

Implementation of the Firearms Amnesty Program in the Municipality of Bauan, Batangas

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Abstract - Executive Order 817 is the law that grants amnesty to persons with unexpired licensed firearms and those in possession of loose/unregistered firearms; provided, that the concerned individual or holders of said firearms submit them to the Philippine National Police for registration and licensing. This study aimed to determine the extent of implementation of Fire Amnesty Program in Bauan Municipal Police Station. This study utilized descriptive-correlation with comparative method to interpret the necessary data gathered in the succession of this study. It was found out that majority of the respondents are 30-39 years old, male, BS graduate, SPO1 and PO3 working 10 years and above. Both group of respondents (police respondents and residents of Bauan, Batangas) assessed that Bauan Police Station implement the fire amnesty program in license application, renewal and loose firearms to a great extent. There is significant difference on the extent of implementation of fire arm amnesty program in terms of loose fire arms.

Keywords- Firearms Amnesty, Bauan, Batangas, Firearms

I. INTRODUCTION

Increasing globalization and multi-nationalism in politics and economic enterprise has created a corresponding global playing field for terrorism, corporate fraud and organized crimes. The government, specifically the law enforcement sector, has to deal with existing and increasing complex crimes-organized syndicates and criminals had acquired logistical capabilities in term of firearms and weapon that are modern and sophisticated; and, recent incidences of crimes show that most of the bloody and violent of these crimes were committed with the use of firearms.

The Philippine National Police is mandated to provide peace and order as they are vested with the authority to enforce the law and keep the country safe and peaceful. One product of a stress laden society is the increased violence and crime. Criminal apprehension and crime prevention is one of the most important tasks of the PNP organization and their main objective is to apprehend criminals and prevent crime and certain place of occurrence (Del Rosario, 2005).

The PNP statistics as of May 2009 reveals that there are an estimated 1.1 million loose firearms proliferating in the country today. Of this total, 50% are considered firearms with unexpired licenses, 48% are firearms in

the hands of the general population (529,550) while the remaining 2% belongs to the threat groups (15,675) and criminal elements (5,725).

Unless the capacity of the country's police and law enforcement system and relevant legislation match the growing sophistication in crime and crime technology, particularly in firearm control, there is a danger that the country becomes the haven of terrorism and international crime syndicates.

The PNP as a law enforcement agency and public service provider has several important roles to perform in the maintenance of peace and public order. As the premier agency mandated to enforce all laws, rules and regulations for the protection of lives and properties; investigate; maintain peace and order and ensure public safety as well as internal security with the active participation of the community, the PNP has taken the initiative towards creating communities of peace and order that fosters enabling environment for progress and development. Currently, there are 559,326 firearms with expired license and some 529,550 unexpired firearms in the hands of the general population. The proliferation of loose and unexpired firearms have been identified as the "critical log", in the "Log Jam Concept" serving as one of the main obstacles in PNP anti-criminality

drive. The PNP statistics from 2005-2009 show that 97.7% of all gun related crimes are committed with the use of loose and unregistered firearms. In 2007 national and local elections, 229 election related violent incidents were recorded of which 178 (78%) were committed with the use of firearms.

It is illegal to own or possess firearms, including their ammunitions, without license. A person with a license to possess firearm alone cannot carry or transport a firearm outside of his or her residence; he or she must additionally have a license to carry firearm. The licenses to possess and carry firearms are issued by the chief of the National Police. With respect to police and military personnel, their authority to possess and carry firearms are covered by mission orders, which are issued by their respective commanders or superiors as enumerated under the Implementing Rules and Regulations to PD 1866.

Furthermore, subject only to certain exceptions such as those involving police and military personnel on duty, the carrying or transport of firearms during election period is prohibited even by license holders.

