



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

The ICCA
Consortium



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 Baragay 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 Culandanum, 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).

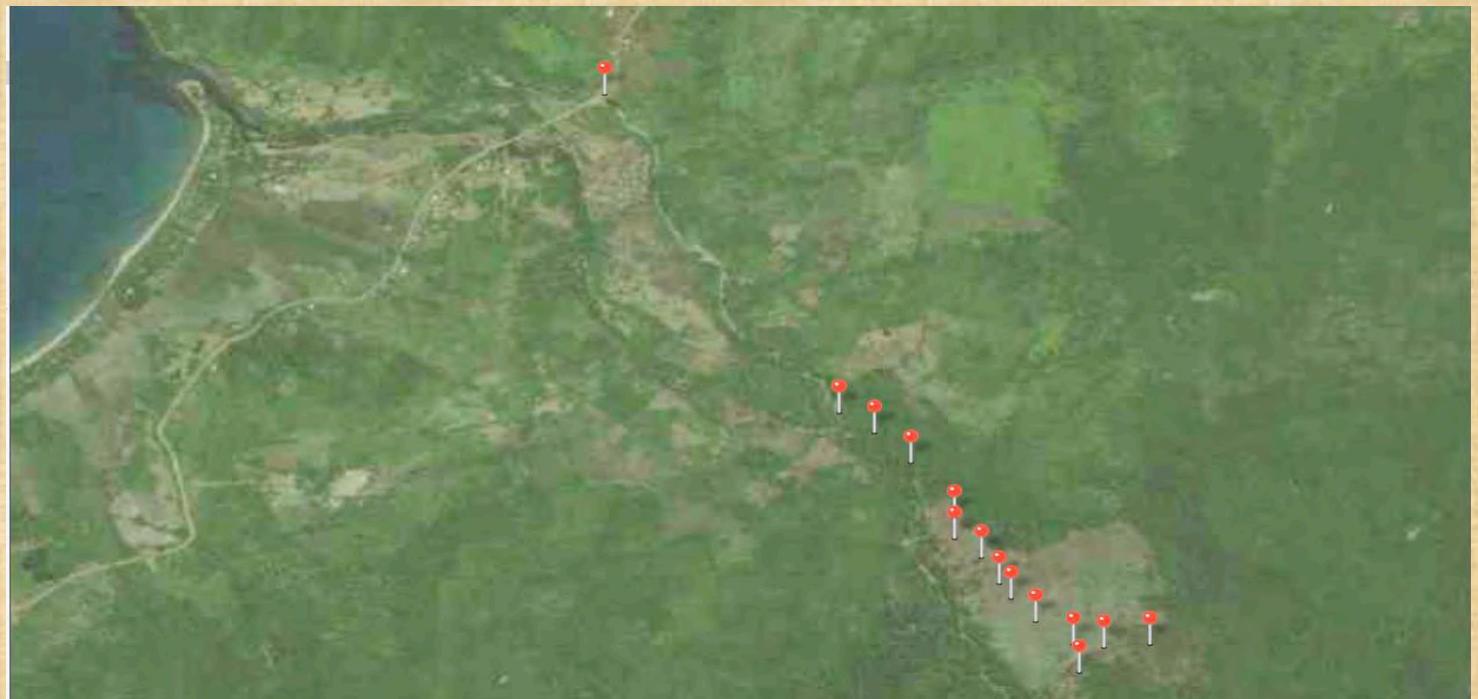
Overall our findings indicate that forest clearing, as well as the burning of forest at the boundaries of Bgy. Culandanom and Bgy.Berong, has bluntly violated DENR EO 23. Criminal charges should then be filed against N. Moralde also for gross violation of section 68 and section 69 of Presidential Decree (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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Photo Time: Jul 22, 2015 11:49:14 AM
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

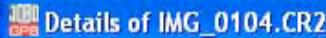
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Country: Philippines

POI	Distance (m)	Category

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Latitude:	9,528361
Longitude:	118,302367
Altitude:	44 m
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Address Line 2:	Aborlan
Address Line 3:	Province of Palawan
Country:	Philippines

