

Joint Statement of KAIABANG-Cordillera People's Alliance Benguet

And Save Mankayan Movement (SMM)

July 31, 2013

Resist FTAA: Pursue the Fight to the Barricade!

Despite people's protests, the Far Southeast Gold Resources Incorporated (FSGRI) in Lepanto, together with its bureaucrat collaborators and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), keep on forcing the legitimacy of the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). In addition to this, the FSGRI and the NCIP insist on the conversion of this bogus FPIC to Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) for the MPSA001 and MPSA 151 permits. The NCIP has remained as pseudo-democratic machinery that is oriented to allow corporate investments in Lepanto and to apply destructive operations while pacifying the community's democratic rights. Along with this, the company and the NCIP's bogus information drive propagated absurd definitions of the conversion. Discussions were translated to mere technical debates far appreciative from the layman's perception. Beyond these deceptive tactics, KAIABANG Cordillera People's Alliance Benguet strongly believes that the FTAA will lead to further foreign control in exploiting the community's resources instead of facilitating wealth for community development and for national industrialization.

Respect the People's Battle Cry! Occupy the Voting!

Lepanto is very desperate to pursue the conversion. On July 27, 2013, the FSGRI together with the NCIP and its local cronies pushed for the voting on the conversion of the FPIC to FTAA for the MPSA001 and MPSA151 permits. But this manipulation did not fool the vigilant community. On the same day, the people of Tabio and Bulalacao together with the Save Mankayan Movement and the Mankayan Youth Movement picketed in front of the Mankayan Municipal hall to express their distrust in the voting system that was designed by the corporation and the NCIP.

The people have witnessed the manipulation of the whole session. Instead of the genuine representatives, there were proxies that voted for the majority of the communities involved. KAIABANG believes that these were appointed by the NCIP itself in order to manipulate the voting system. In addition to this, a proxy even voted for the people of Tabio without their consent. The enraged communities in the picket furthered their inquiry to the NCIP through a letter of protest. Instead of answering the people's questions, the NCIP has shamelessly evaded the questions. In addition to this, there were police forces who confronted the protesters during the picket. Moreover, there were two squads from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) who suddenly came in their full-battle gear to reinforce the police. KAIABANG believes that this is use of force by intimidation.

Because of the injustices that the enraged people of Mankayan have witnessed, they demanded nullity of the voting. However, the NCIP and the FSGRI continued the voting, which resulted to 283 for Yes and 51 for No. KAIABANG believes that the majority of the delegation was obviously flooded by pro-company proxies who did not represent the aggrieved communities. It was an obvious manipulation of the outcome of the votes. They were mere hand-picked representatives who lacked knowledge on technicalities yet were deceived by false promises of the company. Because of this, the corporation and the NCIP now more that keen on welcoming the conversion, for they have used the people's lack of knowledge on technicalities and legalities in order to effectively clear their inquiries of FPIC. Moreover, the NCIP seemed to have disregarded the communities' decisions during the past consultations. The communities were not convinced of this conversion for they have already witnessed the worst that FSGRI and its destructive activities can do to their resources. This sudden ricochet in the voting was a clear manifestation of treachery. It was a clear violation of the indigenous people's rights and on their struggle for land, life and resources. It was an attack on the people's right to say "NO" to development aggression. Insisting the company's drive for the

conversion will only deepen the people's long-battled crisis. The corporation with the help of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and the NCIP are even trying to conclude the people's inquiries into one resolution that can pacify the protests on the unconstitutional processes, which also involves the inclusion of other areas in the proposed mining explorations. For instance, the issue of drilling in Cabiten should be in a separate FPIC process. This is an indication of FSGRI's manipulation on acquiring bogus FPICs in the communities. Instead, the corporation seems to be evading the nitty-gritty processes in informing communities and acquiring their consent.

Onward To the Barricade!

On July 27, 2013, the people of Mankayan have shown their significant capability to take collective action for the defense of land, life and resources. The people of Mankayan have marked another historical struggle to reject the treachery and deceit that leaders and capitalist agencies, who were supposedly servants of the people, commit for profit and self-interest. We as a people have already proven that the unholy alliance of FSGRI with its bureaucrat collaborators and cronies will never surrender their ambitious objectives to accumulate super-profits.

Do not stupefy our people. We, progressive people's organizations in Benguet together with the enraged communities in Mankayan, declare the voting last July 27, 2013 on the conversion of FPIC to FTAA for MPSA001 and MPSA151 as NULL and VOID due to the following reasons: 1) There are no proper grounds to consider this as a constitutional process. The FPIC itself was a temporary permit given to FSGRI and was still in the process of community inquiry. It was not a legitimate permit to begin with; 2) There have been military elements who confronted the protesting communities during the session, which was a clear notion on the use of intimidation by force – a clear understatement of the Bill of Rights and Social Justice in the 1987 Philippine Constitution; 3) The proxies who voted last July 27 were not duly appointed by the communities involved; thus the voting was not authorized by the people.

The FSGRI, NCIP with its local cronies may think that they have won with their bogus schemes and deceitful "technical processes" but they will always remain defeated in the eyes of a people united to make history and build the future for the next generations to come.

The enemy is on its way to attack our rights but we, as a people, shall engage defiantly and counter their aggression with our people's utmost strength and collective action. We shall face even the brute-fascist force of the state because we are armed with non-selfish principles and with a determination to drive away the plunderers. We shall continue our series of Information-Education Campaign to expose the deceitful manipulations of the FSGRI, NCIP, MGB and its local cronies to undermine the people's rights to self-determination. We shall continue to expand our forces in sitios, barangays, municipalities, provinces and cities to fight this injustice and consolidate the Mankayan community despite the intervention of armed elements of the AFP and Philippines National Philippines (PNP). We will live through with the struggle to defend land, life, resources and dignity.

WE ENCOURAGE THE PEOPLE OF MANKAYAN TO CONTINUE THE RESISTANCE ON THE FTAA!

WE DECLARE THE JULY 27 VOTING AS NULL AND VOID! WE DEMAND FOR PROPER CONSULTATION AND RESPECT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S RIGHTS!

WE HOLD THE FSGRI, NCIP, MGB AND THE AQUINO ADMINISTRATION ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE DESTRUCTIVE MINING APPLICATIONS IN MANKAYAN!

No to Conversion! Stop the Expansion! NCIP, Serve the people! Not the Company!

Stop FSGRI's Plunder on Our Resources! People and Environment Over Profit!

Onward with the Struggle to the Barricade! Daga, Biag, Kinabaknang, Salakniban!