrm. 61, 62 (1999).  
ROP v. Black Micro Corporation, 7 ROP Intrm. 46, 47 (1998).  
Micronesian Yachts Co. v. Foreign Investment Board, 5 ROP Intrm. 305, 308 (Tr. Div. 1995).  
Yalap v. ROP, 3 ROP Intrm. 61, 67 (1992).  
Koror v. W.C.T.C., 2 ROP Intrm. 306, 307, 309, 311-12 (1991).  
Ngirchokebai v. Marcil, 2 ROP Intrm. 3, 4 (1989).  
Fritz v. Sali, 1 ROP Intrm. 521, 522, 525, 529, 539 (1988).  
Koshiba v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 65, 71 (Tr. Div. 1983).

Section 7. The Judicial Nominating Commission shall consist of seven (7) members, one

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# Article X

of whom shall be the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who shall act as Chairman. The Bar shall elect three (3) of its members to serve on the Judicial Nominating Commission and the President shall appoint three (3) citizens who are not members of the Bar. The Judicial Nominating Commission shall meet upon the call of the Chairman and prepare and submit to the President a list of seven (7) nominees for the positions of justice and judge. A new list shall be submitted every year.

### Amended

Article X, Section 7 was amended by the Twenty-Seventh Amendment.

### Notes

ROP v. Airai State Pub. Lands Auth., 11 ROP 258, 259 (Tr. Div. 2004).

Section 8. No person shall be eligible to hold judicial office in the Supreme Court or National Court unless he has been admitted to practice law before the highest court of a state or country in which he is admitted to practice for at least five (5) years preceding his appointment. Any justice of the Supreme Court or judge of the National Court who becomes a candidate for an elective office shall, upon filing for such office, forfeit his judicial office.

### Notes

Sakuma v. Borja, 11 ROP 288, 291 (Tr. Div. 2004).

ROP v. Airai State Pub. Lands Auth., 11 ROP 258, 260 (Tr. Div. 2004).

Rebluud v. Palau Land Court, 7 ROP Intrm. 249, 250 (1998).

Udui v. Temol, 2 ROP Intrm. 251, 255 (1991).

Section 9. All justices of the Supreme Court and judges of the National Court shall hold their offices during good behavior. They shall be eligible for retirement upon attaining the age of sixty-five (65) years.

Section 10. A justice of the Supreme Court may be impeached only for the commission of treason, bribery, other high crimes, or improper practices, or on the grounds of his inability to discharge the functions of his office upon a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau. The judges of the National Court and the inferior courts may be impeached by a majority vote of the members of each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau. During his impeachment or removal proceedings, a justice or judge may not exercise the power of his office. A justice or judge shall forfeit his office upon conviction of a felony or any high crime.

### Notes

Ngerur v. Supreme Court, 4 ROP Intrm. 145, 146 (1994).

Section 11. The justices and judges shall receive compensation as prescribed by law. Such compensation shall not be diminished during their term of office.

Section 12. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall be the administrative head of the unified judicial system. He may assign judges from one geographical department or functional division of a court to another department or division of that court and he may assign judges for temporary service in another court. The Chief Justice shall appoint with the approval of the Associate Justices, an administrative director to supervise the administrative operation of the judicial system.

**Notes**

- In re Rois Kebesang, 2021 Palau 38 (Tr. Div.) ¶¶ 10, 15, 22.  
Ngiraterang v. Ngarchelong State Assembly, 2021 Palau 18 ¶ 58.  
Toribiong Clan v. Tmetbab Clan, 22 ROP 116, 118, 119 (2015).  
Yano v. Yano, 20 ROP 24, 28 (2012).  
Orakiblai Clan v. Gov't. of the United States of America, 19 ROP 47, 49 (2012).  
ROP v. Airai State Pub. Lands Auth., 11 ROP 258, 259 (Tr. Div. 2004).  
ROP v. Decherong, 2 ROP Intrm. 152, 159-60 (1990).  
ROP v. Tmetuchl, 1 ROP Intrm. 443 (1988).  
ROP v. Singeo, 1 ROP Intrm. 428A (1987).

Section 13. The Chief Justice shall prepare and submit through the President to the Olbiil Era Kelulau an annual consolidated budget for the entire unified judicial system. The national government shall bear the total cost of the system unless the Olbiil Era Kelulau requires reimbursement of appropriate portions of such cost by the state governments.

Section 14. The Supreme Court shall promulgate rules governing the administration of the courts, legal and judicial professions, and practice and procedure in civil and criminal matters.

**Notes**

- In re Shadel, 22 ROP 172 (Disc. Proc. 2015).  
Henry v. Shizushi, 21 ROP 79, 82 (2014).  
Henry v. Shizushi, 21 ROP 52, 55 (2014).  
Gibbons v. Seventh Koror State Legislature, 11 ROP 97, 103 (2004).  
In re Perrin, 10 ROP 132, 133 (2003).  
Winterthur Swiss Ins. Co., v. Socio Micronesia, Inc., 8 ROP Intrm. 212, 213 (2000).  
In re Shadel, 6 ROP Intrm. 141 (1997).  
In re Tarkong, 3 ROP Intrm. 37 (1991).  
Adelbai v. Ngirasiong, 3 ROP Intrm. 1, 2 (1991).  
Koror v. W.C.T.C., 2 ROP Intrm. 306, 312 (1991).  
ROP v. Decherong, 2 ROP Intrm. 152, 161 (1990).  
ROP v. Decherong, 2 ROP Intrm. 170, 171 (1990).  
Techekii Clan v. Paulus, 1 ROP Intrm. 514, 517 (1988).  
Blesam v. Tamakong, 1 ROP Intrm. 547AA, 547CC (1988).  
ROP v. Singeo, 1 ROP Intrm. 428A, 428D (1987).  
Application of Oiwil, 1 ROP Intrm. 238, 240 (Tr. Div. 1985).

ARTICLE XI

STATE GOVERNMENTS

Section 1. The structure and organization of state governments shall follow democratic principles, traditions of Palau, and shall not be inconsistent with this Constitution. The national government shall assist in the organization of state government.

**Notes**

- The Ngaimis v. ROP, 16 ROP 26, 27, 28, 29, 20, 31 (2008).  
HOTL, et al., v. 7<sup>th</sup> Koror State Legislature, et al., 14 ROP 52, 56, 57 (2007).  
Ngara-Irrai v. Airai, 6 ROP Intrm. 198, 202-03 (1997).  
Koror v. Becheserrak, 6 ROP Intrm. 74, 74 (1997).  
Becheserrak v. Koror, 3 ROP Intrm. 53, 54-56 (1991).  
Teriong v. Airai, 1 ROP Intrm. 664, 668, 673-75 (1984).  
Nakatani v. Nishizono, 1 ROP Intrm. 289, 295 (Tr. Div. 1985).  
In Re Eriich, 1 ROP Intrm. 134, 143 (Tr. Div. 1984).

