



WORKING GROUP ON MINING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Email: wmpuk@tiscali.co.uk



Advancing (ir)responsible mining in Mindanao.

Working Group on Mining in the Philippines (WGMP) - London (14 October 2010)

According to a report published on the Philippine Information Agency website on October 4th 2010 ('Mindanao mining group advances responsible mining' <http://www.pia.gov.ph/?m=12&fi=p101004.htm&no=46>) a number of mining companies with operations in Mindanao, the Philippines, recently launched what they refer to as the Coalition for Responsible Mining in Mindanao or COREMIN2. The purported aim of this coalition is 'to set an example to other mining companies to really promote and advocate responsible mining throughout the country'. However, even a cursory examination of the practices of the companies involved in establishing COREMIN2 leads to serious concerns as to the model of 'responsible mining' that its members, namely: TVI Resource Development Philippines, Inc.; Sagittarius Mines, Inc.; Philex Gold Philippines, Inc.; 168 Ferrum Pacific Mining Corporation; and Apex Mining Company, Inc. have in mind.

TVI Resource Development Philippines, Inc.:

Documented human rights violations in relation to the highly controversial project of this junior Canadian company at Mt Canatuan, Zambongo del Norte, are being addressed by the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (UN CERD). The case is currently being examined under the UN CERD's Early Warning Urgent Action procedure. The UN body has issued letters to the Philippine government expressing its continued concern regarding TVI's 'flagship' project in Mt Canatuan affirming that the project does not have the consent of the Subanon as required by law and has resulted in the destruction of their sacred mountain. Unable to stop the destruction of their sacred Mt Canatuan, despite 13 years of sustained protest and resistance to the project, the local community has been left with no choice but to reluctantly acknowledge TVI's presence. They however continue to oppose any future expansion by TVI within their ancestral domain.

see Complaint by the Subanon to the UN regarding TVI's violations of their rights at <http://www.miningwatch.ca/en/discrimination-against-subanon-philippines-context-large-scale-gold-mining-their-ancestral-domain> and Letters issued to the Philippine government at UN CERD website <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/early-warning.htm>. See also http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp/ceesp_alerts/mining_philippines.cfm

Sagittarius Mines, Inc.:

Massive provincial wide resistance to the Tampakan project of Sagittarius Mines Inc resulted in the issuance of a ban on open pit mining in Southern Cotabato this year. According to independent environmental experts, one with long time experience as an advisor to the World Bank and another a member of an IUCN committee, the project has the potential to negatively 'impact the lands of the Indigenous B'laan peoples and the downstream agricultural areas of South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Davao Del Sur provinces'. They also state that Lake Buluan and 'the Liguasan Marsh (an extensive swamp region some 40 km long and 30 km wide) could also be victims. These areas would be at risk of pollution, erosion, siltation, and continuing devastating flash floods and landslides.'

see <http://www.piplinks.org/system/files/Mining+or+Food+Case+Study+3.pdf>

Members: Cathal Doyle, Irish Centre For Human Rights; Miles Litvinoff, ECCR; Frank Nally SSC, Columbans; Geoff Nettleton, PIPLinks; Rachel Parry, USPG; Anglicans in World Mission; Ellen Teague, Vocation for Justice, Columbans; Andy Whitmore, PIPLinks; Clive Wicks, IUCN-CEESP; Dr Robert Goodland, former World Bank Senior Environmental Adviser.



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168 Ferrum Pacific Mining Corporation:

168 Ferrum Pacific Mining Corporation has an application for mining in the ancestral territory of the Subanen of Midsalip, Zamboanga del Sur. Mining plans in the area target a watershed area of rich biodiversity and a sacred mountain range of the Subanen people. The Subanen, who strongly oppose the project, have been denied their legally recognized right of Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC). Independent experts concluded that the proposed mining plans of 168 Ferrum, GAMI and six other mining companies in Midsalip, 'will severely damage the water catchment services of Midsalip, undermine the human rights of the Indigenous Subanen people, reduce agricultural production and damage the ability of future generations to survive in the area..' and severely affect the integrity of the Zamboanga peninsula.

see <http://www.piplinks.org/system/files/Mining+or+Food+Case+Study+1.pdf>

Philex Gold Philippines, Inc.:

The project of Philex Gold Philippines, Inc, a subsidiary of Philex Mining, in Sibutad Zamboanga del Norte is an example of gold and copper mining that caused 'such extensive destruction in the 1990s and early 2000s that the government departments were eventually forced to suspend the permits'. Mudslides, siltation of the bay, damage to mangroves and massive fish kills together with cyanide and mercury contamination have all been documented in relation to Philex's project. Even the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources eventually found Philex responsible for the damage, not being in compliance with mandated precautions, and lacking the necessary permits. Despite this disastrous track record there are indications that Philex Gold is attempting to recommence mining operations in Sibutad.

see <http://www.piplinks.org/system/files/Mining+or+Food+Case+Study+2.pdf>,
http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp/ceesp_alerts/mining_philippines.cfm

See also

Apex Mining Company, Inc.:

In September 2008 a landslide claiming 24 lives and injuring 32 residents occurred in Masara village where Apex Mining Corp. and Crew Gold had ongoing operations exploring for gold, copper, silver, zinc and other associated mineral deposits. In 2007, 10 people died as a result of landslides in the area with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau assessing it to be high-risk. Despite this Crew and Apex proceed to mine in the area increasing the risk of further deadly landslides in the future. At the time Crew Gold, a Philippine-Canadian joint venture, held nearly three-fourths of shares of Apex Mining Company. The track record of Crew Gold on the island of Mindoro is also far from responsible (the project is now under control of Intex Resources, a company created by Crew Gold). A case regarding it is currently being examined by the Norwegian OECD National Contact Point. Crew Gold is implicated for its past actions in relation to the failure to obtain the Free Prior and Informed Consent of the Mangyan people in accordance with the law; in attempting to mine in a critical watershed area; and in proposing submarine tailings disposal in one the richest marine biodiversity areas in the world.

see OECD complaint at http://oecdwatch.org/cases/Case_164 and
<http://www.minesandcommunities.org/article.php?a=8797>
<http://www.piplinks.org/system/files/Mining+or+Food+Case+Study+5.pdf>

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Given these disturbing track records a more appropriate name for this coalition of mining companies might have been the Coalition for Irresponsible Mining in Mindanao.

Please reply to:

WGMP

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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Frank Nally'.

Frank Nally (on behalf of the Working Group on Mining in the Philippines)

Members: Cathal Doyle, Irish Centre For Human Rights; Miles Litvinoff, ECCR; Frank Nally SSC, Columbans; Geoff Nettleton, PIPLinks; Rachel Parry, USPG; Anglicans in World Mission; Ellen Teague, Vocation for Justice, Columbans; Andy Whitmore, PIPLinks; Clive Wicks, IUCN-CEESP; Dr Robert Goodland, former World Bank Senior Environmental Adviser.