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# Amnesty Int'l bares breach of workers' rights in Dinagat mines

Island province's isolation makes it harder for authorities to enforce labor standards, says report

By: [Ryan Rosauro](#) - @inquirerdotnet   Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:18 AM August 28, 2021



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The abuses mainly involved the employment of workers without the benefit of a written contract, delayed payment of wages, and the nonpayment of premiums for mandatory health, housing and social security benefits.

Amnesty International's report "Undermining Workers' Rights: Labor Rights Abuses in Nickel Supply Chains," which was released to the public on Friday, noted that nickel mining firms in the province employ workers through labor-hire or manpower services companies.



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The group said the mining firms, while not directly involved in the hiring, were "complicit" in these abuses because they failed to do due diligence on the practices of the companies that provide them workers.

For the study, Amnesty International interviewed at least 50 workers and did 15 focus group discussions in 15 villages of five towns in the province.

### \$79-million industry

It also collected and analyzed workers' pay slips and talked to Gov. Arlene Bag-ao and officials of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), the Department of Labor and Employment, and experts in labor and industrial relations.



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Bag-ao and environment and labor officials in the province could not be reached for comment on Friday.

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Dinagat was declared by the government as a mineral reservation area in 1939.



Records from the MGB in the Caraga region showed that the value of nickel ore exports from Dinagat in 2019 was \$79 million.

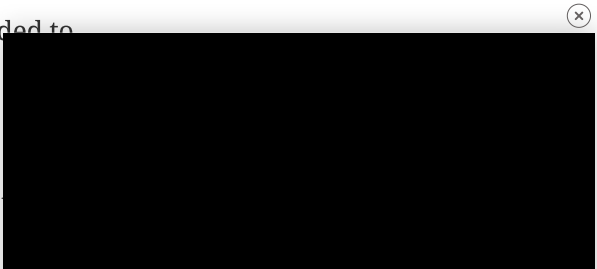
Amnesty International said the entire mining sector of Dinagat employed some 2,300 workers in 2019.



Currently, five companies operate nickel mines in the province, namely, Century Peak Corp., Libjo Mining Corp., Oriental Vision Mining Philippines Corp., Cagdianao Mining Corp., and Sinosteel Philippines HY Mining Corp.

According to Amnesty International, only Cagdianao Mining responded to its queries, and none among the labor-hire agencies did.

Libjo Mining, Sinosteel and Oriental Vision Mining have substantial involvement of Chinese capital, China being the chief destination of country's nickel ore.



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Cagdianao Mining told Amnesty International that it has not renewed a manpower contract with the agency and, in 2019, the mining company settled the unpaid claims of the 48 workers.

### Systemic

The report said the labor rights abuses in the nickel mining sector in Dinagat are “systemic.”

The study pointed to instances when workers informed mining companies of their concerns and experiences with the manpower contractors “yet no action has been taken.”

A major damper to efforts to bring these labor abuses to the attention of authorities was the fear among many workers that they would lose their jobs if they complained, as well as the long travel to government centers in order to lodge a complaint, the study noted.

“The relative geographical isolation of Dinagat Island, and its distance from government centers, also presents challenges that make it harder for those government agencies not present on Dinagat Island—or with a small presence—to inspect mining and labor-hire companies, monitor workplace conditions and arrangements, and ensure compliance with labor standards,” the study said.

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It added that the “unclear delineation of responsibilities” and “poor communication and coordination” among concerned government agencies impeded the enforcement of labor standards in the mining sector.

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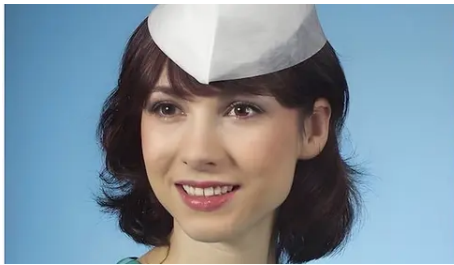


