

PNP reports significant drop in crimes during first 8 months of 2010

The Philippine National Police (PNP) reported on November 17 a significant decrease in crime incidents nationwide during the first eight months of 2010. Crime data gathered by the Directorate for Investigation and Detective Management (DIDM) based on reports from all the police regional offices showed a 38.33 percent drop in total crime volume during the January to August period this year. The DIDM registered a total of 205,604 crimes for the eight-month period, compared to 333,416 crime incidents in 2009. The PNP attributed the lower crime rate to the imposition of stricter security measures as called by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in connection with the May 10 presidential elections. The national crime record posted a 39.1 percent drop in crimes against persons, and 28.37 decrease in crimes against property.

In E- Newsletter Volume 1 Issue no. 39, NAMFREL recognized that the election gun ban has caused a decrease of crime incidents in the country. The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), a non-government organization that monitors gun ban related incidents, says the Philippines ranked 10th in the list of countries across the globe with the highest number of gun-related killings. NAMFREL supports the call of various groups that gun control and ownership law should be revisited and amended. Unfortunately, Republic Act No. 8294 has lowered the penalties for illegal possession of firearms and bases the penalty imposable on whether the involved firearm is high or low powered caliber. There has to be a stringent check on the ownership of all firearms and the number of manufactured firearms especially in areas where private armed groups are prevalent.

3 coastal towns in Isabela still have no barangay elections

The Commission on Elections provincial office in Isabela is waiting for a Commission En Banc Resolution to specify a date to conduct special elections in the three coastal towns namely Palanan, Divilacan and Maconacon that were devastated by super typhoon "Juan" last month. The Comelec Isabela has suggested to the Commission either November 22 or November 29 to be the date of elections. Election paraphernalia were already delivered since late October before the conduct of the elections as poll officials wait for the final declared date.

The Omnibus Election Code states that when for any serious cause such as force majeure, the Commission, motu proprio or upon a verified petition by any interested party, and after due notice and hearing, shall postpone the election therein to a date which should be reasonably close to the date of the election not held, but not later than thirty days after the cessation of the cause for such postponement of the election. The election must be anytime not later than November 25 to comply with provisions in the law that all elected village and youth leaders be declared by November 30 since Republic Act 9340 mandated that all winning Barangay and SK officials shall start at noon of the said date.

NAMFREL-DepEd Procurement Monitoring Updates

On November 18, NAMFREL was invited to observe the pre- bid conference for the Department of Education (DepEd) project on Printing of Scannable Test Booklets an Automated Processing of Results of the 2010 National Qualifying Examination for Principals. The approved budget for the contract is Php 1,505,979 (Php 620,109 for security, printing, packaging and labelling of scannable test booklets and Php 885, 870 for automated processing of the results of the principals examination). The Syrex Corporation was the only bidder that attended the pre- bid confrence. No clarifications were made regarding the requirements set by DepEd. The submission of requirements and opening of bids will be on December 1. The delivery of materials by the winning bidder is set on December 5, 2010.

[Source: Manila Bulletin, Reuters, Comelec data, NAMFREL data]