



PNP News Release

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Small Arms Destruction Day

CONFISCATED GUNS DESTROYED

Thousands of confiscated rifles and handguns were destroyed today in Camp Crame, highlighting the international observance of "Small Arms Destruction Day" by United Nations-member countries.

Small Arms Destruction Day in the Philippines is the centerpiece of activities in the two-day RP-Canada Regional Seminar on the UN Action Plan on Small Arms and Light Weapons which opened yesterday at the EDSA Shangrila Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

This seminar among Asia-Pacific countries coincides with the 1st Anniversary of the last year's international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons held in New York City.

The Philippines and Canada are co-hosts in the Regional Seminar for UN-member countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Canadian Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific David Kilgour, who was guest of honor and speaker for the event, led the symbolic destruction of thousands of rifles, machineguns and handguns at the Camp Crame Parade Grounds.

He was joined by members of the Diplomatic Corps, officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and top police and military officials.

"All these weapons can fuel conflicts, threaten security, and hinder the delivery of aid. The management and destruction of these remnants has become a major policy challenge," Secretary Kilgour said.

Newly-designated PNP Chief, Deputy Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said the weapons destroyed include those seized by the PNP and AFP during encounters with local insurgents and secessionist groups, as well as those recovered from criminal elements, and gun law violators.

Ebdane acknowledged that loose firearms remain to be a peace and order problem in the Philippines and has been attributed as behind most gun-related crimes.

"The Philippine National Police joins the international community of nations in the effort to curb the illicit trade of small arms and other light weapons," Ebdane said.

For his part, Canadian Ambassador to the Philippines Robert Collete said the proliferation and availability of small arms can lead to setting back and often reversing development gains.

"Canada welcomes the opportunity to be involved with an initiative that concretely addresses the issue of security, so that the Philippines and the region's development can continue to move forward towards stability and prosperity," according to Ambassador Collete.