



Parliamentary Petition on Deteriorating Human Rights Situation in the Philippines, Mining and the Role of Canada

Ottawa, September 22, 2020 – MiningWatch Canada and the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP-Canada) have launched an electronic Parliamentary Petition in response to increasing extrajudicial attacks on civilians and human rights defenders in the Philippines since 2016.

“The Philippines is now one of the two most dangerous countries for those who defend human and environmental rights according to Global Witness,” says Patricia Lisson of ICHRP-Canada, adding that “this year the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ report on the Philippines found serious human rights violations, reinforced by harmful rhetoric from high-level officials against, among others, human rights organizations, lawyers, political and judicial actors, journalists, trade unionists, and religious groups.”

Canada is implicated in these rights abuses, both through the role Canadian mining companies play in the country and through Canada’s military aid to the Philippines.

Canadian OceanaGold’s copper-gold project in the village of Didipio, Nueva Vizcaya, has long been accused of serious human rights and environmental abuses. “In 2018, local indigenous people, who have peacefully opposed the mine for years, were falsely accused of sedition against the state, making them targets for extrajudicial killings, which have become so common in the Philippines,” says Catherine Coumans of MiningWatch Canada, “and then this year a large police force violently dispersed a peaceful and authorized blockade of a road to the mine, even though the mine has been without a permit to operate since June of 2019.”

Even as the human rights situation in the Philippines has steadily deteriorated, Canada has continued to provide military aid to the country. “Given the grave human rights situation in the Philippines Canada should not be selling the country military equipment and providing defense cooperation,” says Patricia Lisson of ICHRP-Canada, “Canada should add the Philippines to its list of countries to which it will not export military goods and technology.”

Canada falls short in protecting Philippine human rights defenders both at the consular level in the Philippines and through its corporate accountability mechanisms at home. “When some of the people who were falsely accused, and faced a real threat of extrajudicial killing because of their opposition to OceanaGold, sought assistance from the Canadian embassy in Manila their requests for help were not met,” says Catherine Coumans, “and at the same time we still do not

have an Ombudsperson in Canada who has the investigatory powers to compel witnesses and documents that are necessary to address complaints against Canadian mining companies.

The [electronic Parliamentary Petition](#) addresses these concerns raised by MiningWatch Canada and ICHRP-Canada.

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For background information see:

- [Background brief to the electronic petition](#)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 15 June–3 July 2020. [Situation of human rights in the Philippines: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.](#)
- [Global Witness report](#) of 2019 citing over half of all reported killings of rights defenders occurred in just two countries, the Philippines and Colombia, and that mining was the deadliest sector with 50 defenders killed in 2019.
- For more on mining-related human and environmental abuses see: MiningWatch Canada and Institute for Policy Studies. [OceanaGold in the Philippines: Ten Violations that Should Prompt Its Removal.](#) October 2018.
- For more on the violent dispersal of a peaceful and authorized blockade to accommodate OceanaGold see: [Global Civil Society Organizations Condemn Violent Dispersal of Indigenous Peoples' Mining Barricade in the Philippines.](#)
- For more on the 2018 targeting of Didipio indigenous villagers and their meeting with Canadian consular staff in Manila see: [Indigenous Rights Defenders Targeted Over Opposition to OceanaGold Mine, Seek Support from Canadian Embassy in Philippines.](#)