



CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

For the Defense of the Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

31 July 2013

More consultations should take place in Mankayan and all affected communities

What went on in Mankayan on July 27 is a mockery of indigenous peoples' collective right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) condemns this and challenges the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), local government unit of Mankayan, Lepanto and Goldfields to instead conduct more consultations and hear out the issues raised by the people through the Save Mankayan Movement (SMM) towards resolution. There is clear manipulation—hence, this is not the correct and legitimate FPIC as a process and a peoples' right.



The fact that there was opposition should have prompted NCIP to hold more consultations. But it did the total reverse by hastening the FPIC process and skipping the issues raised by the people. We have also received reports of local residents expressing how they did not fully understand all the issues at hand. NCIP's task is to ensure that all pertinent information reaches all concerned communities, and that these are understood by them. Lepanto, Goldfields and the NCIP should also involve in the FPIC process all affected communities, especially the downstream communities along the Abra River.

We saw in 2012 a one-year barricade and prolonged protests of thousands from affected communities opposing Lepanto expansion and Goldfields drilling. We witnessed countless petitions and signature campaigns. What other proof does the NCIP need to fully see that there IS opposition that cannot just be ignored? Consensus means to everyone's agreement, that conflicts at hand are resolved. The votes cast (283-yes, 51-no) is another proof of the opposition to any mining activity. It is no longer a question of a majority vote over a minority. The July 27 incident in Mankayan again proved NCIP's inutility in upholding its mandate to serve and protect indigenous peoples' rights. Also once more, NCIP and the municipal LGU protected the big interests of Lepanto and Goldfields over the peoples' welfare.

The so-called FPIC activity in July 27 is not acceptable to the people. It is a violation of the very principle of FPIC as contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) and even the FPIC guidelines of the NCIP, and as a sovereign right of the people. The FPIC process is not over. It is just beginning with the NCIP, LGU and Lepanto and Goldfields violating the principle and process of FPIC.

Lastly, the July 27 incident again caused divisiveness and disunity among the people of Mankayan. We are very disappointed at how some municipal and barangay officials voted 'yes', when the LGUs mandate is to consult with its constituents and hear out the issues. If the mining issues are forced onto the people again, we can only expect more protests, as this is the people's right. But we also expect more violation of indigenous peoples, rights and human rights, including militarization. We do not want this to happen—and thus the NCIP and LGU must fulfill their mandate to people of Mankayan and all affected communities in Cervantes, Quirino and further down the Abra River. ***

Reference:
AB Anongos
Secretary General