

FOCUS:
ISSUANCE OF NOTICES OF COVERAGE OF BUGSUK PANDANAN FARMS
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2014

JANUARY-MARCH 2014

- 1a. Consultations on the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and its Extension with Reform (CARPER) laws, as they relate to the Bugsuk-Pandanan landgrabbing-by-Mr. Danding Cojuangco issue were held a erstwhile Bugsuk and Pandanan residents forced into a 'land swap' where, in exchange for mostly barren, smaller, and barely accessible lots located in far mainland 1 in Bugsuk (area = approximately 9,500 hectares) and Pandanan (approximately 5,000 hectares) islands by Mr. Danding Cojuangco (Mr. Cojuangco, then and now, is one of the most powerful and affluent figures in the country) who in 1974 came over to personally enforce said 'swap,' accompanied by armed constables of the now-defunct and widely-feared Philippine Constabulary (the precursor of the current Philippine National Police). The consultations, began in December 2013 til 3rd week of March 2014, were carried out in several areas/islands in Balabac, and in Bataraza and Brooke's Point, where most of the displaced original Bugsuk and Pandanan residents ended.



PAKISAMA president Rene Cerilla (extreme right, top row) and local people's organization SAMBILOG president Panglima Rudy Calo (extreme left, middle row), with the rest of PAKISAMA staff and SAMBILOG leaders prior to the consultation held at Barangay Puring, Bataraza, Palawan on March 18, 2014



SAMBILOG members with their orange-and-red banner posed with Team PAKISAMA after the consultation held at Barangay Sebaring, Bugsuk Island, Balabac, Palawan on March 19, 2014.



Consultation with displaced Bugsuk residents at Barangay Calasaguen, Brooke's Point, Palawan, March 20, 2014.

1b. Orientations/*r e f r e s h e r s*/discussion on CARP, CARPER and IPRA laws, principles of active non-violent (ANV) direct action, and gender equality (GE)/gender and development (GAD) were carried out in March, in the course of the consultations, to establish strong legal grounding for the displaced residents, steer them away from the temptations of violent direct action, and involve both men and women in the struggle for the return of their lands.



PAKISAMA gender equality (GE) specialist Samantha Asuncion (top) and active non-violence (ANV) guru Edgar Morondoꞑ (right) providing inputs on GE and ANV in Barangay Sebaring, Bugsuk Island, Balabac, and Barangay Calasaguen, Brooke's Point, respectively, in the course of the consultations/ discussion on CARP/ CARPER as these relate to Bugsuk-Pandanan landgrabbing passed off as 'land swap' by Mr. Danding Cojuangco.





Agrarian Reform Secretary Virgilio de los Reyes: 'Misfit'. Photo from www.dar.gov.ph/

MANILA, Philippines—Five months before the June 14, 2014, deadline for the distribution of agrarian reform lands, nine Catholic bishops have appealed to President Aquino to fire Agrarian Reform Secretary Virgilio de los Reyes and fast-track the distribution of land to farmers.

In a letter on Jan. 22, the bishops, led by Manila Auxillary Bishop Broderick Pabillo, asked President Aquino for an "overhaul" in the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) leadership and pressed for swift action on the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (Carper).

"Secretary Gil de los Reyes clearly does not fit the role of a transformational leader for the demanding task ahead for CARP (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program)," the Catholic prelates said in a strongly-worded letter to the President.

The five-page letter enumerated how DAR allegedly failed to meet the target distribution of the CARP balance of 1.2 million hectares since the Carper law, the law extending the implementation of the 1963 agrarian reform code, was signed by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in August 2009.

"Even with these more modest targets, the speed with which NOCs (notices of coverage) have been issued by DAR continue to give us a deep cause for concern whether most remaining (and most resistant) agricultural landholdings will receive NOCs by that deadline," the church leaders said.

From July 2010 to June 2013, DAR was only able to distribute 314,422 hectares of land against the original CARP balance of 1.2 million hectares, the bishops said.

The prelates described the pace by which the Carper was being implemented as "sluggish."

"For instance, we brought to DAR's attention last September 2012 the 9,915-hectare landholdings of Danding Cojuangco on Bugsuk-Pandanan islands in Palawan. No notice of coverage has been issued by the DAR to date," they said.

