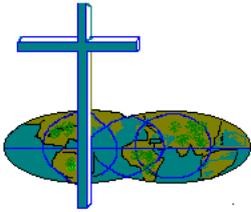


MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST. COLUMBAN

Reg. Charity No. 221594



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Benigno Aquino III
President of the Philippines
Malacañang Palace
Metro Manila, Philippines

November 20, 2010

Dear Mr. President,

As a Catholic Missionary Society, with our strong commitment to the Philippine people over more than 80 years, we are writing to you at this time to express our deep anxiety and concern on the unfolding and critical situation in Midsalip, Zamboanga del Sur.

Geotechniques and Mining, Inc.(GAMI) have recently begun deploying drilling equipment in the critical watershed area of Mt. Sugarloaf, Zamboanga del Sur in the Diocese of Pagadian. The area, which also comprises the Archdiocese of Qzamiz (Misamis Occidental) is a designated Key Biodiversity Area (KBA Number 155) and a conservation priority area, and should, therefore, be exempt from exploration or mining programs. The aforementioned area was also the beneficiary of a World Bank/ADB funded (SECAL-ENR) reforestation project.

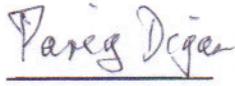
Catholic parishioners, farmers, Subaanen indigenous people and students have been holding a peaceful picket protest to deter the operation of drilling equipment since the 03rd October 2010. We understand they faced harassment on 19th October from the GAMI proponent Frank Real, who is also connected to Czarstone Mining Corporation.

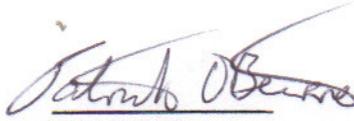
We, Columban Missionaries, have long served our brothers and sisters throughout the Philippines, particularly in the parish of San Jose, Midsalip, and are keenly aware of the many everyday conditions, difficulties and challenges faced by these communities. We have played a major role in the Working Group on Mining in the Philippines, have assisted in the publication of a second report, *Philippines: Mining or Food ?* (2009), <http://www.eccr.org.uk/module-Content-display-pid-52.html> outlining, the social, economic and environmental problems associated with the promotion of extractive industries in areas as critical as Midsalip for the economy of the citizens relying on the healthy ecosystems. Midsalip is of particular importance in this study, and we wholeheartedly support the recommendations made in the report.

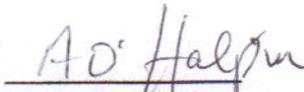
We highly commend you, Mr. President, as you pledge your governments' commitment to ensure justice for every person, especially the poor and vulnerable. We urgently request your personal intervention on behalf of the people of Midsalip, at this time, to help them protect their environment, specifically the vital water catchment and tropical forest which are so important for food security in the Zamboanga Peninsula. They have actively protected their environment against both illegal logging and mining incursions for many years.

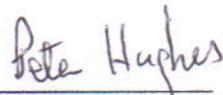
We ask you, Mr. President, to urgently review and revoke all authorizations, permits or mining licences heretofore granted for mineral development in areas of vital water and biodiversity ecosystems, having particular regard to any land conversion plans that will cause irreversible environmental degradation in the Mt. Sugarloaf Key Biodiversity Area (KBA 120) and thus ensure a full and long term food supply for everyone.

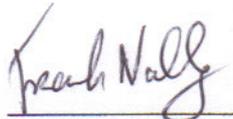
Sincerely,

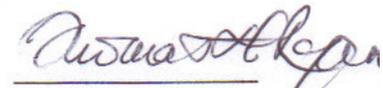

Parig Digan


Patrick O'Beirne


Aodh O' Halpin


Peter Hughes


Frank Nally


Tom Ryan