

# GMA approves gun amnesty

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

President Arroyo signed yesterday an executive order authorizing the Philippine National Police (PNP) to implement gun amnesty for loose firearms in preparation for the 2010 elections.

Chief Superintendent Ireneo Bacolod, director of the PNP-Civil

Security Group, said the executive order is now on the desk of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita for disposition.

Under the procedure, the Office of the Executive Secretary will assign a number to the executive order, and publish it before it can be

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implemented.

Bacolod said the PNP would likely implement the gun amnesty around July 21, for a period of four months.

The PNP under Director General Jesus Verzosa has been pushing for the implementation of gun amnesty to account for loose firearms and minimize election-related violent incidents.

With the PNP campaign against loose firearms, Senior Superintendent Danilo Maligalig, Firearms and Explosives Division deputy for administration, said a number of registered gun holders have already renewed their expired firearms licenses.

Verzosa said the PNP would ask the Commission on Elections to refrain from issuing exemptions so that the police could implement a total gun ban during the election period and lessen cases of election-related violence.

The PNP is also pushing for a measure that would increase penalties for illegal possession of firearms, depending on the quantities and calibers of the guns.

After the amnesty, the PNP will intensify the campaign against loose firearms and push for measures imprisoning firearm holders who failed to renew their gun licenses.