



GIUGKAT (Ravaged):

The Tampakan People's Struggle Against Open-pit Mining

Video Documentary Launch and Forum

Background

SOCCSKSARGEN is endowed with rich mineral resources and vast tracts of agricultural land. Local and multinational companies are targeting it for resource extraction that encroach and ravage ancestral lands. Based on 2011 data, 600,000 hectares – or 26% of the total land area – have been a mining target because of the region's profitable mining investment. Such extractive projects pose an immense threat to the environment and food security of the people of the region.

One of the controversial projects in the region is the Tampakan Copper-Gold Mining Operation of Sagittarius Mines, Inc. (SMI) which is said to be one of the biggest mining projects in the country and Southeast Asia. Its designated final mining area is around 10,000 hectares at the quadripoint of Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, Davao del Sur, and South Cotabato. It is estimated to extract \$1.1 Billion of primarily copper and gold ore reserves, which is an estimated 375,000 tons of copper and 360,000 ounces of gold extracted per year. Its project investment is pegged at \$5.9 Billion and is expected to amass a staggering \$840 Billion in income within its 20 years of operation.

The project undoubtedly poses a grave threat to the environment, lives, livelihood, and food security in the region due to the scale of operations and the extraction method used. It will destroy 7,000 hectares of closed canopy forest in Bulol Lumot, a farmland watershed in the region, and contaminate five major tributaries. It will poison the water of 33,000 hectares of rice fields in Koronadal Valley, disrupting the livelihoods of at least 7,420 farmers in Davao del Sur who depend on irrigated farmlands. The potential impact on food security in the area needs to be fully studied but the large amount of rice fields affected implies potentially devastating effects on many food sources for communities. In addition, the contamination of the watershed and tributary rivers implies potential adverse impacts on the aquatic life in the area and the wilderness in the forests that depend on the water, which can negatively impact the food sources for the community. These have prompted residents from various sectors including church groups, farmers organizations, civil society organizations, local officials, and environmentalists to strongly oppose these destructive projects.

Exposition of environmental destruction

The event will present a video documentation of the resistance of the people in Tampakan against the SMI, citing impacts as narrated by a farmer and a scientist, the church and organized people in the communities as well as the possible legal remedies for the people of Tampakan in a bid to stop the project and prevent the devastating consequences once the project becomes operational. Representatives from the local communities who stand to be affected by the project will speak at the event and provide an update on the struggle of the people in Tampakan to date. SMI is set to be operational in 2026.

The video documentation endeavors to bring to light the ongoing devastation to the environment and the people's livelihood by mining companies - a business largely facilitated by the Mining Act of 1995, which registers its 29-year implementation as law.