

[**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 275, December 08, 2009**]

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;

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.