

[**EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 212, May 28, 2003**]

PROVIDING FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMM UNIFIED COMMAND, SOUTHERN COMMAND, ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES (AFP) FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO.

WHEREAS, Section 21, Article X of the 1987 Constitution provides that the defense and security of the autonomous region shall be the responsibility of the National Government;

WHEREAS, under Section 4, Republic Act 6734, as amended by RA 9054, the defense and security of the ARMM shall be the responsibility of the National Government. Towards this end, a regional command of the AFP shall be organized in accordance with national laws;

WHEREAS, to ensure the well-being and security of the inhabitants in Muslim Mindanao, it is necessary to station and deploy therein such elements of the Armed Forces as may be necessary in the area of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

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. Declaration of Policy - It is hereby declared policy of the State that the defense and security of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) shall be the responsibility of the national government.

Section 2. ARMM Unified Command - There is hereby created and organized an ARMM Unified Command under the Southern Command, Armed Forces of the Philippines, which shall be organized, maintained, and utilized in accordance with national laws. Qualified inhabitants from the ARMM shall be given preference for assignment in the said unified command.

Section 3. Command Relationship - The ARMM Unified Command shall be under the direct supervision and control of the Commander, Southcom, AFP.

The Department of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines shall determine the command relationship between Southern Command, AFP, the ARMM Unified Command and AFP-wide support units of the Major Services operating in Southern Philippines.

Section 4. Calling Upon the Armed Forces - Notwithstanding, the provisions of the preceding sections, the Regional Governor of the ARMM may request the President to call upon the Armed Forces of the Philippines: