

PRESS RELEASE

# **Philippines: Mining-affected communities hold nationwide protest to pressure government to issue EO banning open-pit mining**

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**12 on 12/12; Mining-affected communities, with different environmental, and climate justice groups from 12 different sites all over the Philippines conduct a simultaneous, coordinated action demanding DENR Secretary Roy Cimatú and President Rodrigo Duterte to issue an executive order officially banning open-pit mining in the country.**

**Said areas include Metro Manila, Baguio, Nueva Vizcaya, Masbate, Zambales, Palawan, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Cebu, Homonhon, Eastern Visayas, and South Cotabato.**

“The communities have begged for attention for more than a month, even after enduring mining impacts for so many years; and even risked their health just for their voices to be heard,” said Atty. Aaron Pedrosa of Sanlakas. “There is no way to go but up. This campaign has to be escalated into a nationwide level for the government to take this more seriously. We are here not for mere words, we are here for bigger actions the communities deserve,” added Pedrosa.

A day before the said massive protests, DENR Secretary Cimatú finally faced the communities camping outside his office in Quezon City. According to campers from Manicani who were present on the said dialogue, Sec. Cimatú vowed that from now on there will be no mining operations that will take place in the island— a pronouncement similar to what President Duterte has declared two weeks ago.

“Ito ang mga salitang aming pinanghahawakan. Ang sa amin lang, ayaw namin na ang lahat ng usapang ito ay mapako,” said Marcial Somooc, President of the Save Manicani Movement (SAMAMO). “Kung kaya nila itong sabihin sa amin ng harapan at ideklara sa publiko, ilagay nila ito sa isang kasulatan na kikilalanin ng mga may-ari ng mga malalaking kumpanya ng minahan,” added Somooc.

However, only communities from Manicani were allowed to attend the dialogue. Campers from Sta. Cruz, Zambales missed the opportunity to be heard and tell their personal experiences on the mining operations in their hometown.

“Isa itong senyales na bagama’t may mga nakukuha na tayong sagot sa ating gobyerno, hindi pa tapos ang laban,” said Salvador Cortez of Concerned Citizens of Sta. Cruz, Zambales (CCOS). “Kung maglalabas ang pamahalaan ng kautusan, lahat na ng mga naaapektuhang komunidad sa Pilipinas ng mapanirang pagmimina ay mabibigyan nila ng isang malaking regalo sa darating na kapaskuhan,” added Cortez.

During the Metro Manila protest, mining-affected communities dragged empty cans while marching. This suggests that until the government released and signed an official order, these pronouncements are all talk and still empty promises.

“The mining-affected communities in the country were holding on to president’s promises to address their problem for a long time. He gave them hope through his strong pronouncements, but in reality, nothing has changed and it causes frustration to these people. They are just asking for their rights and basic necessities to live; they just want their stolen farmlands, fishing areas, healthy environment, and their dignity back. Those were not too much to ask and we believe that President Duterte should give it to his people,” said Alyansa Tigil Mina’s National Coordinator Jaybee Garganera.

As of the 12-on-12/12 action, communities camping have already spent 33 days for the people of Manicani outside DENR main office and 49 days in DENR Region 8 office in Tacloban, and 13 days for the people of Zambales.

## **KAMPO**

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FOR INQUIRIES:

Marcial Somooc, SAMAMO: 0916 643 2327

Atty. Aaron Pedrosa, Sanlakas: 0927 592 4830

Jaybee Garganera, ATM: 0917 549 8218

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<https://www.alyansatigilmina.net/single-post/2017/12/12/Mining-affected-communities-hold-nationwide-protest-to-pressure-government-to-issue-EO-banning-open-pit-mining>