



ALYANSA
TIGIL
MINA

July 26, 2010

HON. ABRAHAM MITRA

Governor
Province of Palawan

and

Mearl Hilario

Office of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)

Dear Gov. Mitra and M. Hilario,

Good day!

We write to you in behalf of more than eighty organizations all over the country. We are a network of organized communities, indigenous peoples organizations, NGOs, human rights groups, Church-based organizations and academe.

In the past few years, we have witnessed the continuing struggle of the indigenous peoples in Palawan, particularly in questioning the mining operations in Brooke's Point of the Macro Asia Corporation (MAC) and the Ipilan Nickel Corporation (INC). We are aware of the massive opposition of the local communities against the continued exploration activities of MAC and INC, including signed petitions, mobilization rallies, community forums against mining, and actual holding of balloting that resulted in rejection of the mining projects. Equally informative is the excellent documentation by way of photo, mapping and geo-tagging that has been done by the local groups. These documentations provide overwhelming evidence that the mining projects are posing serious threats not only to the fragile ecology that surrounds Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape, but also to the culture, livelihoods and very lives of the indigenous peoples there.

Notable also is the direct action conducted by the people themselves, culminating in the **karaban** last June 8, 2010, at the Provincial Capitol. This expression of the peoples' will cannot be denied.

We reiterate some of the serious assertions of the indigenous peoples in their resistance:

1. The spirit of **free, prior and informed consent** was not conducted with enough transparency and diligence, either from the part of the mining companies or the local government units. Sacred grounds and burial sites are going to impacted directly by the mining projects. In these cases, the genuine consent of the indigenous peoples has not been secured, and therefore, the operations of these mining projects must be stopped.
2. The proposed mining projects encroach on the buffer zones, the core zones and even the restricted zones of the protected areas. We believe that data cannot lie, and the geo-tagging project of the ALDAW network supports the claims of NATRIPAL and the Bangsa Moro organizations in the areas.
3. Violations of several laws and international treaties – including the SEP, NIPAS, IPRA and CBD– by the mining projects point to a serious flaw in the process of securing permits for the mining projects. These violations cast doubts on the feasibility and the appropriate mitigation that are in place to protect the ecology, the indigenous culture and systems and the very existence of the impacted communities.



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In this context, we urgently request your honorable council, the PCSD to not issue the SEP clearance for MAC and INC. The PCSD is tasked in ascertaining the social acceptability of development projects in the province. The people have documented and publicly rejected the projects of MAC and INC. It is the solemn duty of PCSD to uphold the true will of the people and in this case, the non-issuance an SEP clearance is the just and righteous and honorable decision that the council must take.

We remain in solidarity with NATRIPAL, ALDAW and the rest of the civil society in Palawan. We will continue to monitor their struggle and extend our support to them in any way we can, in the name of our joint commitment to uphold the rights of the marginalized and the poor. We remain faithful to our pursuit of sustainable development, and the experience of the struggle against mining in Palawan shall become a benchmark of our enduring advocacy.

We trust that the PCSD and the Provincial Government of Palawan will remain true to their calling of serving the best interest of the Palawenos.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Garganera', written in a cursive style.

Jesus Vicente C. Garganera
National Coordinator
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