

GMA OKs P10,000 incentive for civilians able to help rebels start anew

President Arroyo yesterday approved a cash incentive of P10,000 for any individual who can convince a rebel returnee to avail the government's Social Integration Program (SIP), Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Avelino Razon Jr. said.

Mrs. Arroyo ordered Razon to formulate guidelines, including standards and qualification criteria, for the program's implementation.

In a statement, Razon said, the National Committee for Social Integration (NCSI) will prepare the corresponding guidelines.

"The amount of P10,000 will be given to any civilian who would be able to invite an active member of a rebel organization like the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army (NPA), the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the

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Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), to surface and facilitate their enrollment under the Social Integration Program of the government," he said.

Razon said the SIP "is proving to be a very effective weapon in the fight against insurgency without using guns and bullets."

He said the NPA is now feeling the pinch of the government's SIP, saying that over 800 communist rebels have availed of the program since it was launched in July last year.

Under the SIP, rebel returnees will also get a bigger incentive of P20,000 to help them start life anew.

Mrs. Arroyo will be in Gen. Santos City today to award P20,000 each to 22 rebel returnees from Cotabato province.

Aside from the P20,000 imme-

diated cash, each rebel-returnee is entitled to a P50,000 capital assistance under the SIP in the form of animals for livelihood, farm implements, and/or *sari-sari* store goods, among others, "to help rebuild their economic and social lives," Malacañang said.

"If they surrender their M16 or M14 rifles, they will receive an additional P50,000 for each firearm, and equitable amounts for similar firearms, explosives or ammunition surrendered."

They will also undergo SIP training and receive livelihood packages, employment, training and educational assistance, among others.

The training seminars will enable rebel returnees to have better access to the government's basic services and other social amelioration programs.