Section 2. All governmental powers not expressly delegated by this Constitution to the states nor denied to the national government are powers of the national government. The national government may delegate powers by law to the state governments.

**Notes**

- Ngatpang State Pub. Lands Auth. v. Whipps, 2020 Palau 17 ¶ 15.  
Rteai Chiefs of Ngarchelong v. Ongidobel, 19 ROP 204, 207, 208 (Tr. Div. 2010).  
Koror State Planning Comm'n v. Haruo, 8 ROP Intrm. 361, 361 (Tr. Div. 2001).  
Koror v. Blanco, 4 ROP Intrm. 208, 209 (1994).

Section 3. Subject to laws enacted by the Olbiil Era Kelulau, state legislatures shall have the power to impose taxes which shall be uniformly applied throughout the state.

**Notes**

- Koror v. ROP, 3 ROP Intrm. 127, 128 (1992).  
Teriong v. Airai, 1 ROP Intrm. 664, 667 (1989).

Section 4. Subject to the approval of the Olbiil Era Kelulau, the state legislatures shall have the power to borrow money to finance public programs or to settle public debt.

**Notes**

- Teriong v. Airai, 1 ROP Intrm. 664, 667 (1989).

## Article XII PALAU NATIONAL CODE ANNOTATED

### ARTICLE XII

#### FINANCE

Section 1. There shall be a National Treasury and a state treasury for each of the states. All revenues derived from taxes or other sources shall be deposited in the appropriate treasury. No funds shall be withdrawn from any treasury except by law.

##### Notes

Republic of Palau v. Ngarchelong State Gov't, 2019 Palau 5 ¶ 13.

ROP v. Carreon, 19 ROP 66, 81 (2012).

The Senate v. Nakamura, 8 ROP Intrm. 190, 195 (2000).

The Senate v. Nakamura, 7 ROP Intrm. 212, 213 (1999).

Baules v. Nakamura, 6 ROP Intrm. 317, 318 (Tr. Div. 1996).

Koror v. ROP, 3 ROP Intrm. 314, 321 (1993).

#### Section 2.

(a) A Public Auditor shall be appointed for a term of six (6) years by the President subject to confirmation by the Olbiil Era Kelulau. The Public Auditor may be removed by a vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the members of each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau. In such event, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall appoint an acting Public Auditor to serve until a new Public Auditor is appointed and confirmed. The Public Auditor shall be free from any control or influence by any person or organization.

(b) The Public Auditor shall inspect and audit accounts in every branch, department, agency, or statutory authority of the national government and in all other public legal entities or nonprofit organizations receiving public funds from the national government. The Public Auditor shall report the results of his inspections and audits to the Olbiil Era Kelulau, at least once a year, and shall have such additional functions and duties as may be prescribed by law.

##### Notes

Senate v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 90, 91-95 (Tr. Div. 1983).

#### Section 3.

(a) The President shall submit an annual unified national budget to the Olbiil Era Kelulau for consideration and approval. The Olbiil Era Kelulau may amend or modify the annual budget as submitted by the President. Except appropriation bills recommended by the President for immediate passage or to cover the operational expenses of the Olbiil Era Kelulau, no appropriation bill may be enacted by the Olbiil Era Kelulau until a bill appropriating money for the budget has been enacted.

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# Article XII

## Notes

The Senate v. Nakamura, 8 ROP Intrm. 190, 191, 194, 195 (2000).

The Senate v. Nakamura, 7 ROP Intrm. 212, 213 (1999).

(b) The chief executive of each state shall submit, with the assistance of the national government, an annual budget to the state legislature for consideration and approval. The state legislature may amend or modify the annual budget as submitted by the chief executive of the state. Except appropriation bills recommended by the chief executive of the state for immediate passage or to cover the operational expenses of the state legislature, no appropriation bill may be enacted by a state legislature until a bill appropriating money for the budget has been enacted.

Section 4. The national government and the state governments shall have the power to make investments pursuant to law.

## Notes

Teriong v. Airai, 1 ROP Intrm. 664, 667 (1989).

Section 5. Except where a particular distribution is required by the terms of the assistance, all block grants and foreign aid shall be shared by the national government and all the states in a fair and equitable manner based on needs and population.

## Notes

Teriong v. Airai, 1 ROP Intrm. 664, 667 (1989).

## Section 6.

(a) Each state shall be entitled to revenues derived from the exploration and exploitation of all living and non-living resources, except highly migratory fish, and fines collected for violation of any law within the marine area extending from the land to twelve (12) nautical miles seaward from the traditional baselines.

(b) The national government shall be entitled to all revenues derived from the exploration and exploitation of all living and non-living resources, except highly migratory fish, and fines collected for violation of any law beyond the areas owned by the state.

(c) All revenues derived from licensing foreign vessels to fish for highly migratory fish within the jurisdictional waters of Palau shall be divided equitably between the national government and all the state governments as determined by the Olbiil Era Kelulau.

## Notes

Koror v. Blanco, 4 ROP Intrm. 208, 209-10 (1994).

Teriong v. Airai, 1 ROP Intrm. 664, 667 (1989).

Fritz v. Sali, 1 ROP Intrm. 521, 541 (1988).

## Article XIII PALAU NATIONAL CODE ANNOTATED

### ARTICLE XIII

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. The Palauan traditional languages shall be the national languages. Palauan and English shall be the official languages. The Olbiil Era Kelulau shall determine the appropriate use of each language.

##### Notes

Gibbons v. ROP, 5 ROP Intrm. 353, 356 (Tr. Div. 1996).

In Re Eriich, 1 ROP Intrm. 134, 143 (Tr. Div. 1984).

Section 2. The Palauan and English versions of this Constitution shall be equally authoritative; in case of conflict, the English version shall prevail.

##### Amended

Article XIII, Section 2 was amended by the Twenty-Fifth Amendment.

##### Notes

KSPLA v. Rubekul a Meyuns, 2017 Palau 7 ¶¶ 29, 30, 31.

Seid v. ROP, 23 ROP 21, 22, 25 (Tr. Div. 2014).

Ngerul v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 295, 299 (2001).

Section 3. Citizens may enact or repeal national laws, except appropriations, by initiative. An initiative petition shall contain the text of the proposed law or of the law sought to be repealed and be signed by not less than ten percent (10%) of the registered voters. An initiative petition shall take effect if approved at the next general election by a majority of the persons voting on the initiative. A law enacted by initiative or a repeal of a law by initiative may not be vetoed by the President. A law enacted or repealed by initiative may be subsequently amended, repealed or reenacted only by another initiative pursuant to the provisions of this section.

##### Notes

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).

Section 4. No state may secede from Palau.

