



## **THE ABORLAN WEST- COAST GEOTAGGED REPORT** **Evidences of massive forest clearing for rubber plantation** **in Bgy. Culandanum, Municipality of Aborlan (Palawan)** **The Philippines**

A report by CALG (Coalition against Land Grabbing) supported by Rainforest Rescue and Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) in collaboration with NATRIPAL (*Nagkakaisang Tribu ng Palawan*)

CALG is a member of



## A. INTRODUCTION

On 23 July 2015, a mission led by the Coalition Against Land Grabbing (CALG) travelled to Barangay Culandanum, located on the West Coast of Aborlan Municipality (Palawan) to carry out a preliminary field and geotagging reconnaissance on the massive forest clearing on timberland allegedly being initiated by a Filipino entrepreneur (Mr. Norman Moralde) for the purpose of developing a large area into rubber plantations. In a photographic context, *geotagging* is the process of associating photos with specific geographic locations using GPS coordinates.

The mission was guided into the area by the President, Vice President and by another member of the local Tagbanua indigenous association named *Samahan ng mga Tribung Tagbanua sa Tina* (NATRITI) which is an affiliated member of NATRIPAL (*Nagkakaisang Tribu ng Palawan*), the largest indigenous federation in Palawan. The members of (NATRITI) are also the local beneficiaries (claimants) of an ancestral domain embracing the barangay of Apurawan and Culandanum and significant portions of primary and secondary forest that is primarily used by them for the collection of NTFPs (mainly rattan), medicinal plants and as their customary hunting ground. The local indigenous inhabitants complain that migrant workers, mostly from Culandanum and other neighbouring barangay, have entered their ancestral domain around 2011 and, since then, massive forest clearing has taken place through the use of chainsaws, leading to the removal of natural vegetation and to the cutting of valuable timber species. Such operations, according to the residents of the local Tagbanua community, have been initiated and coordinated by Norman Moralde who is not a resident of the area.

Moralde's direct involvement in forest clearing was confirmed to us by Mrs. Anna Dumael, a local resident of Bgy. Culandanum who receives from N. Moralde a monthly salary to guard the rubber plantation and organize the workers being employed for the clearing and planting of rubber seedlings.

At the time of our visit, we discovered that a large area of primary forest had already been developed into rubber plantations, with young rubber trees reaching an approximate height between 80cm. to 2.5 m. At the lower edge of the cleared area, a nursery of young rubber seedlings is found. However, the planted trees look frail and yellowish and this suggests that the soil may not be suited for rubber. Concerns, therefore, are being raised on whether the on-going rubber plantation is rather an alibi to 'prepare the ground' for future mining exploration and extraction. Although these are only assumptions, the mission did find a mining test-pith about 3 meters deep in the upper portion of the plantation area. Our local Tagbanua guides told us that the test-pith has been there since many years but no mining extraction has ever taken place in the area.

The area cleared for rubber and visited during our mission was identified on the satellite Google map (see pictures below). However, in addition to this large clearing, the CALG mission discovered at least two other massive clearings of the same size, which – we were told – are a recent expansion of the existing rubber plantation and were opened between March and April 2015. We also noticed other neighbouring areas where forest was set to fire without being cleared and one of such areas lies within the boundary of Barangay Berong (Sitio Kalyagen), in the neighbouring municipality of Quezon. The mission members were told that all such new clearings are part and parcel of the same rubber project being implemented by N. Moralde. The direct responsibility of N. Moralde in the opening of these forest areas was confirmed by the Barangay Kapitan of Culandanum (Armelio Lagud) who told us that he had already warned Norman Moralde to refrain from

additional forest clearings, and he also extended the same warning to the workers being employed by him. The Barangay Kapitan, also told us that he has no contact address for Mr. Moralde and it is very difficult to contact him since he only visits the area sporadically (every 4/5 months). We were also told by both Mrs. Dumael and the Barangay Capitan that foresters of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) are aware of the illegal activities being carried out by N. Moralde and, in fact, have made attempts (although unsuccessful) to contact him and ask him to report to DENR Office.

Outside the rubber plantations, and as we moved towards the lower part of the said forest, we noticed other large forest clearings along the edge of the Piabuyukan river. Our Tagbanua guides told us that these areas have been illegally opened by migrants without the authorization of the local CADT (Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title) claimants. In such areas, the felled logs were cut into smaller logs for charcoal (*uling*) making. We were unable to identify the persons responsible for such new clearings, but the local barangay kapitan assured us that he would investigate the matter further in the attempt of identifying the culprit(s).

