

MALACAÑANG
Manila

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 174

**CREATING AN INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE TO ASSESS AND RESOLVE
LAND DISPUTES IN NORTH COTABATO AND ADDRESS SIMILAR
ISSUES IN CONFLICT-PRONE AREAS**

WHEREAS, armed clashes between the AFP/PNP forces and the BIAF-MILF elements occurred in Barangays Mudseng and Rangeban, Midsayap, North Cotabato from January 25-27, 2007 affecting a total of 732 families with 2,479 dependents in seven (7) barangays;

WHEREAS, the armed encounters have been successfully resolved through the intervention of the GRP and the MILF ceasefire committees, the International Monitoring Team (IMT), and the stakeholders in the area;

WHEREAS, based on the fact-finding mission conducted by the Joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (JCCCH) and the International Monitoring Team (IMT), the armed encounter originated between the Civilian Volunteers Organization/Bantay Bayan and the local MILF which later on escalated into hostilities involving the AFP and the BIAF-MILF;

WHEREAS, the armed encounters between the CVOs (a.k.a. Bantay Bayan) and the local MILF stemmed from a land conflict at Sitio Taboboc, Barangay Rangeban between traditional Moro residents and non-resident claimants, compounded by land disputes among Moro residents in the area;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to look into the issue of land disputes being the root cause of armed clashes and in triggering hostilities in conflict areas;

WHEREAS, the JCCCH recommends the issuance of an administrative order creating an Interagency Task Force to resolve land disputes in the area and conduct an inventory of similar issues in conflict-prone areas in order to avoid the possible occurrence of localized armed skirmishes in the future;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:



PGMA Hologram # 39670



Section 1. *Creation and Mandate* – There is hereby created an Interagency Task Force to address land disputes in North Cotabato and in similar areas, as well as conduct an inventory of such issues in conflict-prone areas relative to armed hostilities stemming from land conflict.

Section 2. *Composition* – The Task Force shall initially be composed of the following:

- a) Department of Agriculture;
- b) Department of Agrarian Reform;
- c) Department of Environment and Natural Resources;
- d) Joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (GRP and MILF CCCH);
- e) International Monitoring Team; and
- f) Local Government Unit of Kidapawan

Membership of the Task Force may include other agencies and/or groups as may be deemed necessary in the course of the inquiry, assessment and resolution of identified land disputes/issues.

Section 3. *Duties and Functions* – The Task Force shall have, among others, the following duties and functions:

1. Assess the issue of land in triggering full blown armed conflicts in North Cotabato and similar issues in conflict-prone areas;
2. Recommend appropriate action including policy recommendations aimed at resolving the issue of land disputes/conflicts as being the root cause of armed hostilities;
3. Coordinate with appropriate agencies in the delivery of necessary interventions in addressing land disputes/issues that are determined as the triggering factors or root causes of armed hostilities.

Section 4. The Task Force shall prioritize the resolution of land disputes that complicate, trigger and cause armed clashes and incidents of violence which spill over into full blown armed encounters.

Section 5. *Support* – The various departments, bureaus, offices, agencies or instrumentalities including government-owned or controlled corporations are hereby directed to extend assistance and cooperation to the Task Force in accomplishing its mandate.

Section 6. *Effectivity* – This Administrative Order shall take effect immediately.



Done in the City of Manila, this 27th day of March, in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Seven.

By the President:

Gloria M. Arroyo

Ermita

EDUARDO R. ERMITA
Executive Secretary

