



Cordillera Peoples Alliance

For the Defense of Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

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Cordillera Communities Speak against Mining on the Occasion of Mines Un-Safety Week 2011

While the Philippine government holds its 58th Annual National Mine Safety and Environment Conference (Mines Safety Week) in Baguio this week, Cordillera communities reiterate their position against corporate mining for the unabated “mining crimes” that mining companies commit against indigenous peoples and the plunder of ancestral land and resources.

“Testimonies of representatives from communities affected by the operations of the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company, Benguet Corporation and Philex Mines in Benguet, and the mining exploration projects in different Cordillera provinces reveal that mining operations and mining companies are only intensifying the present state of massive environmental and livelihood destruction and violations of indigenous peoples’ rights in the region,” said Abigail Anongos, Cordillera Peoples Alliance Secretary General.

The CPA criticizes the Aquino administration for blindly promoting the mining industry despite unrelenting protests in different parts of the country, especially in indigenous peoples’ territories like the Cordillera. Anongos added that “Pres. Aquino has actively encouraging foreign investments in the country, primarily mining investments, through his trips abroad.” According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 530 mining applications or projects were either approved or endorsed by the Aquino administration.

“Our region remains to be a place much desired by mining companies and the government for minerals extraction as shown by the numerous mining applications covering more than 60% of the region’s total land area. However, the government and the public need to know of the mining crimes committed against us and the environment by mining companies such as violations of our rights to our land, livelihood and resources, workers’ rights, and environmental destruction. We seek for the rehabilitation of the land devastated by mining operations in Benguet and just compensation for the affected communities but what the Aquino administration offers is the processing of mine tailings which does not address the people’s needs. These have to be acted upon sincerely and immediately to prevent further plunder of what remains in our lands and resources, and further aggravating the impacts of climate change which is felt nowadays,” added Anongos.

Anongos further added that “If the government is truly earnest for responsible mining and mine safety, it should junk the Mining Act of 1995 and National Minerals Policy, and endorse the People’s Mining Bill and House Resolution 00528 filed by Ifugao Rep. Teddy Baguilat calling for mining moratorium, to ensure that mining safety is in line with environmental safety and the collective rights of indigenous peoples.”

CPA has been at the forefront of the struggle against large-scale mining in the region in defense of ancestral land and resources. It will hold a series of Mines Unsafety protest actions and educational activity on November 9-10, with the theme *Defend Our Land and Resources! Stop Imperialist Mining in the Cordillera!*, to inform the public on the impact of corporate mining to indigenous peoples’ ancestral land and resources.

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