

# Perceptions of Local Government Officials of Ilocos Sur on Licensing of Firearms

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## Abstract

*This study attempted to know the perceptions of local government officials of Ilocos Sur on licensing of firearms, specifically the level of perceptions of the local officials on the reasons to license firearms. Furthermore, the researchers wanted to know the status of licensing of firearms and the requirements needed for the issuance of firearms.*

*The barangay chairmen, who composed the greatest bulk of the respondents, were 41-60 years old, male, and married. Majority of the respondents had no experience in the licensing of firearms. They thought that the PNP Firearms and Explosive Office remain the proper person/agency to issue license of firearms. This agency was noted by the respondents as the place where licenses of firearms were issued.*

*The top three requirements for the issuance of licenses of firearms were: a) submission of a negative drug test; b) being a law-abiding citizen of the Republic of the Philippines; and c) submission of a medical certificate and a certificate of attendance in seminars relevant to what he is applying.*

*The respondents strongly agreed on the need to license their firearms for the following reasons: a) to regulate the use of firearms; and b) to maintain peace and order and to enhance the development of society.*

## Introduction

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### Background of the Study

Licensed firearms owners complaining that then Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief (now Senator) Panfilo Lacson was very strict in giving permits to carry guns outside the homes. A Camp Crame source said that one could count with one's fingers people who have been issued such permits. Lacson and nobody else issued the permits. Some congressmen and local officials had even complained that Lacson did not have the courtesy of issuing them such permits (Tulfo, 2000).

In the past, however many people were issued pennits to carry their guns outside their homes when their lives were not in danger. There was so much laxity on the issuance of permits before that even a blind man was given a permit. It's high time gun permits are only issued to licensed firearm owners who need to carry guns outside their homes because it's extremely necessary.

## **Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to know the perceptions of the local government officials of Ilocos Sur on licensing of firearms, specifically the level of perception of the local officials on the reasons to license firearms. Furthermore, the researchers wanted to know the status of firearms licensing in Ilocos Sur and the requirements needed for the issuance of firearms.

It also sought to give light to the following specific questions:

1. What is the profile of the local government officials in terms of sex, civil status, age, and position in government?
2. What is the status of firearms licensing in Ilocos Sur?
3. What are the requirements needed for the issuance of fireanns?
4. What is the level of perception of the local officials on the reasons to license firearms?

## **Review of Related Literature**

Ramon Tulfo (2000) cites in the Philippine Daily Inquirer that in the book "More Guns, less Crime" with the subtitle "Understanding Crime and Gun Control Law", John R. Lott found out that in many states in the United States (US) where authorities allow citizens to carry guns, there are less muggings, robberies, and rapes than in places where local governments disallow citizens to carry guns.

The following observations were noted to support the findings:

1. Bad people in places where citizens are allowed to carry guns think twice before attacking their would-be victims because they might be carrying guns.
2. If guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns.
3. A gun in the hands of a responsible law-abiding citizen even up the score in a confrontation with an armed criminal or criminals.

## **Methodology**

The respondents of this study were the municipal/city officials and the barangay officials of the different municipalities of the Province of Ilocos Sur

who were chosen at random. A total of 632 municipal/city officials and barangay chairmen were the respondents of this study.

A questionnaire was used in gathering the data. Frequencies, percentages, and means were used in the analysis of the data gathered.

## Discussion of Results

This portion presents the data gathered and the analysis and interpretation of these data.

### Profile of Respondents

The respondent-government officials' profile in terms of sex, civil status, age, and position in government is presented in Table I.

**Table 1. Profile of the local government officials of Ilocos Sur.**

CHARACTERISTIC	NO. N=362	%
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	546	86.39
Female	<b>86</b>	13.61
<b>Civil Status</b>		
Single	43	6.80
Married	561	88.77
Widower	26	4.11
Separated	2	0.32
<b>Age (years)</b>		
21–30	<b>28</b>	4.43
31–40	99	15.66
41–50	224	35.44
51--60	177	28.02
61 & above	104	16.46
<b>Position in government</b>		
Mayor	24	3.80
Vice-mayor	24	3.80
Sangguniang Panlalawigan member	17	2.69
Sangguniang Bayan member	145	22.94
Barangay Chairman	413	65.35
Barangay Secretary	7	1.10
Sangguniang Kabataan President	2	0.32

Sex. More than three-fourths (86.39%) of the respondent-local government officials were male, while 13.61% were female. This only shows that males still dominate the elective positions of the local government in the Province of Ilocos Sur. However, females continue to increase in number.