POI	Distance (m)	Category

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Ok

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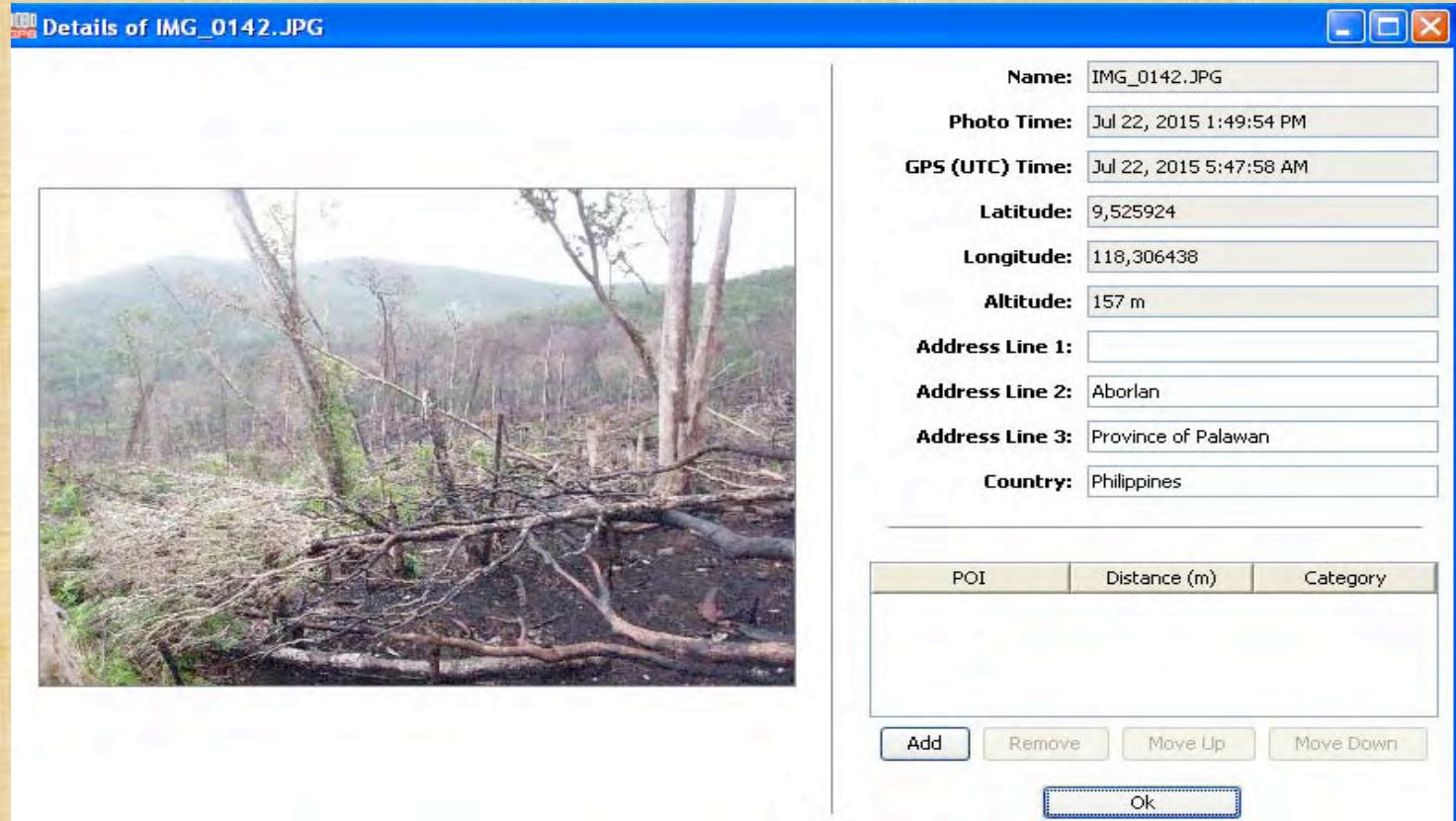


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Longitude:	118,306479
Altitude:	156 m
Address Line 1:	
Address Line 2:	Aborlan
Address Line 3:	Province of Palawan
Country:	Philippines

POI	Distance (m)	Category

Add Remove Move Up Move Down

Ok



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REPUBLICA NG PILIPINAS

LaLwigang Palawan

Bayan ng Quezon

TANGGAPAN NG KONSEHO NG MGA MATATANDA
SA BARANGAY CULANDANUM.

RESOLUTION BILANG: OF 2015

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

KUNG SAAN, ang Pamayanang Kultural ng mga Tagbanua ng Brgy. Culandanum, ay nag-aangkin, gumagamit at nanatili sa kanilang Iupaing Ninuno sa Brgy. Culandanum, Aborlan, Palawan.

KUNG SAAN, ang National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) ay tukikilala ang Native title ng mga Tagbanua. Sa katuray kami ay nakapagsumite na ng aming Application para sa Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title noong at may numero Bilang, na sang ayon sa Batas Republika 8371 o Indigenous Peoples Right Act (IPRA).