Section 5. An area which was historically or geographically part of Palau may be admitted as a new state upon the approval of the Olbiil Era Kelulau and not less than three-fourths (3/4) of the states.

Section 6. Harmful substances such as nuclear, chemical, gas or biological weapons

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# Article XIII

intended for use in warfare, nuclear power plants, and waste materials therefrom, shall not be used, tested, stored, or disposed of within the territorial jurisdiction of Palau without the express approval of not less than three-fourths (3/4) of the votes cast in a referendum submitted on this specific question.

### Comments

Article XIII, Section 6 was amended by First Amendment § 14(a). Source of amendment is RPPL 3-76 § 3.

### Notes

- Wong v. Nakamura, 4 ROP Intrm. 331, 333 (Tr. Div. 1994).
- Gibbons v. Etpison, 4 ROP Intrm. 1, 11 (1993).
- Gibbons v. Etpison, 3 ROP Intrm. 398, 407 (Tr. Div. 1993).
- Fritz v. Salii, 1 ROP Intrm. 521, 522, 525, 529-30, 533, 539, 541 (1988).
- Gibbons v. Salii, 1 ROP Intrm. 333, 334-43, 346-50, 357 (1986).
- Fritz v. Salii, 1 ROP Intrm. 551, 560 (1984).
- Gibbons v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 80, 81 (Tr. Div. 1983).
- Koshiba v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 65, 69 (Tr. Div. 1983).

Section 7. The national government shall have the power to take property for public use upon payment of just compensation. The state government shall have the power to take private property for public use upon payment of just compensation. No property shall be taken by the national government without prior consultation with the government of the state in which the property is located. This power shall not be used for the benefit of a foreign entity. This power shall be used sparingly and only as a final resort after all means of good faith negotiation with the land owner have been exhausted.

### Notes

- ROP v. Terekiu Clan, 21 ROP 21, 24 (2014).
- Wally v. ROP, 16 ROP 19, 22 (2008).
- Airai State Gov't v. Ngkekiil Clan, 11 ROP 261, 263, 264, 265 (Tr. Div. 2004).
- PPLA v. Tmiu Clan, 8 ROP Intrm. 326, 328 (2001).
- Ngiraiuelenguul v. Ngchesar State Gov't, 8 ROP Intrm. 342, 346 (Tr. Div. 1999).
- Superluck Enterprises, Inc. v. ROP, 6 ROP Intrm. 267, 272 (1997).
- Wong v. Nakamura, 4 ROP Intrm. 331, 345 (Tr. Div. 1994).
- Toribiong v. Gibbons, 3 ROP Intrm. 419, 422 (Tr. Div. 1993).
- Gibbons v. Salii, 1 ROP Intrm. 333, 333-39, 341-43, 346-50, 352, 355-57 (1986).
- Koshiba v. Remeliik, 1 ROP Intrm. 65, 75 (Tr. Div. 1983).

Section 8. Only citizens of Palau and corporations wholly owned by citizens of Palau may acquire title to land or waters in Palau.

### Notes

See the Nineteenth Amendment and Twentieth Amendment.

- Shiro v. Estate of Reyes, 21 ROP 100, 102 (2014).

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- Diaz v. Estate of Ngirchorachel, 14 ROP 110 (2007).  
Palau Pub. Lands Auth. v. Seventh Day Adventist Mission, 12 ROP 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 (2004).  
Bandarii v. Ngerusebek Lineage, 11 ROP 83, 85 (2004).  
Dalton v. Borja, 8 ROP Intrm. 302, 303 (2001).  
Anastacio v. Haruo, 8 ROP Intrm. 128, 129, 130 (2000).  
Aguon v. Aguon, 5 ROP Intrm. 122, 127 (1995).

Section 9. No tax shall be imposed on land.

### Notes

- Kanai v. ROP, 2016 Palau 29 ¶¶ 7, 17, 18, 19.  
Koror v. ROP, 3 ROP Intrm. 314, 318-20 (1993).

Section 10. The national government shall, within five (5) years of the effective date of this Constitution, provide for the return to the original owners or their heirs of any land which became part of the public lands as a result of the acquisition by previous occupying powers or their nationals through force, coercion, fraud, or without just compensation or adequate consideration.

### Notes

- Ngaraard State Public Lands Authority v. PPLA, 2022 Palau 27 ¶ 18.  
Koror State Public Lands Authority v. Rengiil et. al., 2022 Palau 11 ¶¶ 21, 27.  
Medalarak v. Ngaraard State Pub. Lands Auth., 2021 Palau 10 ¶ 4.  
Ngatpang State Pub. Lands Auth. v. Whipps, 2020 Palau 17 ¶ 10.  
Esuroi Clan v. Roman Tmetuchl Family Trust, 2019 Palau 31 ¶¶ 41, 42, 43.  
Esuroi Clan v. Olngellel Lineage, 2019 Palau 19 ¶ 7 n.4.  
Olsuchel Lineage v. Ueki, 2019 Palau 3 ¶¶ 19 f.n.4, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37.  
Remed Lineage v. Airai State Public Lands Authority, 2018 Palau 26 ¶¶ 7, 20.  
Ngeribukel Clan v. Ngeribkal Clan, 2017 Palau 33 ¶ 14.  
Koror State Legislature v. KSPLA, 2017 Palau 28 ¶ 18.  
Ngirameketii, Rubekul Kldeu v. KSPLA, 2017 Palau 19 ¶ 4.  
KSPLA v. Toribiong, 2017 Palau 12 ¶ 4 n.2.  
KSPLA v. Rubekul a Meyuns, 2017 Palau 7 ¶¶ 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32.  
Ngirameketii, Rubekul Kldeu v. KSPLA, 2016 Palau 27 ¶¶ 9, 15.  
Ngirameketii, Rubekul Kldeu and Idid Clan v. KSPLA, 2016 Palau 19 ¶¶ 12, 13, 15.  
Idid Clan v. PPLA & KSPLA, 2016 Palau 7 ¶¶ 3, 5, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21, 35.  
In re Ownership of Ngerchelngael Island, 22 ROP 266, 273, 276 (Land Ct. 2014).  
Toribiong v. Tmetbab Clan, 22 ROP 79, 84 (2015).  
Kebekol v. KSPLA, 22 ROP 74, 76 (2015).  
Rengulbai v. Klai Clan, 22 ROP 56, 64 (2015).  
Kebekol v. KSPLA, 22 ROP 38, 39, 42, 45 (2015).  
KSPLA v. PPLA, 22 ROP 30, 32 (2015).  
KSPLA v. Idid Clan, 22 ROP 21, 27 (2015).  
In re lots in Iyebukel Hamlet, 21 ROP 129, 144 (Land Ct. 2014).  
Koror State Pub. Lands Auth. v. Ngermellong Clan, 21 ROP 1, 2 (2012).  
Ikluuk v. Koror State Public Lands Authority, 20 ROP 286, 287 (L.C. 2013).

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- Idid Clan v. Koror State Public Lands Authority, 20 ROP 270, 272, 273 (2013).  
Koror State Public Lands Authority v. Giraked, 20 ROP 248, 249, 251 (2013).  
Ikluuk v. Koror State Public Lands Authority, 20 ROP 128, 130, 131 (2013).  
Kumer Clan/Lineage v. Koror State Public Lands Authority, 20 ROP 102, 107 (2013).  
Elsau Clan v. Peleliu State Public Lands Authority, 20 ROP 87, 88, 89 (2013).  
Ngarameketii v. Koror State Pub. Lands Auth., 18 ROP 59, 60, 62, 64 (2011).  
In re Tabkusik, 18 ROP 16, 20 (Land Ct. 2010).  
Tmetbab clan v. KSPLA, 16 ROP 91, 93 (2008).  
Koror State Pub. Lands Auth. V. Ngirmang, 14 ROP 29, 36 (2006).  
RTFT v. Airai State Pub. Lands Auth., 12 ROP 76, 77, 78 (2005).  
Palau Pub. Lands Auth. v. Seventh Day Adventist Mission, 12 ROP 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 (2004).  
Espong Lineage v. Airai State Pub. Lands Auth., 12 ROP 1, 5, 6 (2004).  
Palau Pub. Lands Auth. v. Tab Lineage, 11 ROP 161, 163, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172 (2004).  
Baulbei Clan v. Melekeok State Pub. Lands Auth., 11 ROP 117, 118, 119, 120, 121 (2004).  
Palau Cmty. Coll. v. Ibai Lineage, 10 ROP 143, 144, 145, 146, 147 (2003).  
ROP v. Wally, 10 ROP 85, 86 (2003).  
Airai State v. ROP, 10 ROP 29, 33 (2002).  
Iyar v. Masami, 9 ROP 255, 259 (Tr. Div. 2001).  
Iyar v. Masami, 9 ROP 238, 239 (Tr. Div. 2002).  
Kerradel v. Ngaraard State Public Lands Authority, 9 ROP 185 (2002).  
Ngerukebid Lineage v. KSPLA, 9 ROP 180 (2002).  
Masang v. Ngirmang, 9 ROP 125, 126 (2002).  
Adelbai v. Masang, 9 ROP 35, 36 (2001).  
PPLA v. Tmiu Clan, 8 ROP Intrm. 326, 326 (2001).  
Ingeiaol Clan v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 311, 312 (2001).  
Carlos v. Ngarchelong SPLA, 8 ROP Intrm. 270, 271, 272 (2001).  
Basiou v. Ngeskesuk Clan, 8 ROP Intrm. 209, 211 (2000).  
Etpison v. Sugiyama, 8 ROP Intrm. 208, 208 (2000).  
Olngebang Lineage v. ROP, 8 ROP Intrm. 197, 198, 201 (2000).  
PPLA v. Salvador, 8 ROP Intrm. 73, 76, 77 (1999).  
Uchelkeyukl Clan v. KSPLA, 7 ROP Intrm. 98, 99, 100 (1998).  
Meriang Clan v. ROP, 7 ROP Intrm. 33, 34, 35 (1998).  
Kirk v. KSPLA, 6 ROP Intrm. 346, 350 (Tr. Div. 1997).  
ROP v. Ngara-Irrai, 6 ROP Intrm. 159, 165 (1997).  
Uchellas v. Etpison, 5 ROP Intrm. 86, 88 (1995).  
Luii v. Meriang Clan, 4 ROP Intrm. 354, 355 (Tr. Div. 1994).  
Gibbons v. Salii, 1 ROP Intrm. 333, 353 (1986).  
ROP v. Tmetuchl, 1 ROP Intrm. 214, 217-219, 226 (Tr. Div. 1984).

Section 11. The provisional capital shall be located in Koror; provided, that not later than ten (10) years after the effective date of this Constitution, the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall designate a place in Babeldaob to be the permanent capital.

## Notes

In Re Eriich, 1 ROP Intrm. 134, 137 (Tr. Div. 1984).

Section 12. The national government shall have exclusive power to regulate importation

## Article XIII PALAU NATIONAL CODE ANNOTATED

of firearms and ammunition. No persons except armed forces personnel lawfully in Palau and law enforcement officers acting in an official capacity shall have the right to possess firearms or ammunition unless authorized by legislation which is approved in a nationwide referendum by a majority of the votes cast on the issue.

### Notes

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).  
ROP v. Ngiraboi, 2 ROP Intrm. 257, 267, 268 (1991).

Section 13. Subject to Section 12, the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall enact laws within one hundred and eighty (180) days after the effective date of this Constitution:

- 1) providing for the purchase, confiscation and disposal of all firearms in Palau;
- 2) establishing a mandatory minimum imprisonment of fifteen (15) years for violation of any law regarding importation, possession, use or manufacture of firearms.

### Notes

Ngemaes v. ROP, 4 ROP Intrm. 250, 251 (1994).  
ROP v. Ngiraboi, 2 ROP Intrm. 257, 267-68, 275 (1991).  
ROP v. Singeo, 1 ROP Intrm. 551, 560 (1989).  
Kazuo v. ROP, 1 ROP Intrm. 154, 155, 160, 162, 174-76, 178 (1984).

## ARTICLE XIV

### AMENDMENTS

Section 1. An amendment to this Constitution may be proposed by a Constitutional Convention, popular initiative, or by the Olbiil Era Kelulau, as provided herein:

(a) at least once every fifteen (15) years, the Olbiil Era Kelulau may submit to the voters the question: "Shall there be a Convention to revise or amend the Constitution?". If a majority of the votes cast upon the question is in the affirmative, a Constitution Convention shall be convened within six (6) months thereafter, in a manner prescribed by law;

(b) by petition signed by not less than twenty-five percent (25%) of the registered voters;  
or

(c) by resolution adopted by not less than three-fourths (3/4) of the members of each House of the Olbiil Era Kelulau.

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# Article XV

## Notes

- Gibbons v. Etpison, 5 ROP Intrm. 273, 274, 276 (Tr. Div. 1992).  
Wong v. Nakamura, 4 ROP Intrm. 331, 338-39 (Tr. Div. 1994).  
Gibbons v. Etpison, 4 ROP Intrm. 1, 3-7 (1993).  
Gibbons v. Etpison, 3 ROP Intrm. 398, 403-04 (Tr. Div. 1993).  
Gibbons v. Etpison, 3 ROP Intrm. 385A, 385A-B, 385E-J, 385O (Tr. Div. 1992).  
Fritz v. Sali, 1 ROP Intrm. 521, 529, 531-35, 543-46 (1988).

Section 2. A proposed amendment to this Constitution shall become effective when approved in the next regular general election by a majority of the votes cast on that amendment and in not less than three-fourths (3/4) of the states.