Right now, Verzosa said concerned PNP officials have already started to craft some guidelines on how to effectively institute a total control of firearms in the country. One of them, he revealed, is their proposal to seek for a stiffer penalty against those who would yield unlicensed firearms. "We are looking at some problems, especially pertaining to criminality, wherein the usual mode of its occurrence is the use of loose firearm. So we will come up with a strategy for a gun control," said Verzosa. "We now have technical groups simultaneously working for us to have a total study against loose firearms and gun control. Our Civil Security Group (CSG) for one is conducting study on this last amnesty and it will even possibly recommending or enacting, proposing some laws, pertaining to the increasing penalty for illegal possession of firearms," he added.

One of the proposals, Verzosa revealed, is to deny a person with the opportunity to post bail if he yields more than two loose firearms. "Illegal possession of firearms is a bailable offense. No matter how many guns, you will be just penalized for one, one count for each... Now we are trying to propose that if you were caught with two or three long firearms at the same time that should be non-bailable. For short firearms, probably five should also be a non-bailable," said the PNP chief. "We should have a level of penalties, if you were caught with a large number of firearms, that would make the case non-bailable, especially those members of the syndicate (Sangco, 2008).

This study aims to determine the increasing incidence of crimes and violence perpetrated with the use of firearms that has become a global phenomenon which needs to be addressed through stricter firearm control. In the Philippines, as a cited example, RCBC Calamba Branch Hold-up Case is an incident that has sparked public clamour for a more stringent gun control policies. However, the "gun culture" among Filipinos - one which attributes power to the gun owner, the gun being a symbol of status and machinismo - has contributed greatly to the problem.

The researcher had decided to conduct a study based on the above reasons. He wanted to gather some basic information that may help him to assess the performance of Bauan Municipal Police Station in the implementation of Firearms Amnesty Program.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to propose a re-implementation of the Fire Amnesty Program in Bauan, Batangas. More specifically, the study sought to determine the extent of implementation of Fire Arm Amnesty Program in terms of license application, renewal and loose fire arms; and, to test the difference in the responses when grouped according to two groups of respondents.

III. METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized descriptive-correlational with comparative method to obtain the necessary data to be gathered in the succession of this study. The descriptive method is a strategic way to pursue and present the detailed phenomena in an advantage of assessment (Maxfield, 2007). It also describes the data and characteristics of a population. This study will rely on the implementation of firearms amnesty program of Bauan Municipal Police Station.

Participants of the Study

The respondents of this study were 39 or 100% of Bauan PNP members detailed at the Bauan Municipal Police Station. Another set of respondents were the 50 residents of Bauan who applied for licensing, renewal of loose firearms during the program's implementation in May 2010.

Instrument

The study utilized a researcher- made questionnaire patterned from Firearms Control Reputation and other literature and studies but was modified to suit the present investigation. There were two sets of questionnaire, one for the PNP members and another is

for residents of Bauan, Batangas. The questionnaire consists of the extent of implementation of fire arms amnesty program of Bauan Municipal Police Station.

Procedure

The researcher read several books, articles, and related empirical studies to collect and absorb data relevant to the present study. Books and other reading materials concerning fire arms amnesty program had been searched from different libraries here in Batangas City before distributing the questionnaires. The researcher presented the instrument to his adviser for validation and personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents.

Data Analysis

The data gathered were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using weighted mean to assess the extent of implementation of the firearms amnesty program and t-test to compare the responses of two groups of respondents.

Results and Discussion

Extent of implementation of Firearms Amnesty Program

Table 1 shows the extent of implementation of firearms amnesty program in terms of license application. Both group of respondents (police respondents and residents of Bauan, Batangas) assessed

that Bauan Police Station implement the fire amnesty program in license application to a great extent as it got the composite mean of 3.34 (police respondents) and 3.27 (residents).

According to the police respondents, the item “The applicant for amnesty must, when surrendering the firearm or ammunition, notify the relevant Designated Firearms Officer in writing if he/she intends to apply for a license to possess the firearm or ammunition, as contemplated in section 139 (4) (a) of the Act and lodge the application within fourteen days from the date on which the firearm and ammunition was surrendered” got the highest weighted mean of 3.67 and verbally interpreted as a very great extent.

