



Resource Development (Phils.) Inc.

NEWS RELEASE

Tribal Leaders Declare Support to TVIRD, Oppose Return of Illegal Miners



'They cannot return.' Subanen leaders *Timuays Casiano Edal* and *Lucenio Manda* (left and right, respectively) both from Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur, and *Isis Guilingan* of Sindangan (center) from Zamboanga del Norte show their solidarity and irrefutably express their strong opposition to reports that illegal miners from Balabag will operate again in TVIRD's 4,779-hectare MPSA area.

Bayog, Zamboanga del Sur / October 2013 – Leaders of the Subanen tribe in the provinces of Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur declared their unconditional support to the forthcoming mining operations of TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. (TVIRD) in Balabag, this town during a recent tribal council meeting. At the same time, *Timuays* Isis Guilingan of Sindangan, Zamboanga del Norte, along with Casiano Edal and Lucenio Manda, both natives of this municipality, also expressed their strong opposition to the reported plan of illegal miners to resume operations in Balabag, the ancestral land of the tribe.

“A lot of us saw how the illegal miners destroyed Balabag. A lot of our brothers experienced (being) treated like slaves in their own homeland. So why allow their return?” said Manda who is also a Sangguniang Bayan (SB) Member of Bayog.

Timuay Edal, a *Balian* (Subanen priest) disclosed that many Subanens had gone to Canatuan, the operating mine of the company.

“They talked with our brothers there and were told that they are enjoying the benefits provided by TVIRD which the Subanens here did not receive when the illegal miners (operated in) Balabag,” he said.

Edal is one of the oldest and respected leaders of the tribe. He shared that the *lumads* (natives) in Canatuan are receiving royalties as mandated by the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) on top of the basic services on health, education, infrastructure support and livelihood that they enjoy from the company.

“And many of them are employed while their children are sent to state universities and colleges through the company’s scholarship program,” he added, referring to TVIRD’s implementation of its Social Development Management Plan (SDMP), which is required under the Mining Act of 1995.

The company’s Canatuan mine is implementing the plan with an operational budget that is exceeded at times in order to adequately respond to the needs of the community.

Successful Canatuan model

TVIRD has operated in Canatuan, town of Siocon in Zamboanga del Norte since 2004 – first, its gold-silver project, followed by its current copper and zinc project in 2008. It is slated to wrap up its mining operations by the end of 2013.

Like Balabag, Canatuan was once overwhelmed by illegal mining operations that the company addressed through multi-stakeholder engagements and genuine support to the community, especially its indigenous hosts. It also implemented the proper and responsible management of Canatuan’s natural environment – a program that is acknowledged to be the best in the country.

In the wake of illegal mining operations in Balabag, the company foresees the need to use the same approach to environmental clean-up and rehabilitation as well as continuous monitoring and management, moving forward.

A firm resolve

“We will oppose the illegal miners’ plan. We will not allow their return. We have no reason to allow them to set foot again in our homeland since their illegal mining activities will only bring back destruction not only to the environment but also to our tribe,” said Timuay Edal.

Meanwhile, the company expresses that it has reason to be hopeful that it will be able to operate its gold and silver project in Balabag in the near future.

“We are the legal contractor of the government. We will mine in Balabag very soon,” said TVIRD Balabag Officer-in-Charge Col. Valentino Edang in the recent Subanen tribal council meeting.

Sitio Balabag of Barangay Depore has been the center of disaccord between the illegal miners and the tribal leaders who support TVIRD - holder of the Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) covering the 4,779-hectare area in Balabag. In 1997, the government issued the MPSA to Zamboanga Minerals Corporation, which later on sold its mining rights to TVIRD.

A shady past, a new beginning

In 2012, the provincial government of Zamboanga del Sur province produced an Executive Summary on the illegal mining operations in Balabag, revealing a host of unlawful activities that include the proliferation of illegal drugs in Balabag.

“Peace and order is unstable if we have illegal miners in our homeland,” said Timuay Manda who himself is a victim of an ambush that killed his young son in 2012. Earlier, Manda declared that he is strongly against this environmentally-destructive and exploitive form of business that thrives largely on child labor.

In October of the same year, the provincial government, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the DENR, and the Philippine National Police of the province dismantled illegal mining operations in Balabag, implementing a Cease and Desist Order (CDO) issued by the MGB.

Following the dismantling of illegal processing plants, Provincial Governor Antonio Cerilles announced it will file cases against them for environmental destruction and other violations of Philippine environmental laws, effectively setting a precedent that illegal mining operations will not to return to the province.

Sustainable development

Currently on its exploration phase, TVIRD has invested significantly on livelihood projects for the people of Bayog as part of its community preparations effort. The third class municipality is a recipient of the

cassava agribusiness jointly implemented by the provincial government of Zamboanga del Sur and the company. TVIRD has allocated Php5 million for the project as counterpart to the government's Php6.5 million.

According to Gov. Cerilles, 18 of the 26 barangays of the municipality have benefited from the program, which is divided into four projects: the Cassava Gahung-Gahung, the Integrated Rice-Duck Farming System, *Gulayan sa Kabahayan* and *Gulayan sa Paaralan*. The provincial government leads in the implementation of the project.

Aside from livelihood programs, TVIRD has contributed to the education of its children through infrastructure as well as the mobility of people and goods. It constructed school buildings, new roads and also repaired farm-to-market roads in several barangays of the municipality.

"We saw the big difference between TVIRD and the illegal miners who had been mining in Balabag for more than two decades. We got nothing from the illegal miners," said Edal.

Press Photos:



- 1 *Tribal leaders from Zamboanga del Sur and Zamboanga del Norte perform a prayer ritual harmoniously declaring their unconditional support to the impending mining operations of TVIRD in Balabag, Zamboanga del Sur.*



- 2** *Still on its exploration phase, TVIRD already invests extensively on responsive education for children in Bayog. It has constructed school buildings and has distributed school supplies to impact communities.*



- 3** *A public-private partnership between the government of Zamboanga del Sur and TVIRD introduced the cassava agribusiness to 18 barangays in Bayog municipality in 2012.*



- 4 *TVIRD improves commerce for roadside community residents when it constructs and repairs Bayog's roads that were once barely passable.*



- 5 *Gone are the days when illegal small scale miners destroyed Balabag's natural environment and enslaved the tribes in their own homeland.*



- 6 A scene to behold: Bayog, a third class municipality, looks to a new beginning when TVIRD soon operates in the area.

About TVI

TVI Resource Development (Phils.) Inc., is the Philippine affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration and production of precious and base metals from district scale large system, high margin projects located in the Philippines.

We are committed to exploration and mining practices that promote transparency, responsible stewardship of the environment, and the inalienable rights to life, dignity, and sustainable development of our host communities.

Connect with us: www.tviphilippines.com

Contact:

Lullie A. Micabalo

Public Affairs Manager

TVI Resource Development (Phils) Inc.

Email: lullie.micabalo@tvipacific.com.ph

Mobile: +63 917 883-7074