The Catholic clergymen also raised the "underperformance" of DAR in handling cases of farmers' groups affiliated to Sulong Carper, a coalition of 33 land reform advocates that are nongovernment organizations closely monitoring the implementation of Carper.

PAKISAMA pressure on DAR via a 5-page letter sent in late January 2014 to President Benigno Aquino III signed by 9 bishops, PAKISAMA, and over a dozen other civil society groups, all under the national alliance Sulong CARPER where PAKISAMA is a key member, and carried as news by national broadsheet dailies and radio-television broadcasts.
<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/571823/9-bishops-tell-aquino-to-fire-dar-chief>

END-MARCH 2014

- 1c. By end-March, a 10-person delegation representing the displaced Bugsuk-Pandanan residents joined a 5-day 75-person PAKISAMA farmer campout outside the main office of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in Quezon City to press for DAR action on the Bugsuk-Pandanan land grabbed by Mr. Cojuangco and broken up into, and hidden under, 16 'special patents' under supposedly different corporate owners all with the same address in Makati City. DAR Secretary Gil delos Reyes met with the farmers for four (4) hours towards the latter part of the campout, on March 27, and promised to act on the Bugsuk-Pandanan issue by/before end-June.



PAKISAMA-member SAMBILOG people's organization's 10-person delegation from Bugsuk, Palawan, joined 65 other PAKISAMA farmers in a 5-day mobilization/campout outside DAR's main office in Quezon City from March 24-28, 2014. Top photos show the farmers in their daily 'morning ritual' outside the main gate of DAR from March 25 til 27, chanting and demanding to see and talk with DAR Secretary Gil delos Reyes, til he finally acceded on the 4th day and met the farmers' leaders for 4 hours from 10 am to 2 pm on March 27, 2014. Lower left photo shows SAMBILOG president Panglima Rudy Calo (2nd from left, seated, lower left photo) talking with the Secretary (center of lower left photo) inside DAR, while the rest of the farmers waited and held a separate program while waiting outside DAR (lower right photo).

1d. Task Force Bugsuk 2 was organized with former Senator Aquilino 'Nene' Pimentel, Jr. at its helm to discuss strategies and ways to, on one hand, pressure DAR to subject to agrarian reform all the Cojuangco lands covered by 15 'special patents' in Bugsuk and Pandanan islands (i.e., use the CARP asset reform law against Mr. Cojuangco), and, on the other hand, anticipate and prepare for his (Mr. Cojuangco's) most likely countermove/s once DAR acts on the farmers' petition/ demand and issues the Notice/s of Coverage (NOC/s) on Cojuangco lands in Bugsuk and Pandanan islands. (The Task Force was designated with the number 2 to distinguish it from an earlier task force with same name which previously tried to address the issue by using the IPRA law to get the displaced residents to reoccupy first their fishing waters leased out by the municipal government of Balabac to a private pearl farm owned jointly by Mr. Cojuangco's brother and a French company, then reoccupy the Bugsuk lands next. The strategy partly succeeded—the Sandiganbayan penalized



Former Senator Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. (2nd from left) discussing with Task Force Bugsuk 2 (TFB2) ways to confront the lawyers of Mr. Danding Cojuangco once DAR issues NOC/s on lands Mr. Cojuangco grabbed in Bugsuk-Pandanan islands

the Balabac mayor for leasing out the local fishing grounds to a private company, but it stopped short of ordering him to allow the displaced residents back to their livelihood grounds.)

APRIL-MAY 2014

- 1e. Came late April 2014, a month after the 5-day PAKISAMA farmer campout at DAR, and after repeated follow-ups by PAKISAMA and representatives of affected farmers with DAR, DAR announced it had issued a Notice of Coverage (NOC) for the 1,016 hectares of land covered by the first of 15 ‘special patents’ held by Mr. Cojuangco through his dummy corporations for lands he grabbed in 1974. (Issuance of NOC signals to all that the Philippine government will take over the land covered by the NOC and redistribute it to its rightful owners and/or to qualified farmer beneficiaries [FBs].) As anticipated earlier by Task Force Bugsuk 2, Mr. Cojuangco’s lawyers immediately appealed with DAR to reconsider its action and exempt Bugsuk from land reform on the ground that it is a ‘coconut nursery’, which farmers disputed, leading to DAR’s denial of Mr. Cojuangco’s lawyers’ appeal/motion for reconsideration.

