

51,000 cops have no guns

by CECILE SUERTE FELIPE
Philstar.com

ALMOST half of police officers nationwide have no hand guns. The Philippine National Police (PNP) has not yet provided hand guns to 51,242 out of the 125,000 police officers nationwide.

The PNP also admitted that some of the 1,741 police station buildings nationwide are in a state of disrepair.

PNP chief Director General Jesus Verzosa said these are among the challenges being addressed by the PNP through the Integrated Transformation Program (ITP).

The concerns on firearms, police station buildings and mobility assets were discussed during the PNP-hosted multi-sectoral forum on police transformation held at the PNP Multi-Purpose Hall in Camp Crame, Quezon City last March 10, attended by leaders and representatives from the religious, business, academe, non-governmental organizations, mass media and government sectors.

Verzosa said the forum aims to enlist the participation of the different sectors of society to come up with better solutions to issues and concerns on peace and order and internal security.

Chief Superintendent Lani-O Nerez, Deputy Director for Logistics, said that PNP has 51,757 units of 9mm pistols, 11,891 units of .38 revolvers and 10,110 pieces of .45 pistols, or a total of 73,758 short firearms.

On long firearms, Nerez said that the PNP has at present 4,213 units of 12-gauge shotguns, 48,456 M16 rifles, and 5,445 M-14 rifles or a total of 58,114 long firearms.

"Due to inadequate funds to procure firearms, the PNP prioritized issuance of firearms to PNP units and personnel in high risk areas," Nerez said.

President Arroyo tapped the PNP in 2006 to adopt Internal Security Operations (ISO) in areas where the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is not

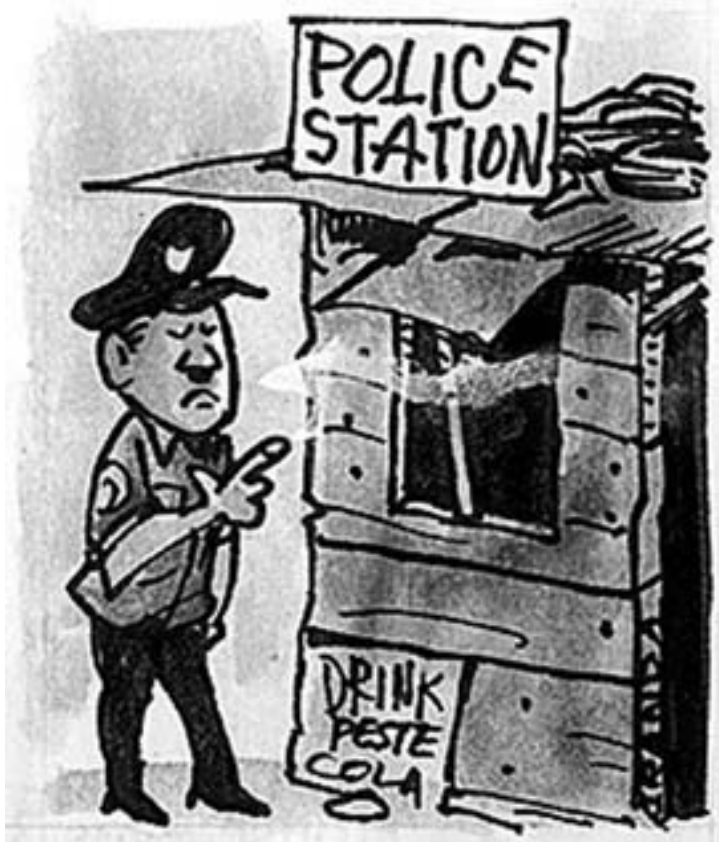


Photo courtesy of Philstar.com

present. PNP units involved in ISO need long firearms and the PNP has only procured a total of 3,964 units in the past six years.

"The yearly procurement of short firearms of 5,000 units per year is not enough to fill up the shortage," Nerez reported. "The annual recruitment of an average of 3,000 police personnel needs the corresponding number of short firearms."

"Only 691 or 40 percent of the 1,741 police station buildings are owned by the PNP, while 1,050 or 60 percent buildings are located on the property of local government units," said Nerez, adding that "some of the existing PNP-owned police station buildings are deteriorating and in disrepair."

Nerez pointed out that in some cases the budget for construction or repair of police station buildings come from local government officials, the general appropriations act (GAA) or private organizations.

The PNP also has a shortage of 12,714 vehicles out of the 22,303 units required.

Verzosa said the involvement of the community is a key factor in implementing the 10-year ITP sought by the PNP to make the police organization more capable, effective and credible.

"We are trying to address the dysfunctions in existing systems, procedures and programs, and by promoting within the PNP a culture of excellence, moral values and spirituality among all personnel," said Verzosa.

GMA holds powwow to prevent media killings

by PAOLO ROMERO
Philstar.com

PRESIDENT Arroyo met recently law enforcement officials and representatives of media organizations at an emergency meeting in Malacañang that came up with fresh measures to prevent more attacks on journalists.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said authorities were anticipating more attacks against journalists as the election season approaches. Mrs. Arroyo also donated P2 million to the Freedom Fund of Journalists to help families of slain newsmen.

Among those who attended the meeting were Butch Canoy, head of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP), Jose Pavia of the Philippine Press Institute (PPI), and Nonoy Espina of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP).

Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor, who is head of Task Force 211, and Philippine National Police (PNP) Director Raul Bacalzo, chief of Task Force Usig, also attended the meeting. Both groups are in charge of investigating unexplained and media killings.

The President ordered the Philippine National Police and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno to offer rewards for 27 fugitive suspects in the killings of media workers.

She ordered Bacalzo to circulate posters with the photographs of the suspects nationwide and form dedicated teams to track down the killers.

The parties also agreed during the meeting that the definition of "solved cases" would be applied

only when a suspect is arrested or convicted. News organizations and the PNP have previously been at odds over the definition of solved cases, which has led to differences in figures.

"Before, a case is considered solved if we have already filed a case in court, regardless of whether a suspect is arrested or not. Now, we will only consider a case of media killing solved if a suspect has been arrested or convicted," Bacalzo said.

He said at least 61 media practitioners were killed from 2001 to 2009. Espina said since 1986, 100 journalists in the country have been killed. The 100th victim was Ernest Rollin of Oroquieta City who was gunned down last Feb. 23.

The 84 suspects include four policemen, two soldiers, two mayors, New People's Army rebels, and civilians. Thirty-four have already been arrested or neutralized while the rest are still at large, he said.

Blancaflor said his task force would exert more effort to stop media killings but sought more cooperation from journalists.

"When you kill a journalist, you kill an idea, you kill freedom of expression," he said.

He and Bacalzo said that in their experiences the cases that were solved were due to cooperation by members of the media.

"We would like to strengthen that partnership," Bacalzo said.

Espina and Canoy thanked Mrs. Arroyo for the meeting and promised closer cooperation with authorities.

Judicial intervention sought on Big 3

by SANDY ARANETA
Philstar.com

A consumer advocate asked a Manila court yesterday to step into the probe of three big oil firms on allegations of forming a cartel and overpricing.

Raul Concepcion, chairman of Consumer and Oil Price Watch (COPW), called on the Manila Regional Trial Court to void a report of a task force from the Department of Energy and Department of Justice clearing Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Chevron (formerly Caltex Philippines Inc.), and Petron Corp.

In his motion, Concepcion said the big three violated section 11 of Republic Act 8479, prohibiting cartels among oil firms, and article 196 of the Revised Penal Code, outlawing monopolies and combinations in restraint of trade.

"The oil companies increased the prices of their petroleum products either simultaneously or in quick succession of each other, resulting in very similar prices, differing only by a few centavos, of their petroleum products in the same areas, even when they purchased the crude oil or refined petroleum at different times," read the motion.

"Hence, they had no valid and legal reason to increase their prices at all or simultaneously or in quick succession."

Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. of Manila RTC Branch 26 said Concepcion believes that the compliance report of the DOE-DOJ task force is invalid.

If judicial intervention is granted, the COPW will have the right to file civil and criminal charges against the three oil companies, Pampilo said.

Task Force officials are scheduled to appear before the court at 8:30 am for tomorrow's hearing of the case.

Concepcion is also expected to appear before the court.

Any person found guilty of violating RA 8479 could go to prison for three to seven years and be fined from P1 million to P2 million.

In their compliance report, the DOE-DOJ task force said the three oil companies did not engage in oil cartelization and overpricing.

The report was based on investigations conducted last year.

"There is no evidence that Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.; Caltex Phils. Inc.; and Petron Corp. violated Republic Act 8479 or the Oil Deregulation Law," the report said.

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