**Civil status.** Majority (88.77%) of the local government officials were married; 6.80% were single; 4.11% are widower, and 0.32% were separated.

Age. More local government officials were 41-50 years old (35.44%) than those who were 51-60 years old (28.01%). The rest were 61 years old and above (16.46%), 31-40 years old (15.66%) and 21-30 years of age (4.43%).

Position in government. More than half (65.35%) of the local government officials were barangay chairmen. Less than one-fourth (22.94%) were Sangguniang Bayan (SB) members; 3.80% each were mayors and vice-mayors; 2.69% were Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) members; 1.10% were barangay secretary; and 0.32%, SK president.

### Status of Firearms Licensing in Ilocos Sur

Table 2 presents the status of firearms licensing in Ilocos Sur.

**Table 2. Status of firearms licensing in Ilocos Sur.**

ITEM	NO. N=632	%
<b>Experience in licensing of firearms</b>		
Yes	48	7.59
No	584	92.41
<b>Presence of firearms to be licensed</b>		
There is	40	6.33
There is none	592	93.67
<b>Number of firearms</b>	<b>n=40</b>	
1-2	32	80.00
3-4	1	2.50
No response	7	17.50
<b>Date of issuance of license of firearms</b>		
1995 and before	14	29.17
1996	-	-
1997	9	18.75
1998	9	18.75
1999	3	6.25
2000	13	27.08

**Table 2. Continued.**

ITEM	NO. N=632	%
<b>Duration of issued license of firearms</b>	<b>n=48</b>	
1-2 months	6	12.50
3-4 months	2	4.17
5-6 months	5	10.42
11 months and longer	35	72.91
<b>Place where license of firearms was issued</b>	<b>n=48</b>	
PNP firearms and explosives office	36	75.00
INP Sub-station/Station	2	4.17
AFP Office	5	10.42
Office of the Mayor	2	4.17
Camp Crame	2	4.17
Office of the PNP Chief	1	2.08
<b>Reasons for applying for license of firearms</b>		
Self-defense	257	40.66
Others have licenses	10	1.58
Government support	59	9.34
Ego trip	1	0.16
Engaged in business/occupation	56	8.86
As an elected public official	3	0.47
Legality	1	0.16
No Response	245	38.77
<b>Proper person/agency to issue license of firearms</b>		
PNP Firearms and Explosives Office	345	54.59
Station/sub-station commanders	54	8.54
Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)	38	6.01
Governor	14	2.22
Mayor	59	9.34
NBI	10	1.58
Barangay captain	4	0.63
No response	108	17.09

**Experience in licensing of firearms.** Of 632 respondents, only 7.59% had an experience in licensing of their firearms. Majority (92.41%) of them did not have this experience. This implies that the majority may be the barangay captains or other government officials who had no firearms.

**Presence of firearms to be licensed.** To the question, "Do you have gun(s) to be licensed?", 93.67% of the respondents answered "None" while 6.33% said there is.

**Number of firearms to be licensed.** Out of 40 respondents who answered the question, 80% had 1-2 firearms; 2.5% had 3-4; and 17.5% had no response.

**Date of issuance of license of firearms.** Of 48 respondents who answered the question, "When were you issued a license of firearms?", 29.17% were issued in 1995 and before; 18.7% each, in 1997 and in 1998; 6.25%, in 1999; and 27.08% in 2000.

**Duration of issued license of firearms.** Out of 48 respondents who answered this item, 72.91% said that their license was good for 11 months and longer; 12.5%, 1-2 months; 10.42%, 5-6 months; and 4.17%, 3-4 months.

**Place where license of firearms was issued.** Of 48 respondents who answered this query, 75% got their license from the PNP Firearms and Explosives Office; 10.42% from the AFP Office; 4.17% each from the INP Substation Office, Office of the Mayor, and Camp Crame; and 2.08%, from the Office of the PNP Chief.

**Reasons for applying for license of firearms.** From the respondents' point of view, self-defense (40.66%) was the primary reason for applying for license of firearms; government support (9.34%), the second; engaged in business/occupation (8.86%), the third; others have licenses (1.58%), the fourth; as an elected public official (0.47%), the fifth; and ego trip and legality (0.16% each), the last. More than one-third (38.77%), however, had no response.

**Proper person/agency to issue license of firearms.** The respondents were asked to give their opinions on the proper person/government agency to issue license of firearms. The PNP Firearms and Explosives Office got the highest percentage (54.59%), followed by the mayor (9.34%), station/substation commanders (8.54%), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) (6.01%), the governor (2.22%), NBI (1.58%), and the barangay captain (0.63%).

