

The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) also has been monitored by the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) for its shipments of smuggled weapons and ammunitions from foreign sources.<sup>107</sup>

There are also reports that financial funding for socio-cultural activities or money raised from Muslim communities may have been diverted to buy arms.

### **Government Efforts**

It is the mission of the PNP's Firearms and Explosives Division (FED) to administer, enforce and implement rules and regulations related to firearms and explosives.<sup>108</sup>

Presidential Decree 1866, as amended by Republic Act 8294, punishes "the unlawful manufacture, acquisition, disposition or possession of firearm, part of firearm or ammunition and the machinery tool or instrument used or intended to be used in the manufacture of any firearm or ammunition"<sup>109</sup>

Terms of imprisonment are from 2 months to 6 years, together with a fine of P 15,000 (cal. 38 or 32), and 6 to 8 years of imprisonment and a fine of P 30,000 if the firearm is high-powered (cal. 40, .41, .45, .357 and Magnum .22). Even if licensed<sup>110</sup> to carry firearms, their firearms should be kept in their residences unless issued with a permit to carry by the PNP Chief.

Such laws and regulations are difficult to implement in the Mindanao given the high importance and priority that individuals' attach to the possession of firearms. It is reportedly the Muslim's "culture" to take a weapon back by all means (once seized by law enforcers). Thus, for security reasons, it is allegedly better not to be identified when seizing unlicensed firearms for security reasons.

In fact, in ARMM "where guns are treated as a status symbol" there are only 792 holders of the Permits to Carry Firearms Outside of Residence (PTCFOR) out of the total number of 30,870

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<sup>107</sup> Manny Mogato, "In Search of a New Enemy", *Politik* (May 1995), p. 38.

<sup>108</sup> Unpublished FED Briefing as cited in PCTC paper, p. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Atty. Jose C. Sison, Pornography and Violence in Media (6<sup>th</sup> part). A Law Each Day (Keeps Trouble Away) in *Philippine Star* (3 November 1999), p. 14.

<sup>110</sup> To own a licensed gun, an applicant must be a Philippine citizen, at least 21 years old, and have no pending criminal case. To be issued a Permit to Carry Firearms Outside of Residence (PTCFOR), the gun owner must pass a firearms proficiency test and a neuropsychiatric evaluation. Lately, a drug test has also been required.