## Amended

Article XIV, Section 2 was amended by the Fifteenth Amendment.

## Notes

- Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).  
Wong v. Nakamura, 4 ROP Intrm. 331, 339 (Tr. Div. 1994).  
Gibbons v. Etpison, 4 ROP Intrm. 1, 5-6 (1993).  
Fritz v. Sali, 1 ROP Intrm. 521, 531 (1988).

## ARTICLE XV

## TRANSITION

Section 1. This Constitution shall take effect on January 1, 1981, unless otherwise provided herein.

## Notes

- Palau Pub. Lands Auth. v. Tab Lineage, 11 ROP 161, 171 (2004).

Section 2. The first election pursuant to the terms of this Constitution shall take place on November 4, 1980. The officials elected shall be installed on January 1, 1981.

### Section 3.

(a) All existing law in force and effect in Palau immediately preceding the effective date of this Constitution shall, subject to the provisions of this Constitution, remain in force and effect until repealed, revoked, amended or until it expires by its own terms.

(b) All rights, interests, obligations, judgments, and liabilities arising under the existing law shall remain in force and effect and shall be recognized, exercised, and enforced accordingly, subject to the provisions of this Constitution.

**Notes**

- Mengeolt v. ROP, 2017 Palau 17 ¶ 11.  
Palau Cmty. Coll. v. Ibai Lineage, 10 ROP 143, 146 (2003).  
Eller v. ROP, 10 ROP 122, 130 (2003).  
Rechucher v. Ngiraked, 10 ROP 20, 25 (2002).  
Kirk v. KSPLA, 6 ROP Intrm. 346, 350 (Tr. Div. 1997).  
Morei v. Ngetchuang Lineage, 5 ROP Intrm. 292, 293 (Tr. Div. 1995).  
Skebong v. Election Commissioner, 1 ROP Intrm. 366, 371 (1986).  
ROP v. Santos, 1 ROP Intrm. 274, 275, 277 (1985).  
Renguul v. Ililau, 1 ROP Intrm. 188, 190 (Tr. Div. 1985).  
Ngirausui v. ROP, 1 ROP Intrm. 185, 185-86 (Tr. Div. 1985).  
Silmai v. Magistrate of Ngardmau, 1 ROP Intrm. 47, 52 (Tr. Div. 1982).

Section 4. On or after the effective date of this Constitution, but not later than the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, the national government of Palau shall succeed to any right or interest acquired by the Administering Authority, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the government of Palau District, and may assume such obligations and liabilities incurred by the Administering Authority, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, or the government of Palau District as may be prescribed by law.

**Notes**

- KSPLA v. PPLA, 22 ROP 30, 36 (2015).

Section 5. Nothing in Section 3 or 4 of this Article shall be deemed to constitute a waiver or release of the Administering Authority, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, or any other government entity or person from any continuing or unsatisfied obligation or duty owing to the citizens of Palau, or the national government or state governments of Palau. The national government and state governments as well as the citizens of Palau shall retain all rights, interests, and causes of action not specifically and expressly released or waived.

Section 6. All municipal charters existing on the effective date of this Constitution shall remain in force and effect until the state governments are established pursuant to this Constitution which shall take place not later than four (4) years after the effective date of this Constitution.

**Notes**

- Peleliu v. Koror, 6 ROP Intrm. 91, 92 (1997).  
Airai v. Iluches, 6 ROP Intrm. 57, 61 (1997).

Section 7. Upon the effective date of this Constitution, the employees of the district government of Palau shall remain as employees of the national government of Palau, unless otherwise provided by law or regulation.

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# Article XV

Section 8. Until the judicial system provided for in this Constitution is organized, which shall occur not later than one (1) year after the effective date of this Constitution, the judicial system as of the effective date of this Constitution, shall continue unless otherwise provided by law. After the organization and certification of the judicial system by the President, all new actions shall be commenced and filed therein and all pending matters shall be transferred to the proper court as though commenced and filed in those courts in the first instance, except as otherwise prescribed by law. The Chief Justice of the Trust Territory High Court shall be the acting Chief Justice of the Supreme Court until the President appoints the first Chief Justice.

### Notes

Nakamura v. Isechal, 10 ROP 134, 136 (2003).

Section 9. Individuals, corporations, or other entities qualified to do business in Palau on the effective date of this Constitution shall maintain their legal existence and shall be allowed to continue to do business unless otherwise provided by law. Business and professional licenses in Palau District on the effective date of this Constitution shall continue in effect unless otherwise prescribed by law or until they expire by their own terms.

Section 10. Any provision of this Constitution or a law enacted pursuant to it which is in conflict with the Trusteeship Agreement between the United States of America and the United Nations Security Council shall not become effective until the date of termination of such Trusteeship Agreement.

### Notes

In re Angelino, 22 ROP 183, 190 (Tr. Div. 2014).

Eller v. ROP, 10 ROP 122, 130 (2003).

Watanabe v. Nelson, 4 ROP Intrm. 169, 169 (1994).

ROP v. Sisior, 3 ROP Intrm. 376, 379 (Tr. Div. 1991).

Kazuo v. ROP, 1 ROP Intrm. 154, 158-59, 175-76, 180 (1984).

Section 11. Any amendment to this Constitution proposed for the purpose of avoiding inconsistency with the Compact of Free Association shall require approval by a majority of the votes cast on that amendment and in not less than three-fourths (3/4) of the states. Such amendment shall remain in effect only as long as the inconsistency continues.

### Notes

Gibbons v. Etpison, 5 ROP Intrm. 273, 274 (Tr. Div. 1992).

Wong v. Nakamura, 4 ROP Intrm. 331, 332-33, 337 (Tr. Div. 1994).

Gibbons v. Etpison, 3 ROP Intrm. 385A, 385B (Tr. Div. 1992).

Fritz v. Salii, 1 ROP Intrm. 521, 525, 529-38, 541-46 (1988).

Section 12. There shall be a Post Convention Committee on Transitional Matters which

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shall consist of nine members, five of whom shall be appointed by the President of the Palau Constitutional Convention subject to the approval of the Convention, two of whom shall be appointed by the House of Elected Members of the Palau Legislature, and two of whom shall be appointed by the House of Chiefs of the Palau Legislature. The term of office of the members shall commence not later than ten (10) days after the ratification of this Constitution. The Committee shall commence work within ten (10) days following ratification of this Constitution and shall continue until the installation of officers elected pursuant to Section 2 of this Article. The duties and powers of this Committee shall be as follows:

- 1) to aid in the orderly transfer of governmental functions;
- 2) to propose necessary transitional legislation;
- 3) to obtain information necessary to orderly transition;
- 4) to work in cooperation with the Palau Political Status Commission and the Palau Legislature on transitional matters;
- 5) to take all steps reasonable and necessary to promote orderly transition; and
- 6) to seek necessary funds from the Palau Legislature to implement this section and to carry out these tasks.