Our GPS data overlaid on Google Earth map has clearly shown that the area of on-going rubber expansion was covered by good standing forest until very recently. Thus, N. Moralde and his workers must be held responsible for the on going plundering of natural forest. It must be pointed out that Google Earth Satellite Maps available on the net are not updated (unless one registers for special access), hence some of the new forest clearings geo-tagged by us do not show yet on public Google Earth maps. Rather these areas, on Google Earth, appear to be still covered by natural vegetation. This further indicates that the clearings documented by the CALG mission are relatively recent.

The expansion of rubber plantations by Mr. Moralde is taking place without the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) of the local indigenous communities, thus in violation of NCIP Administrative Order no.3 of series of 2012 and in contradictions with other key articles stated in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (R.A. 8371) such as the: 1) *Rights of Ownership* (Chapter III, Sec. 7, item a); 2) *Rights to Religious, Cultural Sites and Ceremonies* (Chapter VI, Section 33); 3) *Right to Develop Lands and Natural Resources*. (Chapter III, Sec. 7, item b); 4) *the Rights to Ancestral Lands* (Chapter III, Sec. 8); 5) *the Right to Determine and Decide Priorities for Development* (Chap. IV, Sec. 17), etc;

As of now, the affected Tagbanua communities are taking actions to protect their ancestral domain against Mr Moralde's agribusiness expansion. On 12 September 2015, the indigenous Tagbanua representatives of Culandanom, council of elders and NATRITI wrote and signed a resolution and a certification against rubber development on their ancestral land (see Annex 1 and Annex 1a).

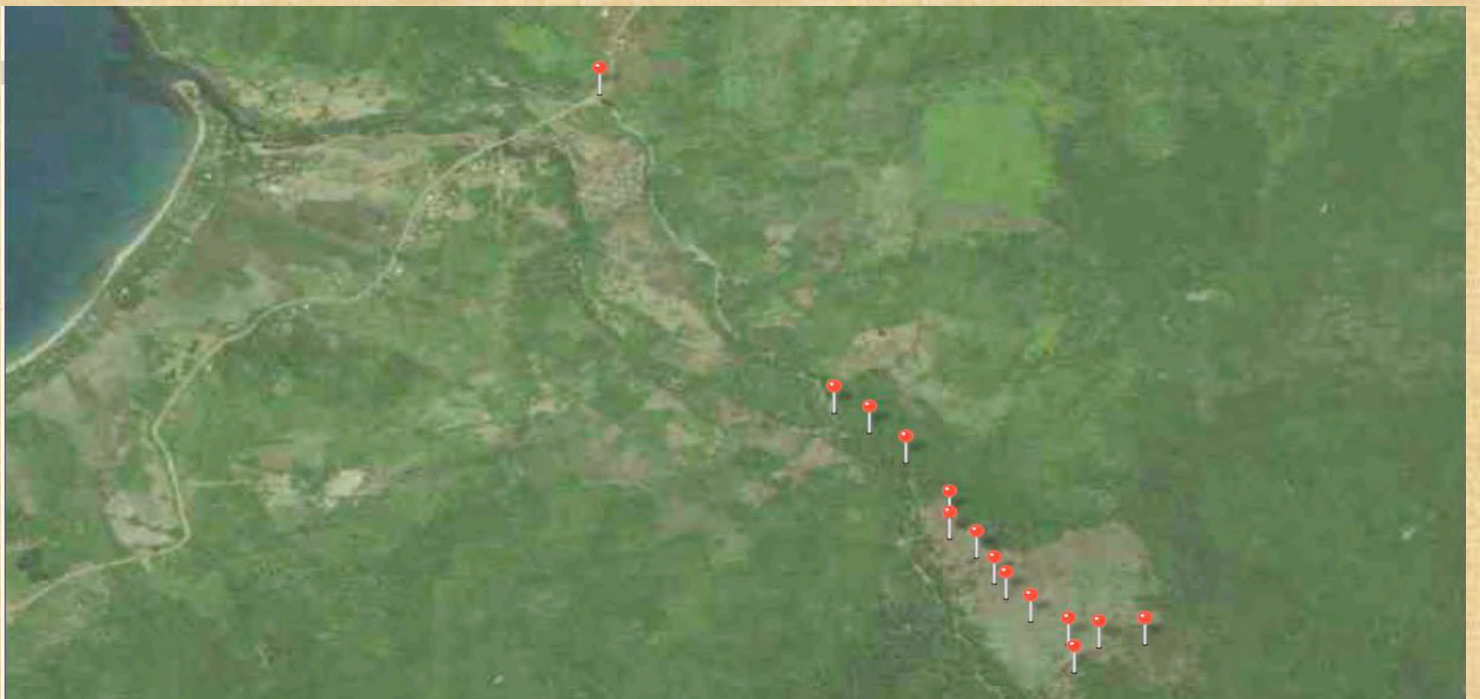
Overall our findings indicate that forest clearing, as well as the burning of forest at the boundaries of Bgy. Culandanom and Bgy.Berong, has bluntly violated DENR EO 23. Criminal charges should then be filed against N. Moralde also for gross violation of section 68 and section 69 of Presidential Decree (PD) 705.

