

accounts, substantial financial support also came from Saudi Arabia⁹⁷ and Iran⁹⁸, these same accounts suggest that the MNLF was given access to military camps operated by Syria, Egypt, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).⁹⁹

Sources of Firearms in Mindanao

In contemporary times, the following are attributed as sources of firearms in Mindanao:

1. military and police (firearms legitimately lost or declared lost during armed encounters between government and separatist forces or stolen from military and police arsenals);¹⁰⁰
2. unlicensed manufacturers of caliber .38 and .45 pistols in Western Mindanao and Zamboanga;
3. unreturned firearms during the coup attempts in the 1980s, where a number were declared lost but which instead likely reportedly sold to the secessionist forces;
4. foreign shipments, reportedly from Afghanistan;
5. gunrunners based in Southern Mindanao (particularly in Agusan, Surigao, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga) who sell firearms to ideological groups or local bandits;
6. rebels' manufacture of their own weapons, including assault rifles and rifle-propelled grenades.

In general, only a few smuggling activities have been monitored. Of these, law enforcers has successfully interdicted only a few smuggling operations. It is even possible that gun smuggling in certain areas are flourishing under the connivance corrupt law enforcers and smugglers. In such instances, gun smugglers usually use commercial vessels and conceal the firearms stored within, or use middlemen to unload undeclared firearms. These weapons are smuggled in as:

- undeclared or misdeclared items that are included with other goods and consigned to fictitious names and addresses;

⁹⁷ Che Man, p. 141.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁹⁹ RJ May, "The Moro Movement in Southern Philippines" in Christine Jennett and Randal D. Steward (eds), *Politics of the Future: The Role of Social Movements* (1989) p. 326.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with military officers. Also interview with an informant, former New People's Army member in Central Mindanao Region, now sympathetic to the MILF, Cotabato City, 25 October 1999.