

[EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 549, July 18, 2006]

**EXTENDING FURTHER THE DURATION OF OPERATIONS OF THE
PRESIDENTIAL MIDDLE EAST PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE
(PMEPC) TO DECEMBER 31, 2006**

WHEREAS, the term of the Presidential Middle East Preparedness Committee (PMEPC) expires on 30 June 2006, pursuant to Executive Order No. 506 dated February 15, 2006;

WHEREAS, tensions in the Middle East continue to exist particularly in Iraq, and also in nearby countries in the region, including Iran and Afghanistan, which pose a serious threat to the security of Filipino Overseas Workers in these areas;

WHEREAS, there is a need for the PMEPC to continue monitoring developments, update contingency measures and be ready to implement Evacuation Plan when the need arises to ensure the safety of Filipinos in Iraq, in other Middle East countries, and in Iran and Afghanistan, as well as uphold the current travel ban on OFWs to Iraq;

WHEREAS, there is a need for PMEPC to assist for the release of 20 Filipino Nationals, who were taken hostage on the recently hijacked M/T Lin 1 off the coast of Somalia;

WHEREAS, under Section 31, Chapter 10, Title III, Book III of the Administrative Code of 1987, the President has the continuing authority to reorganize the functions of the Office of the President.

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

SECTION 1. The PMEPC shall continue to exercise its functions and responsibilities provided under EO 159 s-2003 in relation to EO 194 and EO 195 s-2003 until December 31, 2006. Provided, it may cover such areas as may be instructed by the President.

SEC. 2. The Committee shall be provided an additional funding allocation of Three Million Pesos (P3M) for its administrative and operational expenses to be provided by the Office of the President. Additional financial requirements that may be needed by the Committee shall be sourced out by the Department of Budget and Management from available funds of the concerned agencies forming part of PMEPC, subject to the usual government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

SEC. 3. All other rules, regulations and issuances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Executive Order are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 4. This Order shall take effect immediately.