### Section 13.

(a) The Senate, for the first four-year term after ratification of this Constitution, shall be composed of eighteen (18) senators to be popularly elected as follows:

#### **Notes**

Tellames v. Congressional Reapportionment Comm'm. 8 ROP Intrm. 142, 142 (2000).

- 1) the First Senatorial District shall be composed of Kayangel and Ngarchelong and shall have two (2) senators;
- 2) the Second Senatorial District shall be Ngaraard and shall have two (2) senators;
- 3) the Third Senatorial District shall be composed of Ngiwal, Melekeok and Ngchesar and shall have two (2) senators;
- 4) the Fourth Senatorial District shall be Airai and shall have one (1) senator;

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- 5) the Fifth Senatorial District shall be composed of Ngardmau, Ngaremlengui, Ngatpang and Aimeliik and shall have two (2) senators;
- 6) the Sixth Senatorial District shall be Koror and shall have seven (7) senators;
- 7) the Seventh Senatorial District shall be Peleliu and shall have one (1) senator;
- 8) the Eighth Senatorial District shall be composed of Angaur, Sonsorol and Tobi and shall have one (1) senator.

(b) The Olbiil Era Kelulau shall promulgate in its first term after the effective date of this Constitution an enabling act designating the duties and the rules governing the composition of the reapportionment commission. The first reapportionment commission shall be constituted within four (4) years of the first general election.

### Notes

Seventh Koror State Legislature v. Borja, 12 ROP 206, 209 (Tr. Div. 2005).

Fritz v. Sali, 1 ROP Intrm. 521, 546 (1988).

In Re Eriich, 1 ROP Intrm. 150, 150 (1984).

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we, the Delegates to this Convention assembled at the Palau Legislature Building in Koror this 2nd day of April in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy Nine, have hereunto subscribed our names,

### Aimeliik

/s/Alfonso Rebochong Oiterong  
/s/Masami Siksei

### Angaur

/s/Victorio Ucherbelau  
/s/Carlos Hiroshi Salii

### Ngardmau

/s/Ngiraiwet Ignacio

### Ngarchelong

/s/Masayuki Adelbai  
/s/Johnny Reklai  
/s/Victor O. Rehuher

### Ngaraard

/s/John Sadao Tarkong  
/s/Laurentino Ulechong  
/s/Sadang N. Silmai

### Ngaremlengui

/s/Blau J. Skebong  
/s/Haruo Ngiraked Wilter

### Ngchesar

/s/Moses Ramarui  
/s/Bonifacio Basio Basilius

### Airai

/s/Singichi Ikesakes

### Kayangel

/s/Hank Takawo

### Melekeok

/s/Andres Demei  
/s/Huana Rengulbai

### Koror

/s/Felix K. Yaoch  
/s/Billy G. Kuartei  
/s/Johnson Toribiong  
/s/Kuniwo Nakamura  
/s/Lazarus E. Salii  
/s/Peter Sugiyama  
/s/Kaleb Udui  
/s/Santos Olikong

### Peleliu

/s/Tosiwo Nakamura  
/s/Yukio M. Shmull  
/s/Haruo I. Remeliik

### Tobi

/s/Pablo Kiyoshi

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## Sonsorol

/s/Mariano W. Carlos

## Ngiwal

/s/Raymond Ulochong  
/s/Hideo E. Termeteet

## Ngatpang

/s/Masa-Aki N. Emesiochel

Attest: /s/Jonathan Koshiba  
Convention Secretary

# PALAU NATIONAL CODE ANNOTATED

## FIRST AMENDMENT

Article XIII, Section 6 and the final phrase of Article II, Section 3 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

### Section 14.

(a) To avoid inconsistencies found prior to this amendment by the Supreme Court of Palau to exist between section 324 of the Compact of Free Association and its subsidiary agreements with the United States of America and other sections of the Constitution of the Republic of Palau, Article XIII, section 6 of the Constitution and the final phrase of Article II, section 3, reading “provided, that any such agreement which authorizes use, testing, storage or disposal of nuclear, toxic chemical, gas or biological weapons intended for use in warfare shall require approval of not less than three fourth (3/4) of the votes cast in such referendum,” shall not apply to votes to approve the Compact of Free Association and its subsidiary agreements (as previously agreed to and signed by the parties or as they may hereafter be amended, so long as such amendments are not themselves inconsistent with the Constitution) or during the terms of such compact and agreements. However, Article XIII, section 6 and the final phrase of Article II, section 3 of the Constitution shall continue to apply and remain in full force and effect for all other purposes, and this amendment shall remain in effect only as long as such inconsistencies continue.

(b) This amendment shall enter into force and effect immediately upon its adoption.

#### **Source**

RPPL 3-76 § 3.

#### **Notes**

Gibbons v. Etpison (Civil Appeal 19-92 and 4-93).

Doe v. ROP (Civil Action 481-93).

Wong v. Nakamura (Civil Appeal 1-94 and 18-94).

Fritz v. U.S., No. 93-00024 (ARM) (DNMI 1994).

Sumang v. Babbitt, No. 94-00140 (HMF)(D. Hawaii 1994).

## SECOND AMENDMENT

Article III, Section 4 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

A person born of parents, one or both of whom are of recognized Palauan ancestry, is a citizen of Palau by birth. United States citizenship shall not affect a person’s Palauan citizenship, nor shall

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a person of recognized Palauan ancestry be required to renounce United States citizenship to become a naturalized citizen of Palau. Persons of recognized Palauan ancestry who are citizens of other foreign nations may retain their Palauan citizenship or become naturalized Palauan citizens as provided by law. Palauan citizens may renounce their Palauan citizenship. Renouncements made prior to the effective date of this amendment are not affected by this amendment.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 6, 2004.

### Amended

The Second Amendment was amended by the Seventeenth Amendment.

## THIRD AMENDMENT

Article VIII, Section 4 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

The President and Vice President shall be elected in a nationwide election for a term of four (4) years. The President and Vice President shall be chosen jointly by the casting by each voter of a single vote applicable to both offices. A person may not serve as President for more than two consecutive terms.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 6, 2004.

### Amended

The Third Amendment was amended by the Seventh and Eight Amendments.

## FOURTH AMENDMENT

Article IX, Section 2 of the Constitution is hereby amended to add a new paragraph to read as follows:

No person shall serve as a member of the Olbiil Era Kelulau for more than three terms; provided however, that any person elected as a member of the Olbiil Era Kelulau in the regular general election in which this amendment is adopted shall be entitled to serve the four-year term for which he or she was elected regardless of the number of previous terms served.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 6, 2004.

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## **Repealed**

The Fourth Amendment was repealed by the Thirteenth Amendment.