www.dar.gov.ph/notice-of-coverage-2014?start=800

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agrarian Reform

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NOC (as of Jan to May 2014)

palawan

Region	Province	Name of Landowner	Name of Landowner Copy Furnished with NOC (DAR A.O. 8, S. of 2011)	Title No.	Lot No.	Survey No.	Area (has.)	Municipality	Barangay	Status of NOC	Date Served	Service Status
IV-A	PALAWAN	AGRICULTURAL INVESTORS, INCORPORATED		SP-1	16	SWO-04-000018	1,016	BALABAC	BUGSUK	NOC SERVED	4/11/2014	ACCEPTED
IV-B	PALAWAN	AMADOR SILVESTRE (FIRST PEOPLE'S BANK, INC.) / PDIC		OCT-1051	462	GSS-1410	4,8233	PUERTO PRINCESA CITY	BACUNGAN	NOC SERVED	5/29/2014	ACCEPTED
IV-B	PALAWAN	AURELIUS P. CARREON (FIRST PEOPLE'S BANK, INC.) / PDIC		OCT-3399	1	Ccs-04-001053-D	2,8001	PUERTO PRINCESA CITY	STA. LOURDES	NOC SERVED	5/29/2014	ACCEPTED

Display #

DAR website announcing the NOC issued to Agricultural Investors, Inc. (AII), a company owned by Mr. Danding Cojuangco, for 1,016 hectares of CARPable land with ‘Special Patent’ No. 1 (SP-1).

<http://www.dar.gov.ph/notice-of-coverage-2014?start=800>

- 1f. DAR’s provincial agrarian reform officer (PARO) for Palawan indicated it would take 6 to 9 months for it to identify the Bugsuk-Pandanan farmers/residents ejected by Mr. Cojuangco. PAKISAMA offered to help DAR do so in a months’ time (throughout May), and traced over 750 former Bugsuk-Pandanan 222 residents, or their offsprings, in different parts of Palawan—some in the other islands of Balabac

(e.g., in Matangule and Marihangin islands), the rest scattered in the municipalities of Bataraza and Brooke's Point, and Puerto Princesa City (Palawan's provincial capital). Amid harassments/threats made by Cojuangco's goons on PAKISAMA personnel, the latter collected affidavits from the 750+ former Bugsuk-Pandanan residents or their offsprings who narrated their experience/trauma from Mr. Cojuangco's ejection of them/their parents back in 1974. The affidavits were submitted to DAR by end-May for validation by DAR personnel (even as more former Bugsuk-Pandanan residents in other parts of Palawan came forward to likewise tell their stories of being driven out/dispossessed of their Bugsuk/Pandanan lands by Mr. Cojuangco).



DAR's Palawan P.ARO discussing to-do's with PAKISAMA staff and SAMBILOG leaders

JUNE 2014

1g. PAKISAMA sought the help of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to engage the municipal government officials of Balabac in a dialogue/confrontation over the Balabac mayor's use of local police to harass PAKISAMA personnel out to help DAR identify former Bugsuk-Pandanan residents ejected by Cojuangco from their farm/ancestral lands, as well as on municipal water issues for which the mayor was already penalized by the Sandiganbayan. The mayor avoided the dialogue/confrontation—with 5 boatfuls of locals from various points/islands of the municipality who were about to be joined by other locals from mainland Balabac island villages/barangays—and 'escaped' to the provincial capital where the governor, to whom DILG and PAKISAMA had brought the matter the evening before (on June 12, 2014) at Rio Tuba (where the mayor earlier promised to show up and meet SAMBILOG but did not do so and proceeded instead to Puerto Princesa for some vague excuses), called him to a meeting at the provincial capitol; thereafter the governor promised to help and get the Balabac mayor/municipal officials to sit down/talk with PAKISAMA/SAMBILOG re issues raised against the mayor.



