

Survival



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**We are the global movement
for tribal peoples' rights. We help
them defend their lives, protect
their lands and determine their
own futures.**

Honorable Jose Chaves Alvarez
Honorable Dennis Socrates
Governor, Province of Palawan
Second Floor Provincial Capitol Complex
Puerto Princesa City,
Palawan,
Philippines

17 June 2015

Dear Governor Jose Chaves Alvarez and Vice Governor Dennis Socrates,

Re: The ban on shifting cultivation and the expansion of plantations and mining in Palawan.

Survival International, the global movement for tribal peoples' rights, is extremely alarmed by the ban on Palawan tribes' traditional and sustainable shifting cultivation, known locally as kaingin. Tribal people are being specifically targeted and blamed for causing deforestation in the region, while at the same time the expansion of agribusiness plantations and mining is destroying their land and their ways of life, without their consent.

As you may know, in 1994 a ban against shifting cultivation was enforced by former Mayor Edward Hagedorn. It was only after an international campaign by Survival International that the ban was partially lifted, and the Batak and Tagbanua tribes were allowed to continue their kaingin under certain conditions. However, unfortunately, once again, the ban on kaingan is being forcefully implemented. This is creating food shortages and malnutrition amongst the previously self-sufficient tribes of Palawan.

At the same time that these sustainable farming practices, which have enabled the tribal peoples of Palawan to protect the biodiversity of their forests for generations, are being banned, large areas of indigenous lands are being illegally cleared for oil palm plantations. We have recently received alarming reports from Sarong and Sandoval, in the Municipality of Bataraza, that more than 2,500 ha of the indigenous ancestral domain have been illegally cleared by the Agumil company for oil palm plantations.

Survival urges you to immediately lift the ban on indigenous people practicing their sustainable shifting cultivation. We also urge you to stop the expansion of plantations

and mining on the land of Palawan's indigenous communities, without their free prior and informed consent, as enshrined in Philippine and International law.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Corry

Director

cc.

Dennis Socrates, Vice Governor, Palawan

Hon. Lucilio R. Bayron, Mayor of Puerto Princesa City

Hon. Mary Jean Feliciano, Mayor of Brooke's Point Municipality

Dr. Marlea Pinor Munez, Executive Director and Mr. Ruben S. Bastero, Regional Director RIV, NCIP

Hon. Ramon Jesus Paje, Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Dionisia Banua, NCIP Commissioner

Mr. Nelson P. Devanadera, Executive Director, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development

Mrs. Mearl Hilario, PCSD Committee on Tribal Affairs