## **FIFTH AMENDMENT**

Article IX, Section 8 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

The compensation of the members of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall be a uniform fee for each day the member attends an official session of the Olbiil Era Kelulau. The amount of the fee shall be determined by law. No increase in compensation shall apply to the members of the Olbiil Era Kelulau during the term of enactment, nor may an increase in compensation be enacted in the period between the date of a regular general election and the date a new Olbiil Era Kelulau takes office.

### **Source**

Proposed amendment enacted November 6, 2004.

### **Notes**

The Fifth Amendment is amended by the Eleventh Amendment.

## **SIXTH AMENDMENT**

Article VIII, Section 3 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

Any citizen of Palau who is not a citizen of another country and who is not less than thirty-five (35) years of age and who has been a resident of Palau for the five (5) years immediately preceding the election shall be eligible to hold the office of President or Vice President.

### **Source**

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 1 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## **SEVENTH AMENDMENT**

Article VIII, Section 4 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

The President and Vice President shall be elected in a nationwide election for a term of four years. A person may not serve as President for more than two consecutive terms.

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## Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 2 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## EIGHTH AMENDMENT

Article VIII, Section 4 of the Constitution is hereby amended with a new paragraph added to read as follows:

The terms of the incumbent President and Vice President shall end at the time of the installation of the President elect and Vice President elect which shall take place on the third Thursday of January after the general election at eleven o'clock a.m.

## Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 3 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## NINTH AMENDMENT

Article IV of the Constitution is hereby amended to include a new section, Section 14, to read as follows:

The Olbiil Era Kelulau may provide for a trial by jury in criminal and civil cases, as prescribed by law; provided, however, that where a criminal offense is alleged to have been committed after December 31, 2009, and where such criminal offense is punishable by a sentence of imprisonment of twelve (12) years or more, the accused shall have the right to a trial by jury, as prescribed by law.

## Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 4 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## TENTH AMENDMENT

Article IX, Section 6 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

To be eligible to hold office in the Olbiil Era Kelulau, a person must be:

- 1) a citizen of Palau only;

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- 2) not less than twenty-five (25) years of age;
- 3) a resident of Palau for not less than five (5) years immediately preceding the election; and
- 4) a resident of the district in which he wishes to run for office for not less than one (1) year immediately preceding the election.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 5 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## ELEVENTH AMENDMENT

Article IX, Section 8 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

The compensation of the members of the Eighth Olbiil Era Kelulau shall be a salary, the initial amount of which shall be determined by law, but shall not exceed the amount of compensation received by the members of the Seventh Olbiil Era Kelulau. No increase in compensation shall apply to the members of the Olbiil Era Kelulau during the term of enactment, nor may an increase in compensation be enacted in the period between the date of a regular general election and the date a new Olbiil Era Kelulau takes office.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 6 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

### Notes

The first sentence of the Eleventh Amendment the “members of the Eighth Olbiil Era Kelulau” are specifically addressed but not the members of any future Olbiil Era Kelulau.

## TWELFTH AMENDMENT

Article IX, Section 11 of the Constitution is hereby amended to include a new paragraph to read as follows:

The terms of the incumbent members of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall end at the time of the installation of the members elect which shall take place on the third Thursday of January after the general election. Each house of the Olbiil Era Kelulau shall convene its meeting on the fourth Tuesday in January following the regular general election and may meet regularly for four (4) years. Either house may be convened at any time by the president officer, or at the written

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request of the majority of the members, or by the President.

## Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 7 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT

To Repeal a new paragraph added to Article IX, Section 2 of the Constitution by the Fourth Amendment as follows:

The Amendment of the Constitution “Limiting Terms of Members of the Olbiil Era Kelulau” is hereby repealed.

## Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 8 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT

Article X, Section 2 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

The Supreme Court is a Court of Record consisting of an appellate division and a trial division. The Supreme Court shall be composed of a Chief Justice and not less than three (3) Associate Justices all of whom shall be members of both divisions, provided, however when the Olbiil Era Kelulau appropriates funds for additional justices to serve on the appellate division, the Chief Justice shall implement the separation of the Justices of the appellate division and provide rules and regulations therefore. All appeals shall be heard by at least three justices. Matters before the trial division may be heard by one justice. No justice may hear or decide an appeal of a matter heard by him in the trial division.

## Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 9 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT

Article XIV, Section 2 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 2. After the Election Commission certifies, that a proposed amendment has

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satisfied the requirements of this Article, a nationwide election shall be held on the proposed amendment as prescribed by law, provided that no such election shall be held either six (6) months before or six (6) months after a general election.

Section 3. Once a proposed amendment is approved in a nationwide election by a majority of the votes cast on that amendment and is not less than three-fourth (3/4) of the states, the amendment shall take effect on the date prescribed in the text of the amendment itself or if a date is not prescribed, then on the date the election results are certified.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 10 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## SIXTEENTH AMENDMENT

Article IV of the Constitution is hereby amended to include a new section, Section 15, to read as follows:

In post secondary education and any institution of higher learning, academic freedom is guaranteed.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 11 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## SEVENTEENTH AMENDMENT

Article III, Section 4 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

A person born of parents, one or both of whom are citizens of Palau or are of recognized Palauan ancestry, is a citizen of Palau. Citizenship of other foreign nations shall not affect a person's Palauan citizenship.

Article III, Section 2 and 3 are hereby repealed.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 12 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

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## EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT

Article VII of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

A citizen of Palau eighteen (18) years of age or older may vote in national and state elections. The Olbiil Era Kelulau shall prescribe a minimum period of residence and provide for voter registration for national elections. Each state shall prescribe a minimum period of residence and provide for voter registration for state elections. A citizen who is in prison, serving a sentence for a felony, or mentally incompetent as determined by a court may not vote. Voting shall be by secret ballot. Voting shall only be by absentee ballot for voters who are outside the territory of Palau during an election.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 14 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH AMENDMENTS

Article XIII, Section 8 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

Only citizens of Palau and corporations wholly owned by citizens of Palau may acquire title to land or waters in Palau. Foreign countries, with which Palau establishes diplomatic relations, may acquire title to land for diplomatic purposes pursuant to bilateral treaties or agreements. While non-citizens may not acquire title to land, Palauan citizens may lease land in Palau to non-citizens or corporations not wholly owned by citizens for up to 99 Years

### Source

Proposed amendments enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 15 & 16 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

### Notes

The Code Commission has combined the Nineteenth Amendment and Twentieth Amendment which were meant to both be part of the same paragraph in Article XIII, Section 8. The Nineteenth Amendment (identified as "15 of 22" in the Official Ballot) reads: "Only citizens of Palau and corporation wholly owned by citizens of Palau may acquire title to land or waters in Palau. Foreign countries, with which Palau establishes diplomatic relations, may acquire title to land for diplomatic purposes pursuant to bilateral treaties or agreements." The Twentieth Amendment (identified as "16 of 22" in the Official Ballot) reads: "Only citizens of Palau and corporations wholly owned by citizens of Palau may acquire title to land or waters in Palau. While non-citizens may not acquire title to land, Palauan citizens may lease land in Palau to non-citizens or corporations not wholly owned by citizens for up to 99 Years."