Photo above shows PAKISAMA's SAMBILOG leaders seeking the help of DILG Undersecretary (USec) Bimbo Fernandez (at the center, above) at the DILG central Office in Quezon City last March 28, 2014 vs. the Balabac mayor's use of policemen to harass

PAKISAMA personnel working with SAMBILOG members in Bugsuk. Right photo shows USec Fernandez (3rd from right on upper right photo) coming over to Palawan on June 12, 2014 (after 2 schedules set in April then May were postponed), and bringing the issue against the Balabac mayor before Palawan Governor Jose Alvarez (5th from right on upper right photo and 2nd from left on lower right photo) who promised to help SAMBILOG (in a meeting at Rio Tuba in the evening of June 12, upper right photo; and at the Provincial Capitol in Puerto Princesa the following day, lower right photo).



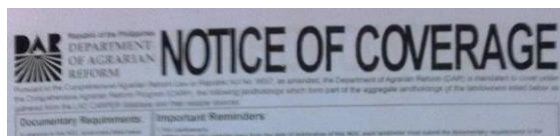
1h. Came third week of June 2014, after repeated follow-ups with—and direct/indirect pressure on

—DAR by PAKISAMA, Bugsuk-Pandanan farmer representatives, and Sulong CARPER and Agrarian Reform (AR) Now national networks where PAKISAMA is a key member, including a July 4, 2014 national mobilization-cum-conference at UP Diliman, Quezon City (see photo next page) seeking the extension of deadline for the issuance of Notices of Coverage from June 30, 2014 to June 30, 2016, attended by over 700 farmers from PAKISAMA and over a dozen other farmer



and farmer-support groups (and after DAR's own investigation—and meetings with the Presidential Commission on Good Government [PCGG] and Department of Environment and Natural Resources [DENR] on said landholdings, including DAR Secretary Gil delos Reyes's own ocular visit, incognito, of Bugsuk) DAR finally issued NOCs subjecting to agrarian reform all Cojuangco-grabbed lands in Bugsuk-Pandanan islands, under 14 other 'special patents' with a total land area of approximately 9,805 hectares, bringing the total land area covered by NOCs in the Bugsuk-Pandanan islands (counting the first NOC

with 1,016 hectares) to some **10,821** hectares (the biggest single landholding—more than twice Hacienda Luisita’s 4,915 hectares—to be subjected to land reform of late).



1	Spade One Agro-Dev. Corporation	OCT-SP-2	989.0000	1	Balabac, Bugsuk
2	Woodsmen Agro-Dev., Inc.	OCT-SP-3	1,000.0000	1	Balabac, Matangule (Now Bancalaan)
3	Wings Agricultural Corporation	OCT-SP-4	978.0000	1	Balabac, Pandanan
4	Kalawakan Agricultural Developers, Inc.	OCT-SP-5	956.0000	1	Balabac, Pandanan
5	Habagat Agro-Development, Inc.	OCT-SP-6	963.0000	1	Balabac, Bugsuk
6	Unexplored Land Developers, Inc.	OCT-SP-7	798.7800	1	Balabac, Bugsuk
7	Unexplored Land Developers, Inc.	OCT-SP-8	192.0000	1	Balabac, Pandanan
8	Ocean Side Agro-Industrial Enterprises, Inc.	OCT-SP-9	480.0000	1	Balabac, Pandanan
9	Ocean Side Agro-Industrial Enterprises, Inc.	OCT-SP-10	500.0000	1	Balabac, Bugsuk
10	Labayug Agri-Tech., Inc.	OCT-SP-11	1,000.0000	1	Balabac, Bugsuk
11	Pura Planters, Inc.	OCT-SP-12	85.0000	1	Balabac, Pandanan
12	Pura Planters, Inc.	OCT-SP-13	907.0000	1	Balabac, Bugsuk
13	Punong Bayan Agricultural Dev. Corp.	OCT-SP-14	807.0000	1	Balabac, Bugsuk
14	Punong Bayan Agricultural Dev. Corp.	OCT-SP-15	150.0000	1	Bugsuk, Gabung (Now Sebaring)
	TOTAL		9,805.7800		

DAR's NOC announcement for Bugsuk-Pandanan, Balabac, Palawan appeared in the June 26, 2014 issue of the Philippine Star.