

Please help us to save our rich ecosystem threatened by large scale mining



Midsalip lies in the heart of the **Zamboanga Peninsula** in Mindanao, Southern Philippines. It is a place of great natural beauty, with strands of dipterocarp forests, rich in flora and fauna on the mountain peaks, with waterfalls and with rivers reaching into three provinces. In a report produced by the DENR, **Mount Sugarloaf Complex** (known as Mt. Mediau) is one of 34 terrestrial and inland waterways listed and named in 2002 as of very high biological importance and priority conservation area. (The Midsalip Mountains form part of Mt. Sugarloaf Complex). For the Subaanen indigenous people who have lived here since time immemorial, their sacred mountain, **Mt. Pinukis**, and the surrounding area, comprise their **Ancestral Domain**.

Mt. Pinukis, Mt. Mediau and other mountains in this biologically rich, but fragile ecosystem are now threatened by proposed large-scale mining. The Subaanen shamans foretell a great disaster with much loss of life if this happens. Since both Mt. Pinukis and Mt. Mediau are inactive volcanoes and since fault lines pass through Midsalip, and the soil is prone to landslides, a great disaster will surely happen if open pit mining is allowed to proceed.

From the 1960's until 1980's large scale logging companies did much damage to the forest cover of Midsalip. The logging was eventually stopped by the local people through what was known at the time as, **The Midsalip People Power Picket** of 1988. The picket was supported by an international advocacy campaign. Since then, many of the Subaanen people have worked hard to protect their ecosystem through contouring the slopes denuded by the loggers. They have planted fruit and hard-wood trees. They are practicing multiple cropping and planting nitrogen rich crops. Farmers living in Midsalip have developed more than 1,600 hectares of rice land. A further fourteen-thousand hectares of rice lands in the

surrounding lowlands are irrigated by rivers which have their source in the Midsalip Mountains. The Philippine Government has borrowed from the Asian Development Bank to replant part of the Midsalip watershed and to provide security of tenure to the Subaanen living on the slopes of the mountain.

In 1995, when the Philippine Mining Act was passed, the English-Australian Company RTZ-CRA made a mining application which covered 500,000 hectares in the Zamboanga Peninsula including 100,000 in Midsalip and its surrounds. Phelps Dodge, USA also made a similar application. A concerted campaign by local people and international supporters forced both applications to be withdrawn.

During the years 2005-2006 the Philippine President, Gloria Arroyo made the promotion of mining a priority. She claimed that cash benefits would help to pay the Philippines huge foreign debt repayments. As a direct result, Midsalip has been carved up by mining companies. These include TVI (Canada) AP TANG (Singapore) Cebu Ore, 168 Ferrum, Geotechniques and Mines Inc. (GAMI), Mr. Frank Real, etc. The MGB and NCIP have joined hands with corrupt politicians and mining companies to ensure that mining applications are approved.

The voices of Irrigators, lowland farmers, and Subaanen who oppose mining have been largely unheeded. Both the World Bank and the UN recognize that the Philippines food and water sources are very vulnerable to the threat of climate change. The World Bank recently provided a grant to mitigate the effects of climate change on small farmers in the Philippines.



If mining is allowed to proceed in Midsalip, the water catchment area and the land and seas will be

MIDSALIP PEOPLE DEFEND THEIR SACRED LAND

destroyed and with the destruction of the remaining forests climate change will be accelerated.

Two international experts produced a book titled "**Mining or Food.**"

<http://philippinesminingorfood.blogspot.com/>

This book strongly recommends that no mining or exploration should take place in Midsalip. The complaints regarding the flawed FPIC process carried out by the NCIP have not been addressed and there is a pending case before the Supreme Court which until now has not been yet dealt with. In spite of this fact exploration has been taking place in Midsalip without community consent. During the month of October this year, drilling machines were brought to two barangays to begin exploratory drilling. But through the vigilance of the local community who set up a picket, the drilling has been halted.



Subaanen and Bisayan People keep vigil day and night to ensure mining exploration does not destroy their lands.

The situation in Midsalip at present is critical. We know that a concerted campaign can make a difference. We succeeded before and together with you we believe we can succeed again.

What can you do?

- **Work with us to protect the food source of the people who live in the Zamboanga Peninsula.**
- **Email or write to the following :**
- **President. Benigno C. Aquino III, Malacanang Palace, Manila, Philippines.**
- *Ask him use his influence to call a moratorium on mining in Midsalip and the surrounding municipalities.*
- **Mr. Ramon Paje, Secretary of Department Environment and Natural Resources, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, 1100 Quezon City, Philippines.**

- *Ask him to uphold the appeals of the Subaanen and Visayan people in Midsalip against the large scale mining applications.*



Durian Fruit on Steep hills, in Kabalaran, Midsalip: a result of years of hard work by the local people

We thank you for your partnership with our struggle for life and know we can count on your



support.

NCIP: National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

FPIC: Free, Prior, Informed, Consent.

Email addresses:

Lgonzales@worldbank.org : WB Manila

Chanlon@worldbank.org : WB US

titonoy@president.gov.ph : Philippine President

This advocacy campaign is coordinated by:

ALLIANCE TO SAVE THE INTEGRITY OF NATURE (ASIN)
Ms. Wilma A. Tero
San Jose Parish
Midsalip, Zamboanga del Sur, Mindanao, Philippines.