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## **TWENTY-FIRST AMENDMENT**

Article V of the Constitution is hereby amended to include a Section 3 to read as follows:

The national government shall take affirmative action to assist traditional leaders in the preservation, protection, and promotion of Palauan heritage, culture, languages, customs and tradition.

### **Source**

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 17 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## **TWENTY-SECOND AMENDMENT**

Article IV, Section 13 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

The government shall provide for marital and related parental rights, privileges and responsibilities on the basis of equality between men and women, mutual consent and cooperation. All marriages contracted within the Republic of Palau shall be between a man and a woman. Parents or individuals acting in the capacity of parents shall be legally responsible for the support and for the unlawful conduct of their minor children as prescribed by law.

### **Source**

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 18 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## **TWENTY-THIRD AMENDMENT**

Article VI of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

The national government shall take positive action to attain these national objectives and implement these national policies: conservation of a beautiful, healthful and resourceful natural environment; promotion of the national economy; protection of the safety and security of persons and property; promotion of the health and social welfare of the citizens through the provision of free or subsidized health care; and provision of public education for citizens which shall be free from grades one (1) to twelve (12) and compulsory as prescribed by law.

### **Source**

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 19 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

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## TWENTY-FOURTH AMENDMENT

Article IV of the Constitution is hereby amended to include a new section, Section 16, to read as follows:

The national government shall provide free preventive health care for every citizen as prescribed by law.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 20 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## TWENTY-FIFTH AMENDMENT

Article XIII, Section 2 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

The Palauan and English version of this Constitution shall be equally authoritative; in case of conflict, the Palauan version shall prevail.

### Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 21 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## TWENTY-SIXTH AMENDMENT

Article I, Sections 1 and 2 of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

### Section 1.

(a) The Republic of Palau shall have jurisdiction and sovereignty over its territory which shall consist of all the islands, atolls, reefs, and shoals that have traditionally been in the Palauan archipelago, including Ngeruangel Reef and Kayangel Island in the north and Hatohobei Island (Tobi Island) and Hocharihie (Helen's Reef) in the south and all land areas adjacent and in between, and also consist of the internal waters and archipelagic waters within these land areas, the territorial waters around these land areas and the airspace above these land and water areas extending to a two hundred (200) nautical miles exclusive economic zone, unless otherwise delimited by bilateral agreements or as may be limited or extended under international law from a straight archipelagic baseline, the seabed subsoil, water column insular shelves and airspace over land and water unless limited by international treaty obligations assumed by Palau.

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(b) The archipelagic baselines, from which the breadths of maritime zones are measured for the Palau Archipelago shall be drawn from the northernmost point of Ngeruangel Reef, thence east to the northernmost of Kayangel Island and around the island to its easternmost point, south to the easternmost point of the Babeldaob barrier reef, south to the easternmost point of Angaur Island and then around the island to its westernmost point, thence north to the westernmost point of Ngeruangel Reef and then around the reef to the point of origin. The normal baselines, from which the breadths of maritime zones for the Southwest Islands are measured, shall be drawn around the islands of Fanna, Sonsorol (Dongosaro), Pulo Anna and Merir, and the Island of Hatohobei (Tobi Island), including Hocharihie (Helen's Reef).

### Section 2.

(a) The Republic of Palau shall have exclusive ownership and shall exercise its sovereign rights to conserve, develop, exploit, explore, and manage at a sustainable manner, all living and non-living resources within its exclusive economic zone and its continental shelf in accordance with applicable treaties, international law and practices. The Republic of Palau shall have exclusive ownership and sovereign jurisdiction over all mineral resources in the seabed, subsoil, water column, and insular shelves within its continental shelf.

(b) Each state shall have exclusive ownership of all living and non-living resources, except highly migratory fish, within the twelve (12) nautical mile territorial sea, provided, however, that traditional fishing rights and practices shall not be impaired.

#### **Source**

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Identified as 22 of 22 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## **TWENTY-SEVENTH AMENDMENT**

Article X, Section 7 of the Constitution is amended to read as follows:

The Judicial Nominating Commission shall consist of seven (7) members, all of whom shall be citizens of the Republic of Palau, as defined by Article III of the Constitution of the Republic of Palau. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall be one of the seven (7) members and shall act as Chairman. The Bar shall elect three (3) of its citizen-members to serve on the Judicial Nominating Commission and the President shall appoint three (3) citizens who are not members of the Bar. The Judicial Nominating Commission shall meet upon the call of the Chairman and prepare and submit to the President a list of seven (7) nominees for the positions of justice and judge. A new list shall be submitted every year.

# CONSTITUTION

## Source

Proposed amendment enacted November 19, 2008. Proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 7-102, SD1, HD1 in the Official Ballot November 4, 2008.

## TWENTY-EIGHT AMENDMENT

Article I, Section 1 of the Constitution, as amended by the 26th Amendment, is hereby amended by deleting subsection (b), and as follows:

Section 1. ~~(a)~~ The Republic of Palau shall have jurisdiction and sovereignty over its territory which shall consist of all the islands, atolls, reefs, and shoals that have traditionally been in the Palauan archipelago, including Ngeruangel Reef and Kayangel Island in the north and Hatohobei Island (Tobi Island) and Hocharihie (Helen's Reef) in the south and all land areas adjacent and in between, and also consist of the internal waters and archipelagic waters within these land areas the territorial waters around these land areas, and the airspace above these land and water areas extending to a two hundred (200) nautical miles exclusive economic zone, unless otherwise delimited by bilateral agreements or as may be limited or extended under international law.

~~(b) The archipelagic baselines, from which the breadths of maritime zones are measured for the Palau Archipelago shall be drawn from the northernmost point of Ngeruangel Reef, thence east to the northernmost of Kayangel Island and around the island to its easternmost point, south to the easternmost point of the babeldaob barrier reef, south to the easternmost point of Angaur Island and then around the island to its westernmost point, thence north to the westernmost point of Ngeruangel Reef and then around the reef to the point of origin. The normal baselines from which the breadths of maritime zones for the Southwest Islands are measured, shall be drawn around the islands of Fanna, Sonsorol (Dongosaro), Pulo Anna and Merir, and the Island of Hatohobei (Tobi Island), including Hocharihie (Helen's Reef)."~~

## Source

Proposed by Senate Joint Resolution No. 10-61, SD1 in the Official Ballot May 1, 2020. Proposed amendment enacted November 17, 2020 pursuant to ROP Const. Art. XIV § 2.

# **PALAU NATIONAL CODE ANNOTATED**