Among the low mean scores, the item “Provide a certified copy of her/his competency certificate (if already issued), (Applicant must show her/his original competency certificate to the Designated Firearms Officer)”; and “Provide a certified copy of the legal firearm license, permit or authorization applicable to the specific firearm (if applicable)” with weighted mean of 3.23.

Furthermore, according to the residents of Bauan, the item “Where the applicant do not possess a competency certificate, she/he must apply for a competency certificate in accordance with the provisions of the Act. 16 Lyceum of the Philippines University Graduate School Page

Table 1. Extent of Implementation of Firearms Amnesty Program Instrument

Application for License	Bauan Police			Residents		
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
1. All such applicants must comply with the following requirements in addition to the requirements of regulation 14 of the Firearms Control Regulations, 2004	3.36	GE	3	2.98	GE	7
2. Provide a certified copy of her/his competency certificate (if already issued).	3.23	GE	6.5	3.04	GE	6
3. Where the applicant does not possess a competency certificate, she/he must apply for a competency certificate in accordance with the provisions of the Act. ..	3.26	GE	5	3.52	VGE	1
4. Provide a certified copy of the Amnesty form on which the applicant has indicated her/his intention to apply for the specific firearm license.	3.28	GE	4	3.23	GE	5
5. The applicant for amnesty must, when surrendering the firearm or ammunition, notify the relevant Designated Firearms Officer in writing if he/she intends to apply for a license to possess the firearm or ammunition...	3.67	VGE	1	3.46	GE	2
6. Provide a comprehensive motivation (preferably in the form of a statement under oath or affirmation).	3.38	GE	2	3.44	GE	3
7. Provide a certified copy of the legal firearm license, permit or authorization applicable to the specific firearm (if applicable).	3.23	GE	6.5	3.25	GE	4
Composite Mean	3.34	GE		3.27	GE	

Such applicant must undergo the prescribed training and practical test regarding the safe and efficient handling of a firearm as well as the prescribed test on the knowledge of the Act” got the highest weighted mean of 3.52 and verbally interpreted as very great extent. While the item “All such applicants must comply with the following requirements in addition to the requirements of regulation 14 of the Firearms Control Regulations, 2004” got the lowest weighted mean of 2.98 and verbal interpreted as great extent.

Table 2 shows the extent of implementation of firearms amnesty program in terms of renewal. Both group of respondents (police respondents and residents of Bauan, Batangas) assessed that Bauan Police Station

implement the fire amnesty program in renewal to a great extent as it got the composite mean of 3.39 (police respondents) and 3.43 (residents).

According to the police respondents, the item “Issuance of Temporary License (stub from renewal form w/ SBR/OP)”; “PPO/CPO collect applications and submit to ROPDs/ FED Satellite Offices”; and “FED/FED Satellite Offices processes, approves and issues the License Cards” got the highest weighted mean of 3.44 and verbally interpreted as a great extent.

Among the low mean score, the item “CPO/CPS/MPS Firearms Secretariat (FAsS) submits weekly accomplishment report to ROPD for subsequent submission to FED, CSG” with weighted mean of 3.23.

Table 2. Extent of Implementation of Fire Arm Amnesty Program in terms of Renewal

Renewal	Bauan Police			Residents		
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
1. List of delinquent FA holders to be furnished to PRO, PPO and eventually to all City/Municipal Police Stations	3.38	GE	5	3.62	VGE	3
2. CPO, CPS and MPS will deliver letter of notification assisted by Barangay Officials	3.36	GE	7.5	3.38	GE	6.5
3. Conduct house to house visitation (accomplish visitation form)	3.36	GE	7.5	3.69	VGE	2
4. Issuance of Temporary License (stub from renewal form w/ SBR/OP)	3.44	GE	2	3.73	VGE	1
5. PPO/CPO collect applications and submit to ROPDs/ FED Satellite Offices	3.44	GE	2	3.40	GE	5
6. ROPDs submits to FED collected processed applications	3.38	GE	5	3.38	GE	6.5
7. FED/FED Satellite Offices processes, approves and issues the License Cards	3.44	GE	2	3.56	VGE	4
8. FED/FED Satellite Offices forward approved FAs license cards to ROPD/Liaison for subsequent release to licensee	3.38	GE	5	2.98	GE	9
9. CPO/CPS/MPS Firearms Secretariat (FAsS) submits weekly accomplishment report to ROPD for subsequent submission to FED, CSG	3.33	GE	9	3.12	GE	8
Composite Mean	3.39	GE		3.43	GE	