## **Requirements for the Issuance of Firearms License**

According to PO3, Severino Tabbilos, the assistant licensing officer of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Firearms and Explosives Division Office of the Province of Ilocos Sur, the requirements for firearm licensing (individual) are categorized into general and specific as listed from the directive of higher PNP and DILG authorities.

### **General Requirements for New and Transfer**

#### **A. For Regular License**

1. Application form with three pieces 2x2 picture (colored) and CTC Numbers (duly notarized)
2. Information Sheet
3. Affidavit of non-pending case (duly notarized)
4. Duly stamped self-addressed envelope (registered mail with return card)
5. Deed of Sale or Affidavit of Transfer (if applicable)
6. PNP Form No. 12
7. PNP Form No. 2
8. Police clearance

9. Court clearance
10. Mayor's certification
11. Ballistic/stencil report
12. FA bond
13. Drug Test
14. Neuro-Psychiatric clearance
15. Gun Safety Seminar
16. DI clearance
17. long envelope

B. For Special Permit

1. Application form with three pieces 2x2 picture (colored) and CTC Numbers (duly notarized)
2. Information Sheet
3. Affidavit of non-pending case (duly notarized)
4. Duly stamped and self-addressed envelope (registered mail with return card)
5. Deed of Sale or Affidavit of Transfer (if applicable)
6. PNP Form No. 12
7. Ballistic/Stencil Report
8. Drug Test
9. Neuro-Psychiatric clearance
10. Gun Safety Seminar

Specific Requirements **for New and Transfer**

A. For Regular License

1. **Businessman.** Balance sheet and profit loss statement duly certified by a CPA or certificate from the city/municipal treasurer showing gross sale for at least one (I) quarter.
2. **Proprietor, administrator or lessee.** Treasurer's certificate showing the assessed value of the agricultural land and power of administrator or contract of lease (for administrator/lessee)
3. **Veteran of AFP on CDD status.** Copy of Special Order of Separation
4. **US Army or Navy pensioner.** Retirement Order and notice from USVA as to amount of pension being received
5. **Official/Employee of private firm, establishment or corporation.** Certificate from employer duly notarized showing position of the applicant and his monthly salary and the balance sheet and profit and loss statement of the employer
6. **Retired government employee.** Retirement Order and Pension award
7. **Professional.** Copy of Privilege Tax Receipt for the current year
8. **Private school teacher.** Certificate of employment (duly notarized)

For foreign sounding names, proof of citizenship is required.

## B. For Special Permit

1. **Senators/congressmen.** PNP Form No. 3 to be signed by the Secretary of the Senate/House of Representatives
2. **Officials/Employees of Senate/House of Representatives.** PNP Form No. 3 to be signed by Secretary of the Senate/House of Representatives, DI clearance, and copy of appointment from the Civil Service Commission
3. **Appropriate officials.** PNP Form No. 3 to be signed by Department Secretary/Bureau Director of Head of Office, DI clearance, and copy of appointment from the Civil Service
4. **Provincial officials/employees.** PNP Form No. 3 to be signed by provincial governor or city/municipal mayor, DI clearance, copy of appointment from the Civil Service, and Commission of Oath of Office for elective officials
5. **PNP/Military/BFP/BJMP/PCG Personnel in the active service.** PNP Form No. 3 to be signed by immediate commander or head/chief of office and latest appointment/enlistment/ETAD orders.
6. **Retired PNP/Military/BJMP/BFP/PCG Personnel.** PNP Form No. 3 to be signed by applicants, DI clearance, if retired from more than three years, copy of special orders of retirement.
7. **Reserve Officers on inactive status.** PNP Form No. 3 to be signed by applicant himself, copy of GO of Commission, and DI clearance.

Table 3 presents some requirements for the issuance of license of firearms, as perceived by the respondents. The local government officials were asked to give their perceptions on requirements for the issuance of license of firearms.

**Table 3. Requirements needed for the issuance of license of firearms.**

REQUIREMENT	FREQUENCY OFMENTION	%
1. Must be a law-abiding citizen of the Republic of the Philippines	365	57.75
2. Must bear in mind that firearms are used for self-defense, defense of relatives, and defense of properties and of family	282	44.62
3. Must not be charged of any offense/felony against the Revised Penal Code or other criminal laws of the land	205	32.44
4. Must apply for the issuance of license/permit	131	20.73
5. Must promise not to carry guns outside the home	82	12.97
6. Must state the number of firearms to be licensed in the application	45	7.12

The respondents claimed that to be issued a license of firearms, one must be a law abiding citizen of the Republic of the Philippines (57.75%); must bear in mind that



firearms are used for self-defense, defense of relatives, and defense of properties and family (44.62%); must not be charged of any offense/felony against the Revised Penal Code or other criminal laws of the land (32.44%); must apply for the issuance of license/permit (20.73%); must promise not to carry guns outside the home (12.87%); and must state the number of firearms to be licensed in the application (7.12%).

