



SANGGUNIANG PAMBANSA NG MGA SIMBAHAN SA PILIPINAS

National Council of Churches in the Philippines

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MEMBER CHURCHES

- ✚ Convention of
Philippine Baptist
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- ✚ Episcopal Church in
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- ✚ Iglesia Unida
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- Association of Christian
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- Student Christian
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Philippines
- Ecumenical Church Loan
Fund, Inc.
- Lingap
Pangkabataan, Inc.

Dear Chairperson and Honorable Members of the Subcommittee:

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) is a fellowship of ten mainline Protestant and non-Roman Catholic Churches and ten service oriented organizations in the Philippines. It represents close to twelve million adherents who believe that the Christian faith must be lived out in the crucible of people's daily experiences. From its inception, the NCCP has been a channel for united witness to the Good News of salvation through its prophetic role on issues affecting the powerless and its active engagement with the people in their struggle for social transformation. As such, environmental protection and the issue of large-scale mining is one of its core advocacies.

Such an apostolate has led the NCCP to support the struggle of the people of Siocon against the mining activities of TVI Pacific, Inc., a Canadian mining firm operating in Mt. Canatuan, Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines led by Timuay Boy Anoy, the traditional and legitimate leader of the Subanon people. We congratulate the municipal officials for being in solidarity with the people in opposing TVI. We are inspired by the unity forged by all sectors in the community, both Muslims and Christians which some of the NCCP staff witnessed when they visited that far away coastal town in October 2004.

We are aware that TVI has managed to convince the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines to recognize the latter as a model of corporate social responsibility and as a "test case" that will, hopefully, pave the way for the return of foreign mining companies to the Philippines. The Canadian Ambassador has also encouraged the Philippine government to convince the Supreme Court to reverse its decision on the Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement provision within the Mining Act of 1995, which it has. We are also aware that TVI has been granted a tax holiday and one hundred percent (100%) repatriation of profits. We perceive this as irresponsible governance on the part of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's administration. It is a clear disrespect for the Subanon tribe's right to their ancestral domain.

Owing to the groundswell of the Filipino people's firm opposition to large scale mining activities of foreign mining companies, including that of TVI, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines continues to stand alongside the indigenous people and affected communities in our country whose rights are blatantly trampled upon.

We appeal to this august body to join our call to put an end to Canadian government support for TVI Pacific, Inc. and to repeal the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

(Signed) MS. SHARON ROSE JOY RUIZ-DUREMDES
General Secretary – NCCP