



UNITED NATIONS DISPUTE TRIBUNAL

Case No.: UNDT/NY/2009/123

Judgment No.: UNDT/2011/008

Date: 12 January 2011

Original: English

Before: Judge Goolam Meeran

Registry: New York

Registrar: Santiago Villalpando

BUENDIA

v.

SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

JUDGMENT

Counsel for Applicant:

Gilbert Raymund T. Reyes and Norman P. Yap

Counsel for Respondent:

Robert Nadelson, UNDP

1. The Applicant, Mr. Buendia, a Programme Specialist with the United Nations Development Programme (“UNDP”) in the Philippines, appealed the decision of the Respondent to impose a written censure and a loss of two steps in-grade.

2. By its Judgment No. UNDT/2010/176 of 8 October 2010, the Tribunal upheld Mr. Buendia’s complaint that the Respondent could not impose a disciplinary measure on the basis of evidence that was improperly obtained in breach of Francisco’s due process rights.

3. The Tribunal affirmed and applied the principle in the Judgment of the former UN Administrative Tribunal in para. XIV of Judgment No. 815, *Calin* (1997):

The Tribunal ... respects the Secretary-General’s authority to exercise his discretion in defining serious misconduct and in determining appropriate penalties. However, the Tribunal will affirm the Respondent’s exercise of discretionary authority only when satisfied that the underlying allegation of misconduct has been proven through a procedure that respects due process and that is not tainted by prejudice, arbitrariness, or other extraneous factors.

4. In upholding the important principle of due process, the Dispute Tribunal stated at para. 47:

It would be wrong in principle for the Tribunal to condone a breach of the right to due process on the basis that it made no difference in the end because there was sufficient evidence that the applicants had in fact committed the misconduct in question. Procedural propriety and the protection of fundamental rights is a central theme pervading not only the Charter of the United Nations, but various issuances of the Secretary-General and the General Assembly. Disciplinary findings and penalties imposed as a result or as a consequence of a breach of this fundamental principle cannot be regarded as fair. A breach of the right to due process is both procedurally and substantively unfair.

5. The Tribunal issued certain orders in preparation for a hearing on remedies and also gave the Parties the opportunity to discuss and agree the remedies to be afforded to Mr. Buendia.

6. The Tribunal wishes to record its approval of the Parties' efforts in reaching an agreement to settle this matter.

7. Mr. Yap, for the Applicant, and Mr. Nadelson, for the Respondent, have informed the Tribunal that agreement had been reached by the Parties to settle the question of remedy.

8. By submission dated 12 January 2011, Counsel for the Applicant informed the Tribunal that the Respondent has complied with the terms of their settlement agreement and requesting that the instant case be closed.

Conclusion

9. There being no further judicial action to be taken, the case is closed.

(Signed)

Judge Goolam Meeran

Dated this 12th day of January 2011

Entered in the Register on this 12th day of January 2011

(Signed)

Santiago Villalpando, Registrar, UNDT, New York