This draft report represents only a brief synthesis of the CALG mission's key findings and has been prepared for the purpose of requesting CENRO to take immediate actions and carry out ocular inspections in the targeted impacted locations.

### GEOTAGGING EVIDENCES OF FOREST CLEARING IN BGY. CULANGDANUM



The red spots indicate the area targeted by the CALG mission in Bgy. Culangdanum, Aborlan West-Coast.



The CALG mission itinerary from main road to the upland forest clearing.




**A close-up of the cleared area and the mission's itinerary during ocular inspection**

From a first hand evaluation it would appear that at least two other areas of an equivalent size have been cleared in 2015 on both the west and eastern fringes of the rubber plantation. However, these new clearings do not show yet on the available and public version of Google Earth Satellite map.

GEOTAGGED PHOTO EVIDENCES ELABORATED WITH JOBO GEOTAGGING SOFTWARE

jobo rubber 1

Details of IMG\_0089.CR2



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**GPS (UTC) Time:** Jul 22, 2015 3:47:18 AM  
**Latitude:** 9,528767  
**Longitude:** 118,302296  
**Altitude:** 63 m  
**Address Line 1:**   
**Address Line 2:** Aborlan  
**Address Line 3:** Province of Palawan  
**Country:** Philippines

POI	Distance (m)	Category


Add Remove Move Up Move Down

Ok

Clearings for rubber plantation first opened in 2011 (see images below).

jobo rubber 11

Details of IMG\_0115.CR2




**Name:** IMG\_0115.CR2  
**Photo Time:** Jul 22, 2015 12:08:29 PM  
**GPS (UTC) Time:** Jul 22, 2015 4:06:34 AM  
**Latitude:** 9,528164  
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**Address Line 2:** Aborlan  
**Address Line 3:** Province of Palawan  
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POI	Distance (m)	Category

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Ok


**Details of IMG\_0104.CR2**



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**Country:** Philippines

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**Details of IMG\_0138.CR2**



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**Latitude:** 9,525945  
**Longitude:** 118,306479  
**Altitude:** 156 m  
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**Address Line 2:** Aborlan  
**Address Line 3:** Province of Palawan  
**Country:** Philippines

POI	Distance (m)	Category

Details of IMG\_0142.JPG



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**Longitude:** 118,306438  
**Altitude:** 157 m  
**Address Line 1:**  
**Address Line 2:** Aborlan  
**Address Line 3:** Province of Palawan  
**Country:** Philippines

POI	Distance (m)	Category
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REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS

LaLawigan ng Palawan

Bayan ng Quezon

'TANGGAPAN NG KONSEHO NG MGA MATATANDA'  
SA BARANGAY CULANDANUM.

RESOLUTION BILANG: 07 2015

ISANG RESUSUSYON PARA SA PAGTALAGA NG KINATAWAN  
NG MGA TAGBANUA NG BRGY. CULANDANUM, ABORLAN,  
PALAWAN SA IHAHAIN NA KASO LABAN KAY.

KUNGSAAAN, ang Pamayanang kultural ng mga Tagbanua ng  
Brgy. Culandanum, ay nag-aangkin, gumagamit at ranatili  
sa kanilang lupaing Ninuno sa Brgy. Culandanum,  
Aborlan, Palawan.

KUNGSAAAN, ang National Commission on Indigenous Peoples  
(NCIP) ay kinikilala ang Native title ng mga Tagbanua,  
sa katurayan kami ay nakapagsumite na ng aming Apli-  
kasyon para sa Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title  
nong \_\_\_\_\_ at may numero Bilang, \_\_\_\_\_  
na sang ayon sa Batas Republika 8371 o Indigenous  
Peoples Right Act (IPRA).

KUNGSAAAN, para maiipagtanggol ang aming karapatan sa aming  
lupaing Ninuno pinagkaisahan ng Pamayanang kultural na mag-  
Hain ng kaso sa NCIP RHO Regional Office NO. IV, Laban  
Kay G. \_\_\_\_\_ para bawuin ang nasabing  
lupa at pigilan ang ano mang pagtayo ng istruktura o anumang  
aktibidades sa nasabing lupa at

DAHIL DITO, dahil sa mosyon ni, Antonia Tayao ,, at sinundan ni,  
 Ronald Onos ,, pinagkaisahan na ang hahanap at kakatawan  
 sa kaso ay sina, Panglima Aniong Pandas,, NATRIT, Vice President,  
 Amabilo Lagon,, Joelino Puga,, NATRIT President,, Efran Ongot.