### Level of Perception of the Local Officials on the Need to License Firearms

Table 4 shows the level of perception of the local officials on the need to license firearms.

**Table 4. Level of perception of the respondents on the need to license firearms.**

REASON TO LICENSE FIREARM	5	DR
1. To regulate the use of firearms.	4.27	Strongly Agree
2. To give everybody a chance to have guns	3.05	Agree
3. To support the idea that a gun in the hands of a responsible law-abiding citizen even up the core in a confrontation with armed criminal(s)	3.48	Agree
4. To allow owners to carry guns outside their homes when their lives are in danger	3.01	Agree
5. To minimize laxity in the issuance of permits that even a blind man can be given a permit	3.09	Agree
6. So that pennits will only be issued to licensed firearm owners because of the necessity	3.98	Agree
7. Licensed fueann issued to responsible citizens on extremely necessary cases promotes peace and order and development of society	4.09	Strongly Agree
8. Licensed firearms issued to irresponsible people will only lead to chaos/war in society and consequently, backwardness or poverty in society.	3.87	Agree

The respondent local officials strongly agreed that licensing of fireanns is needed to regulate the use of firearms ( $\bar{X} = 4.27$ ) and to promote peace and order and development of the society ( $\bar{X} = 4.09$ ). They also agreed that firearms should be licensed because of necessity ( $\bar{X} = 3.98$ ); to prevent irresponsible people from carrying guns since this will lead to chaos/war ( $\bar{X} = 3.87$ ); to even up the score between a law-abiding citizen and an armed criminal ( $\bar{X} = 3.48$ ); to minimize laxity in the issuance of permits/license ( $\bar{X} = 3.09$ ); to give everybody a chance to have guns ( $\bar{X} = 3.05$ ); ..... to allow owners to carry guns outside their homes when their lives are in danger ( $\bar{X} = 3.01$ ).

## Conclusions

### Profile of Respondents

The barangay chairmen who composed the greatest bulk of the respondents are male, married, and 41-60 years old.

### Status of Firearms Licensing in Ilocos Sur

Majority of the local government official-respondents have no experience in licensing of firearms.

Licenses of firearms are issued by the PNP Firearms and Explosives Office. The respondents view self-defense as the dominant reason for applying for license of firearms. Government support and being engaged in business/occupation are others reason for getting a license.

### Requirements for the Issuance of License of Firearms

The top three requirements perceived by the local government officials of Ilocos Sur are: 1) one must be a law-abiding citizen of the Republic of the Philippines; 2) must bear in mind that firearms are used for self-defense, defense of relatives, and defense of properties and of family; and 3) must not be charged of any offense/felony against the Revised Penal Code or the other criminal laws of the land.

### Level of Perception of the Local Officials on the Need to License Firearms

The respondents strongly agree on the need for license of firearms for the following reasons:

- a. to regulate the use of firearms;
- b. to maintain peace and order and to enhance the development of society

On the other hand, the respondents agree on the need to license firearms for the following reasons:

- a. to give everybody a chance to have guns.
- b. to support the idea that a gun in the hands of a responsible law-abiding citizen evens up the score in a confrontation with armed criminal(s)
- c. so that owners can carry guns outside their homes when their lives are in danger
- d. to minimize laxity in the issuance of permits that even a blind man can be given a permit
- e. so that permits will only be issued to licensed firearm owners because of necessity
- f. licensed firearms issued to irresponsible people will only lead to chaos/war in society and consequently backwardness or poverty in society.

## Recommendations

Based on the aforestated conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby forwarded:

1. The PNP Firearms and Explosives Office should strengthen its roles as the proper agency to issue license of firearms. It should conduct information dissemination on the advantages of having licensed firearms and the requirements for licensing of firearms. The more firearms to be licensed would also mean more revenues for the government.

2. The requirements for the issuance of license of firearms as perceived by local government officials should be known by the PNP specifically the Firearms and Explosives Office. They could serve as guide in the formulation of guidelines for the proper requirements of the issuance of license of firearms.

3. Firearms should be licensed to regulate the use of firearms in order to have peace and order and development of society. Hence, heavy sanctions should be imposed on persons who have unlicensed firearms in their possession.

## References

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