Furthermore, according to the residents of Bauan, the item “Issuance of Temporary License (stub from renewal form w/ SBR/OP)” got the highest weighted mean of 3.73 and verbally interpreted as very great extent. While the item “FED/FED Satellite Offices forward approved FAs license cards to ROPD/Liaison for subsequent release to licensee” got the lowest weighted mean of 2.98 and verbal interpreted as great extent.

Application of scientific methods to management and administration of military, government, commercial, and industrial systems. It is characterized by a systems orientation, or systems engineering, in which interdisciplinary research teams adapt scientific

methods to large scale problems that must be modeled, since laboratory testing is impossible. Examples include resource allocation and replacement, inventory control, and schedule of large-scale construction.

Assessing these components of the legal system may significantly expand the effectiveness of prolonged efforts to ensure safety and security in a complex environment. Tactical and operational transitions are often well planned and rehearsed in military operations and their synchronization is often essential for mission success. Functional transitions, like those that comprise a regional legal system, may occur in a manner that leaves commanders unprepared. The challenge of Operation Restore Hope was increasing the

effectiveness of the Haitian policing effort without strengthening the Haitian judicial capabilities. OIF has shown that quickly installing Iraqi judges and penitentiaries is meaningless without a self-reliant police force. Maintaining or developing all major components of a regional legal system is key to success.

Table 3 shows the extent of implementation of firearms amnesty program in terms of loose firearms. Both group of respondents (police respondents and residents of Bauan, Batangas) assessed that Bauan Police Station implement the program in loose firearms to a great extent as it got the composite mean of 3.42 (police respondents) and 3.58 (residents).

According to the police respondents, the item “Under the Law, unregistered FAs are considered loose FAs. Thus, such FAs can be registered under EO 585 if the said FAs are not included in the FED data base (FIMS)” got the highest weighted mean of 3.59 and verbally interpreted as a very great extent.

Among the low mean score, the item “Document to show proof of address/billing or any document indicating the applicant’s residence is required. This is to have an official mailing address in case this office wants to communicate with the applicant in the future” with weighted mean of 3.31.

Table 3. Extent of Implementation of Fire Arm Amnesty Program in terms of Loose Firearms

Loose Firearms	Bauan Police			Residents		
	WM	VI	R	WM	VI	R
1. Applicants may register a loose firearm within one (1) year upon the issuance of the IRR of EO 585-A	3.49	GE	2.5	3.56	VGE	6.5
2. Filipino citizens who are at least 21 years of age are qualified	3.41	GE	6	3.40	GE	9
3. The following firearms may be registered subject to the approval of C, PNP, as mandated by law: Handguns (Pistols/Revolvers) Caliber .22 to .357; shotguns (all gauges); rifle caliber .22; and all other low-powered firearms	3.36	GE	8	3.33	GE	10
4. Under the Law, unregistered FAs are considered loose FAs. Thus, such FAs can be registered under EO 585 if the said FAs are not included in the FED data base (FIMS).	3.59	VGE	1	3.69	VGE	2.5
5. Applicant will pay additional penalty and surcharge if the firearms has an expired license	3.49	GE	2.5	3.63	VGE	5
6. If the firearm submitted for licensing is not the same firearm with data existing in the FED’s FIMS, a serial number will be assigned to the submitted firearm by the FED, CSG.	3.44	GE	4.5	3.65	VGE	4
7. The owner shall be notified of the status of the firearm in his/her possession and will be requested to turn-over the said firearm to FED, CSG or to the nearest police unit for deposit until the adjudication process is completed.	3.44	GE	4.5	3.75	VGE	1
8. Juridical entities can register any number of firearms provided that they comply with existing rules and regulations based on RA 5487 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.	3.36	GE	8	3.56	VGE	6.5
9. Document to show proof of real identity/name of the applicant is required. This is to prevent individuals from submitting fictitious/wrong names	3.36	GE	8	3.52	VGE	8
10. Document to show proof of address/billing or any document indicating the applicant’s residence is required. This is to have an official mailing address in case this office wants to communicate with the applicant in the future.	3.31	GE	10	3.69	VGE	2.5
Composite Mean	3.42	GE		3.58	VGE	