Bilang Pagpapatibay sa Resolusyon ng ito Narito ang aming mga  
 Pangalan at Lagda ngayong ita 12 ng September, 2015

<u>PANGALAN</u>	<u>LAGDA</u>
1. Gemmalyn O Lagon	
2. Ophelia F. LESIAN	O. LESIAN
3. Cristine R. Fabian	
4. Robena P. Fabian	Roben
5. Markito P. Tolal	
6. JEME DACH	Dora
7. Gemma Ceriaco	
8. Belineng Giunto	Belineng
9. JUANLYE LECIAN	
10. MCL ONOS	
11. RFFY GRIPIACO	
12. mila k LESIAN	
13. <del>Amabilo</del> Pugas	
14. Motilio B. Fabian Sr.	Motilio
15. Motilio P. Fabian Jr.	Motilio
16. Efran T Ongot	
17. Estacio L. Calawa	
18. Censora L. Pugas	
19. Lippson Lison	
20. Emilio Pugas	
21. Amabilo P Lagon	A Lagon
22. Belina Lagon	B Lagon

25. JURELO	O	Lagon	JLagon
26. AnJ Lyn		Lagon	Lagon
25. Jhomy	L.	pardas	<del>JP</del>
26. Jail	L.	pardas	<del>JP</del>
27. Welly	L.	pardas	<del>JP</del>
28. LILITA	P.	ONGOT	LILITA
29 Roy	P.	ONGOT	<del>JP</del>
30. Virelly	C.	Kumul	<del>JP</del>
31. Edio	P.	Lisian	<del>JP</del>
32. madrina	P.	Lisian	<del>JP</del>
33 Rini		Guinto	<del>JP</del>
34 marlin		Guinto	<del>JP</del>
35. Romil		Lisian	<del>JP</del>
36. Bebi		total	Bebi
37 Remy		Lagon	<del>Jagon</del>
38 Roy		Pelepario Pigas de	<del>JP</del>
39	MEGINO	P. Lesian	<del>JP</del>
40. ANNABELE		Ongot	ANN
41. MARLYN		Lisian	MM
42. Victor		Guinto	Guinto
43. Beveca	F.	Guinto	Guinto
44. Berhana	F.	Guinto	Guinto
45. GENA	O	LESEAN	<del>JP</del>
46. CIMON	T	Ongot Jr	<del>JP</del>
47 EMILYN	L	Ongot	EMM
48 GOSIMIL		Pigas	G-7
49 JOYALYN		Lisian	Joye
50 JONKEY		Lisian	Jonkey
51 LIO		Lisian	Lio
52 GENALYN		Lisian	Genel
53. Silito		Lisian	Sitito
54. APINIA		Lisian	APIN
55. Silito		Lisian	

APPENDIX 1a

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS

Lalawigan ng Palawan

Bayan ng Aborlan

Tanggapan ng konseho ng mga Matatanda sa Barangay Culandatum

PAGPAPATUNAY

SA MGA KINAUKULAN:

Kaming konseho ng mga matatanda (Council of Elders) ng aming katutubong pamayahanang Tagbanwa ng Barangay, Culandatum, Aborlan, Palawan ay nagkaisa na sina, Panglima, Aniong Pardo, NATRETT, Vice President, Armaito Lagon, Joelino Pgado, NATRETT - President, Efren Ongod, ang ayang kinatawan sa kasong aming isasampa Laban kay, , na may kinataman sa paglabag sa aming karapatan bilang katutubo o di-pagkukuhang malaya na una at malinang na kapahintulutan mula sa aming katutubo sa kanilang malawak na pataniman ng RUBBER.

Nilagdaan at pinagkasunduan, ngayong ika 12 ng September, 2018 sa Brgy. Culandatum, Aborlan, Palawan.

PANGALAN	TUNGKULIN	LAGDA
1. ABILINO TANDAY	Parampo	[Signature]
2. ARTURO FAYAO	[Signature]	[Signature]
3. RONALD ONOS	BOD	[Signature]
4. MARCELINO P. KIMIL	Panglima	[Signature]
5. FELICIANO P. PIGAS	subandar	[Signature]
6. LINAN R. ONGOD	SATTA	[Signature]
7. GETHER	B.O.D. Uecian	[Signature]
8. Remy P. Lagon	BOD	[Signature]
9. DENIO P. Uecian	B.O.D	[Signature]
10. RAONIMIN T		[Signature]

1 Efrén T Ongat  
Eltesio L. Calabawa

Pris  
Dagadong

