



**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT & SOLIDARITY
TO THE PEOPLE OF MANKAYAN IN THEIR
STRUGGLE AGAINST LEPANTO
CONSOLIDATED MINING COMPANY**

We support the continuing struggle of the people of Mankayan in opposition to the drilling operation of Goldfields and expansion of Lepanto. The resilience shown by the people of Tabeo, Mankayan and members of Save Mankayan Movement to keep their barricade standing for eight-long months despite all the efforts of Goldfields, Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company and state armed forces to disperse the residents is an inspiration for all those are fighting for their land, life and livelihood against large-scale and destructive mining.

We condemn in the strongest sense the brutal attempts of the LCMC, PNP and AFP to tear down and disperse the peoples' barricade. The early-morning assault on September 17 (the third since May 25) directed against the 300 men, women, elderly and children manning the blockade by about 115 PNP personnel, 40 AFP, 50 Lepanto security guards, and inaction of the NCIP and CHR despite witnessing the resounding call and sacrifice of the people to stop the drilling operation of Goldfields and fight for their rights is a testament of the incompetence and bias for Lepanto. It further substantiates that the PNP, AFP, and government agencies like the CHR and NCIP are nothing but mere instruments of the state to deceive the people, protect the interest of large-scale mining companies and quell collective actions to assert human rights.

We join the call of the people of Mankayan and all other communities to bring to an end Lepanto's more than seven decades of operation and greed that destroyed scores of livelihood, poisoned the Abra River, and continue to threaten the health and safety of the residents of the people. Lepanto's operation significantly contributes to the pollution of the Abra River – a critical ecosystem and wildlife habitat, a major source of irrigation, fish and other aquatic food for the communities from Benguet, to Abra and down to Ilocos Sur. The company's Dam 5A which holds tens of thousands of toxic mining wastes is a clear and present danger to the communities along the Abra River given Lepanto's history of dam leakage and collapse. The aforesaid destructions and risk will considerably increase Goldfields' operation.

We will neither be cowed nor silenced by brute force and deception perpetuated by the State, Lepanto and other large-scale and destructive mining companies. We shall continue to struggle – side by side with other communities and organizations against environmental plunder and abuse for we are bound not only by our commitment for environmental security and justice but also with our divine covenant to be stewards of God's creation.

Reference:

DONNA RABANG PETA

Convener, Defend Ilocos Against Mining Plunder
09093026676

FINELA CAVERO MEJIA

Convener, Save the Abra River Movement
09352135567