

GMA wants zero political killings as PNP target

President Arroyo yesterday ordered the Philippine National Police (PNP) to bring to zero the number of political killings in the country, even as she congratulated the police force for minimizing incidents of unexplained killings.

"Thanks to your investiga-

tions and building up of evidence and arresting perpetrators, political killings were down 83 percent last year," President Arroyo said. "But we must not rest until we reach zero.

"And with the priority you have given that legacy, we will

continue to bring perpetrators to justice, jail criminals, and exhort the nation to leave behind its terrible legacy of political violence," the President noted.

The Chief Executive issued the order to PNP chief Director

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General Avelino Razon Jr. during the PNP 17th anniversary celebration at Camp Crame in Quezon City.

"You have made it easy for us to follow the roadmap laid out by the Melo Commission to get to the bottom of unexplained political killings. Thanks to *Mamang Pulis* and *Aling Pulis* we have been meeting with success in the fight to put an end to the legacy of political violence in the Philippines," she said.

When she appointed him as PNP chief, the President directed Razon to make human rights his administration's legacy to the police force.

In response, the PNP top

honcho said he has already signed and caused the implementation of Letter of Instruction (LOI) PAMANA, which would pave the way for a renewed set of PNP-wide policy directions and guidelines on respect, promotion and protection of human rights.

The PNP Human Rights Affairs Office (HRAO), activated last June 29, serves as a management facility that oversees the implementation of PNP guidelines and policies on human rights, and continues to conduct confidence-building and exploratory initiatives with international human rights organizations.

He also assured the

HRAO, headed by Senior Superintendent Lina Sarmiento, will continue to support and closely cooperate with Human Rights Watch.

To ensure the effective implementation of LOI PAMANA, Razon said the PNP has activated Human Rights Desks in police units from the regional down to the police station level, which shall serve as focal points of all human rights issues and concerns within their jurisdiction.

"With the activation of these desks, we hope to transform the police organization into a UN-certified fortress of human protection," Razon added. "As we heed the marching orders of the Presi-

dent to make human rights my legacy, we now see *Mamang Pulis* as more aware, conscious, and sensitive to upholding the human dignity and the highest principles of human rights. Needless to say, he has emerged more humane or *malakas*."

Former President Fidel Ramos and other government officials attended the celebration.

The President also congratulated PNP awardees during the celebration, including a wife of a senior police officer who sacrificed his life to save other policemen when another law enforcer hurled a grenade that exploded inside the Multi-Purpose Hall of Camp Crame.

The President also cited police officers that led government troops in arresting detained Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV for initiating a rebellion at the Peninsula Manila and those who rescued Italian priest Giancarlo Bossi.

"The Manila Pen incident indicated that the people want political stability, a bright economic future and social justice. Those who dream of doing things to disrupt our progress are out of touch with the hopes and dreams of the average Filipino," she added.

"We have been

through many upheavals and time again, but the people have indicated they want a stable government and economic progress - civilisD (CMI) terms from the elite units of the PNP's National Capital Region Police Office and the Quezon City Police District.

"The all-women SWAT team... should respond to extreme cases of domestic violence when hostage taking is involved," Mrs. Arroyo said in her speech. "Police girl power is not limited to sisterly counseling. It packs a mean firepower as well."

She noted that the head of the PNP's Human Rights Office, which received a special award during the anniversary celebration, is headed by a female police officer.

Mrs. Arroyo said after ordering the hiring of 2,000 policewomen - equivalent to four battalions for the years 2006 to 2010, the WCPC would be the country's first all-women police outpost and serve as the prototype station women's desk.

"The women's desk or cubicle should showcase a woman's touch, in cool pastel colors or in feminist purple, victim-friendly reception rooms, shelves that will display 'help' literature on domestic violence, and a clean comfort room," Mrs. Arroyo said.

The WCPC, formerly the Women and Children Concern Divisions, "serves as the focal point of coordination and cooperation between the PNP and the different government and non-government organizations (NGOs) involved in embarking on the programs and activities for the protection and welfare of women and children in the fields of investigation, training and counseling," a Palace statement said.

"She noted that the inauguration of the WCPC came a few weeks ahead of the celebration of the Philippine Women's Month in March.

Mrs. Arroyo also lauded the PNP for various projects and programs it has initiated to improve police visibility and integrity in the community.

She said the PNP's neighborhood partnership program was cited by the United Nations Agency for Asia and Far East Institute for Crime Prevention and Treatment of Offenders as a model of community participation in crime prevention. A Cecille Suarez Felipe, Paolo Romero

Police girl power

Meanwhile, President Arroyo launched yesterday an all-women SWAT team that packs a mean wallop to respond to dangerous cases of domestic violence.

The President also inaugurated the Women and Children Protection Center (WCPC), which would serve as a "one stop shop" investigation unit for such cases.

She pointed out that aside from SWAT units, there are now all-women