KUNG SAAN, para maipagtanggol ang aming karapatan sa aming Iupaing Ninuno pinagkaisahan ng Pamayanang Kultural na mag-Hain ng kaso sa NCIP RHO Regional Office NO. IV, laban kay G. para bawin ang nasabing Lupa at pigilan ang ano mang pagtayo ng istruktura o anumang aktibidades sa nasabina lugar.

DAHL DITO, dahil sa mosyon ni, Antolino Tayao, " at sinundan ni, Ronald Onos " pinagkaisahan na ang haharap at kakatauan sa kaso ay sina, Panglima Aniong Pandas, NATRIT, Vice President, Amailo Lagon, Joelino Pugad, NATRIT President, Efren Ongot.

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

PANGALAN

1. Gemmelyn O. Lagon
2. Ofelia F. Lesian
3. Cristine R. Fabian
4. Robena P. Fabian
5. Maklito P. total
6. JEME DATCH
7. Gemma Ceráco
8. Belineng Giunto
9. Junalye Vecita
10. MCL ONOS
11. RFFY Grivaco
12. Mila K. Lesian
13. Engracia Pegas
14. Motilio B. Fabian Sr.
15. Motilio P. Fabian Jr.
16. Efren T. Ongot
17. Esteso L. Calawwa
18. Consig L. Pegas
19. Vippolo L. Pegas
20. Emelio L. Pegas
21. Armando P. Lagon
22. Belina Lagon

LAGDA

- L. Ongot
O. LESIAN
Cris
Roby
MUL
Datch
GEM
Belineng
Junalye
MOT
RFFY
MOT
Motilio
Efren
Esteso
Consig
Vippolo
Emelio
Armando P. Lagon
Belina Lagon

25. Jurel O	Lagon	Lagon
26. Anjlyn Lagon		Lagon
25. Johnny L. pardas		JP
26. Jail L. pardas		JP
27. Welly L. pardas		WY
28. LILITA P. ONGOT		LILITA
29. Roy P. ONGOT		RO
30. Jerselle C. Kamel		JES
31. Edio P. Lisan		ED
32. madrina P. Lisan		ML
33. Rini Guinto		RIN
34. Merlin Guinto		MER
35. Romil. Lisan		ROMIL
36. Bebi total		BEBI
37. Remy Lagon		LAGON
38. Rey Polenario Pigas Jr		REY
39. MEGNO P. Lisan		MEGNO
40. ANNABELLA Ongot		ANN
41. MARLYN Lisan		MAR
42. Victor Guinto		GUINTO
43. Rebeca F. Guinto		REBECA
44. Berhana F. Guinto		BERHANA
45. GENA O Lisan		GENA
46. Cimou T Ongot Jr		CIMOU
47. EMILYN L Ongot		EMILYN
48. GESMIL Pigas		GESMIL
49. JOYCELYN Lisan		JOYCELYN
50. JONEVYoy Lisan		JONEVY
51. LIO Lisan		LIO
52. Genalyn Lisan		GENALYN
53. Silitito Lisan		SITITO
54. APINIA Lisan		APINIA

APPENDIX 1a

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS

lalawigan ng Palawan

Baryan ng Aborlan

Tanggapan og konseho ng mga Matalandia sa Barangay Culandonum

PAGPAPATUNAY

SA MGA KINAVVULAN:

Kaming konseho ng mga matalandia (Council of Elders) ug
aniñg katutubong panayahan ng Tagbanua ng Barangay, Culandonum,
Aborlan, Palawan ay nagkaisa na sina, Panglima, Aniong Pardas,
~~NATRIT~~, Vice President, Armailo Lagon, Joelino Pigad, ~~NATRIT~~-President,
Efren Ongot, ang syang kinatawan sa kasong aming isasanipa
laban kay, , na may kinataman sa paglabag
sa aming karapatan bilang katutubo o di-pagkuha ng malaya
na una at malinang na kapahintulutan mula sa aning katutubo
sa kanilang malawak na pataniman ng RUBBER.

Nilagdaan at pinagkasunduan, ngayong ika 12 ng September, 2015
sa Brgy. Culandonum, Aborlan, Palawan.

PANGALAN

TUNGKULIN

LALDA

1. Abilino Tanday

Parampo

Fred ty

2. Antolin Fajao

SMBOD

Japo

3. Ronald Onos

DO BOD

S

4. Marcelino P. Kimil

Panglima

MO

5. Peterucio Pigas

sabundar

Z

6. Linon Q. Ongot

Satka

Eto

7. Gethen B.O.D. vecian

GEX

8. Remy P. Lagon

BOD

Japo

9. Denio P. Cesian

B.O.D.

D

10. P. Ongot

Z

I Efren T Ongat
Eliecio L. Calabwa

Pnis

Dagadong

E
S