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REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

IN THE TRADITIONAL RIGHTS COURT
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

HARRINGTON DRIBO, and ROBINSON
ABNER,

Plaintiff,

v.

BERNIE HITTO and HANDY EMIL, and
WALUR BEAJA and JACK JORBON,
and ALEE JORKAN and CANSEE
JORKAN ALIK,

Defendants.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 2017-00226

ANSWER & OPINION TO THE SECOND
ORDER REFERRING QUESTIONS TO
THE TRADITIONAL RIGHTS COURT

To: Hon. Carl B. Ingram, Chief Justice of the High Court
Roy Chikamoto and Jack Akeang, Counsel for Robinson Abner
Rosalie Konou, counsel for Cansee Alik

I. SUMMARY IN BRIEF

On August 17, 2026, the High Court issued a Second Order Referring Questions to the Traditional Rights Court (TRC). This referral, made for the second time, sought clarification on why the TRC referred to the *bwij* as “*bwij of Lijileej*” rather than “*bwij of Liriwa*.” In prior cases, the TRC, the High Court, and the Supreme Court consistently referred to the *bwij* as “*bwij of Liriwa*,” as reflected in Plaintiff’s Exhibit P3, TRC Opinion in Answer, dated April 1, 2021.

II. THE TWO QUESTIONS RESUBMITTED

The High Court resubmitted two questions to the TRC for clarification:

1. Why does the TRC refer to the “*bwij of Lijileej*” rather than the “*bwij of Liriwa*”?

2. What evidence in the record supports the TRC's reference to the "*bwij of Lijileej*"?

III. ANALYSIS AND REASONS

The TRC opines that, regarding the terminology "*bwij in Lijileej*," the understanding is that the *bwij of Liriwa* remains extant. Having originated with Liriwa, the *bwij* continued through Libonar, then to Kallep, and ultimately to Lijileej. Accordingly, the *bwij* that traces back to Liriwa is not extinct.

The TRC's opinion relies on Plaintiffs' Exhibit B (Alik/Jorkan), which contains the *menmenbwij* (genealogy) of Liriwa.

Dated: August 21, 2026

_____/s/_____
Grace L. Leban, Presiding Judge

_____/s/_____
Nixon David, Associate Judge

_____/s/_____
Milton Zackios, Associate Pro Tem Judge