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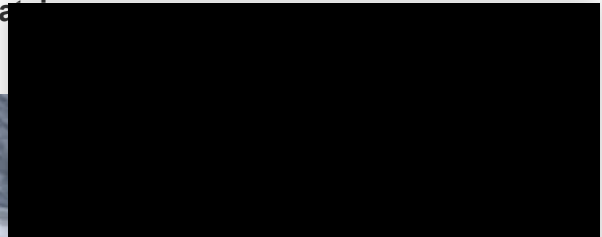
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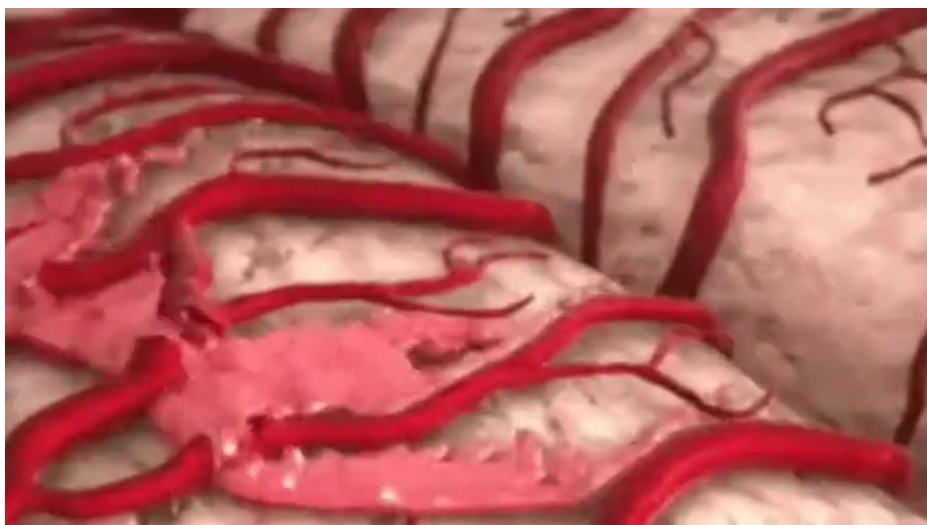
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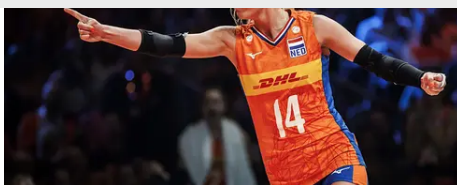


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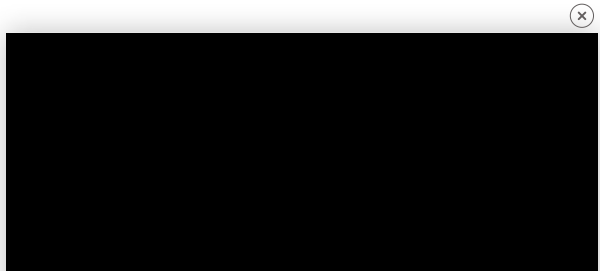
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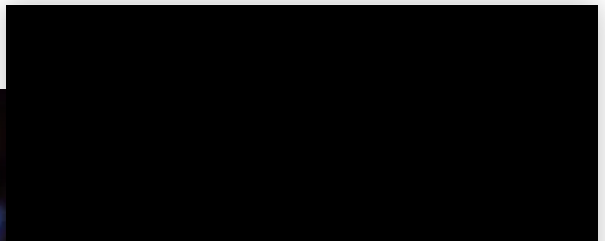
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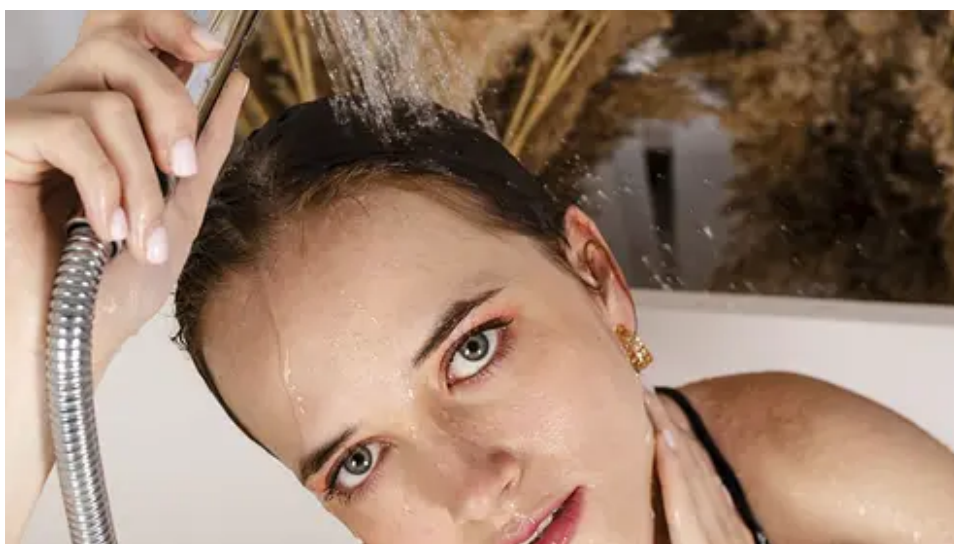
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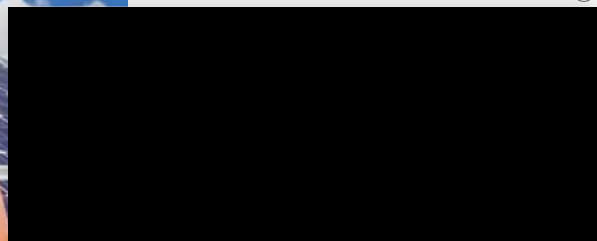
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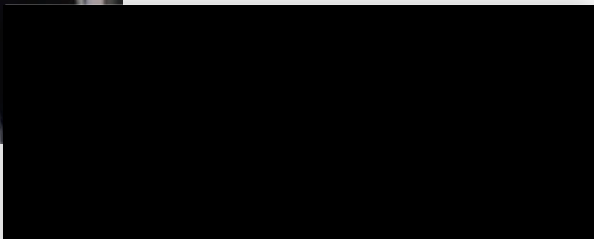
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