Furthermore, according to the residents of Bauan, the item “The owner shall be notified of the status of the firearm in his/her possession and will be requested to turn-over the said firearm to FED, CSG or to the nearest police unit for deposit until the adjudication process is completed” got the highest weighted mean of 3.75 and verbally interpreted as very great extent.

While the item “The following firearms may be registered subject to the approval of C, PNP, as mandated by law: Handguns (Pistols/Revolvers) Caliber .22 to .357; shotguns (all gauges); rifle caliber .22; and all other low-powered firearms” got the lowest weighted mean of 3.33 and verbal interpreted as great extent.

2. Comparison of Responses on the extent of implementation of Fire Arms Amnesty Program.

Table 4. Comparison of Responses on the Extent of Implementation of Fire Arm Amnesty Program by the Two Groups of Respondents ($t = 1.960$; $df = 89$)

Extent of Implementation of Fire Arm Amnesty Program in terms of:	tc	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Application of license	1.094	0.277	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Renewal	0.671	0.504	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Loose of firearms	2.231	0.023	Rejected	Significant

Legend: Significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

Based on the table, the computed t-value (2.231) in the extent of implementation of fire arm amnesty program in terms of loose fire arms is greater than the critical value of 1.960 at 0.05 level of significance; thus, the hypothesis of no significant difference on the extent of implementation of fire arm amnesty program in terms of loose fire arms is rejected. This means that there is a difference exists on the two groups of respondents.

This means that the responses of the Bauan police and residents of Bauan differs due to their different point of view. Police implement or enforce the law while residents or the community are the person whom the law is enforced. The need to draft a Firearms Control Program within the realities of the Philippine jurisdiction calls for the immediate attention and the

concerted efforts of all concerned government agencies as well as other stakeholders. Coupled with the realization of the multifarious and generally devastating effects of the firearms control problem, it was then decided that a broad-based forum that calls for a unified participation of key sectors of the Philippine society must be conducted.

The leadership in Bauan is forward, looking unfettered by bureaucratic red tape and supportive of entrepreneurial efforts. The crime rate in Bauan is lowest in the entire Province of Batangas and there has been no strike in any of the industrial firm in Bauan over the last several years. The socio-economic conditions in Bauan and the surrounding areas are the principal deterrents to the spread of insurgency to this community.

Table 3. Proposed Program

Key Area	Objectives	Implementation	Person Responsible
Implementation of Firearms Amnesty Program	To enhance the implementation of Firearms Amnesty Program	Seminar Modules	Management
Awareness about the program	To enhance the awareness of the firearms owners about the firearms amnesty program	The firearms owners will undergo seminar about the program as part of firearms licensing.	Bauan Police station and PNP members and firearms owners

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Both groups of respondents (police respondents and residents of Bauan, Batangas) assessed that Bauan Police Station implement the firearms amnesty program

in license application, renewal and loose firearms to a great extent. There is a significant difference on the responses of the two groups of respondents on the responses of two groups of respondents on the extent of

implementation of amnesty program in terms of loose arms. A program is proposed to enhance the implementation of firearms amnesty program in Bauan Municipal Police Station.

PNP Bauan may recommend to re-implement the Firearms Amnesty Program. Bauan Municipal Police Station may conduct seminars about the Firearms Amnesty Program to reinforce its implementation. The police officers of Bauan Municipal Police Station may strictly comply with the Firearms Amnesty Program. A future study is recommended to have an in-depth assessment of the extent of implementation of Firearms Amnesty Program in other municipalities.

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