

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 275

**CREATING AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION TO ADDRESS THE ALLEGED
EXISTENCE OF PRIVATE ARMIES IN THE COUNTRY**

WHEREAS, the existence of private armed groups is contrary to our Constitution and laws which provide that there shall be only one police force that is national in scope, civilian in character and administered and controlled by the National Police Commission;

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State to maintain peace and order, protect life, liberty and property, and promote the general welfare so that all the Filipino people shall enjoy the blessings of democracy;

WHEREAS, it is a declared policy of this Administration to have peaceful elections;

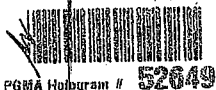
NOW THEREFORE I, GLORIA M. ARROYO, President of the Philippines, by the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

SECTION 1. Creation and Mandate. - There is hereby created an independent Commission to address the alleged existence of private armies in the country by investigating the existence of private armed groups with a view to dismantling them permanently.

SECTION 2. Composition. - The Commission shall be composed of representatives from the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, the Ulama League of the Philippines, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police and the media.

SECTION 3. Duties and Functions. - The Commission shall have, among others, the following primary duties and functions:

- a) Prioritize and focus investigation of the existence of private armies in the country;
- b) Be the government's sole voice on the issue of private armies;
- c) Make a report to the President outlining its action and policy recommendations including appropriate prosecution and legislative proposals if any, aimed at eliminating the existence of private armies prior to the May 2010 elections;



PGMA Hologram # 52649



SECTION 4. Elimination and Prosecution. - The law enforcement agencies of the government shall prioritize the dismantling of private armies in accordance with the instructions of the Commission, with the aim to eliminate them prior to the May 2010 elections.

The Department of Justice shall prioritize the prosecution of members and leaders of such private armed groups, with a view to their conviction at the soonest possible time.

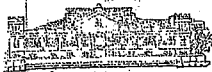
SECTION 5. Powers. - The Commission shall have, among others, the following powers:

- a) It shall have all the powers of an investigative body under Section 37, Chapter 9, Book I of the Administrative Code of 1987, including the power to summon witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony or evidence relevant to the investigation and to issue compulsory processes to produce documents, books, records and such other matters in the performance of its functions;
- b) It shall have the power to clear or disapprove all pertinent media statements by any member of the Administration;
- c) It shall have the power to promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Administrative Order;
- d) It shall have the power to call upon any agency of the Government for such assistance as it may require in the discharge of its functions;
- e) It shall have the power to engage the services of resource persons, professionals and other personnel which may be necessary to carry out its functions;
- f) It shall have the power to deputize the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Philippine National Police, the Department of Justice, and any other law enforcement agency to assist it in the performance of its functions;
- g) It shall have the power to perform any other acts as may be necessary and appropriate to implement this Order.

SECTION 6. Secretariat. - The Commission shall be an independent body. It shall be supported by a Secretariat composed of technical and administrative personnel which shall provide staff support to the Commission.

SECTION 7. Funding. - The Office of the President shall provide the funds for the operation of the Commission.

SECTION 8. Agencies' Support. - The various departments, bureaus, offices, agencies or instrumentalities including government-owned or -controlled corporations are hereby directed to extend such assistance and cooperation as the Commission may need in the discharge of its functions.



SECTION 9. Effectivity. - This Administrative Order shall take effect immediately upon its publication in a national newspaper of general circulation.

DONE in the City of Manila, this 8th day of December, in the year Two Thousand and Nine.

Gloria M. Arroyo



By the President:

Eduardo R. Ermita

EDUARDO R. ERMITA

Executive Secretary



PGMA Hologram # 52651