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Controversial PCGG official out of Philcomsat

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AFTER hugging headlines last year over a spat with prominent lawmakers and getting involved in a controversy over a vehicle provided for him, Presidential Commission on Good Government Commissioner Ricardo Abcede was refrained from handling affairs of Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat), a sequestered communications firm on suspicion that it is part of the Marcoses so-called ill-gotten wealth.

PCGG Chairman Camilo Sabio made the disclosure of Abcede's pull out after reporters inquired about the resignation of the commissioners handling government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) and confirmation that he took the Philcomsat chairmanship from Abcede.

Sabio, however, explained that

Abcede never served as chairman neither was he appointed even as a director of Philcomsat although he was directly involved in its affairs as PCGG commissioner for assets and management.

The decision to replace Abcede came after the latter failed to answer the senators' questions pertaining to the affairs of Philcomsat on several occasions during the Senate committee hearings on government corporations and public enterprises.

"I'm assuming full responsibility," Sabio said, stressing that it is his duty as PCGG chairman, the government agency tasked to recover the so-called ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses.

Abcede earned the ire of the senators due to alleged questionable decisions in the affairs of Philcomsat including the purchase of a luxury car, a brand-new black Toyota Carry, as his personal service vehicle with the

documents bearing his name.

On the last plenary day of the Thirteenth Congress, the Senate proposed the overhaul of the PCGG after finding PCGG nominees to a couple of sequestered companies guilty of "overwhelming mismanagement."

"The PCGG... failed miserably in its mandate to preserve and protect the interest of the national government" in three companies in which the government has interests, read Committee Report 312, which the Senate adopted.

Sen. Richard Gordon, who heads the Senate Committees on Government Corporations and Public Enterprises and on Public Services that submitted the report, said President Arroyo should also look into the eventual abolition of the PCGG.

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel on Wednesday revived the call for PCGG's abolition, claiming that the agency has outlived its mandate.