



2025  
Report

# Forest Futures for Indigenous Peoples

*State of Indigenous  
Peoples Address*



**LRC**  
LEGAL RIGHTS  
AND NATURAL  
RESOURCES  
CENTER



# **Forest Futures for Indigenous Peoples**

*State of Indigenous  
Peoples Address  
2025 Report*

Forest Futures for Indigenous Peoples:  
State of Indigenous Peoples Address  
2025 Report

© 2026

Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center  
- Kasama sa Kalikasan / Friends of the  
Earth Philippines



The Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC) is a legal, research, policy, and advocacy institution that works for the recognition and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and upland rural poor communities to land and environment. LRC is the Philippines member of Friends of the Earth International.

Reproduction of this publication for educational purposes, especially for local communities, is permitted provided the source is fully acknowledged. This material, in whole or in part, may not be reproduced for sale or other commercial purposes.

Website: [www.lrcksk.org](http://www.lrcksk.org)  
Email: [lrckskfoeph@gmail.com](mailto:lrckskfoeph@gmail.com)

SIPA 2025 Report Team:  
J.L. Dulce, E.M. Taqueban  
Documenters:  
D. Brillo, C.A.R. Garin, G.R.A. Camelon  
Research Interns:  
F.L.D. Franco, C. Angala

Cover Photo: A ceremonial exchange of native tree seedlings among Indigenous Peoples and advocates. Lake Sebu, 2025.  
Photo by M. Dans/LRC

# Table of Contents

<b>01</b>	Executive Summary
<b>03</b>	Background
<b>05</b>	Introduction
<b>11</b>	The National Situation
<b>12</b>	Land and Environmental Conflict
<b>14</b>	Forest Grabbing
<b>19</b>	Agribusiness
<b>21</b>	Mining and Energy
<b>27</b>	Infrastructure
<b>29</b>	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
<b>32</b>	Militarization and Violence
<b>33</b>	State of the Nation Address 2025
<b>35</b>	The Indigenous Peoples' Agenda
<b>39</b>	References





## Executive Summary

The 2025 State of Indigenous Peoples Address (SIPA) Report puts a thematic focus on the mutual intersection of the situation of Filipino Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and the forest landscapes interconnected with their ancestral domains.

Majority of the Philippines' remaining forest cover and biodiversity corridors with indigenous territories, and are sustained by indigenous knowledge systems and governance. Aside from their culture, indigenous livelihoods, on the other hand, are deeply rooted in the forest economy.

Consequently, indigenous territories and forest landscapes face common drivers of pressure. The past two decades saw the decimation of 1.5 million hectares of the country's tree cover driven by agribusiness, mining, energy, infrastructure, and wildfires, with clear indications that the current unjust trajectory of the global energy and climate transition is responsible.

Inputs from the SIPA 2025 national gathering complemented by our latest iterative research confirm that these very same economic sectors are likewise responsible for at least 2.8 million hectares of land and environmental tenements that are potentially overlapping with indigenous territories—this size is 51% of the total land area of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) currently on record.

'Forest grabbing' projects comprise 39% of the area size of conflicts with CADTs, affirming the huge overlap between forests with indigenous territories. Fossil fuels, mainly due to the wide coverage of petroleum service contracts, are the second biggest at 27%, followed by mining (15%), renewable energy (12%), infrastructure (5%), and agriculture (1%).



Delegates from various tribes gathered around the SIPA 2025 opening ritual. Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by A. Villaruel/LRC

Policies such as the Sustainable Forest Land Management Agreements (SFLMA), the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT), the streamlining of permitting processes for mining and energy, and the Build Better More (BBM) were seen to systematically undermine environmental and social safeguards that aim to address the historic injustices that continue to be experienced by IPs.

The systematic violation of the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a cross-cutting trend found across all these economic sectors, rationalized by the national government's pursuit of enabling ease of doing business. Recent attempts by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) to overhaul the current FPIC guidelines, should they push through, are expected to weaken the right of IPs to self-determine consensus and decision-making, especially over extractive and destructive projects attempting to manufacture consent for their operations.

Widespread militarization and violence is also another over-arching trend, especially in indigenous territories where rights assertion and resistance to development aggression are strongest. The increasing securitization of the natural resource conflict not only afflicts violence to communities but also aggravates biodiversity loss and ecological degradation of the forest landscapes that serve as battleground.

President Bongbong Marcos' State of the Nation Address speech, for the fourth time running, had no mention once again of the plight and aspirations of IPs and was seen as just another collection of empty promises. Instead, Marcos touted investment and development priorities that were precisely the drivers of deforestation and displacement.

SIPA 2025 delegates outlined an Indigenous Peoples' Agenda that reiterated strategic calls for IP rights linked to the restoration and protection of 'Forest Futures.' They called for the recognition and respect of ancestral domains and their right to self-determination; the strengthening of indigenous governance over territories, landscapes, and natural resources; policy reforms and accountability measures; capacity building especially for indigenous youth; and urgent responses to human rights hotspots in indigenous territories.



SIPA 2025 is a national gathering of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) convened by the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC) that serves as a counterpoint to the annual State of the Nation Address (SONA) of the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

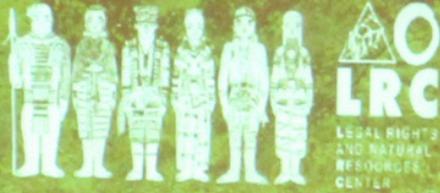
The SIPA 2025 was held with the theme 'Katutubo, Kagubatan, Kinabukasan / Indigenous Forest Futures,' which reflects the interconnectedness of indigenous territories with forest landscapes, and the heightening land and environmental conflicts they face. The previous year saw the world losing an unprecedented 6.7 million hectares (Ha) of primary rainforest loss, the biggest recorded in a single year over the past two decades (Goldman et al., 2025).

Indigenous territories play a crucial role in protecting forests, containing 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity and intersecting with 40% of all terrestrial protected areas and ecologically intact landscapes (Garnett et al., 2018). However, indigenous territories themselves face increasing pressures that undermine their ability to safeguard what are often called the lungs of the Earth, 60% of Indigenous Peoples' lands in 64 countries are threatened by industrial development that spans commercial agriculture, mining, fossil fuel, renewables, and urbanization (Kennedy et al., 2023).

Given this context, SIPA 2025 sought to collectively analyze the national situation of IPs, particularly the interface of their lands and rights with the state of forest landscapes, and the common challenges they face.

The gathering aimed to learn together about emerging 'false solutions' that are being peddled to address the burgeoning environmental and climate crises, which pose threats to ancestral domains and forests. These range from forest carbon projects, to unsustainable renewable energy development to mining for transition minerals.

Finally, the organizers and delegates developed a general program of action for the protection, restoration, and sustainable development of the ancestral domain-forest landscape corridors across the Philippines, as well as the promotion of IP's right to self-determination to achieve these ends.



# State of Indigenous Peoples Address 2025

*Katutubo, Kagubatan, Kinabukasan*

These lessons and calls to action were put into practice on the last day of SIPA 2025, when the national gathering joined the host tribes and local civil society based in the Kabulnan Watershed in a dialogue with key local government officials, calling for greater recognition of indigenous governance and rights within the watershed's management regime.

This report was produced through the documentation, case studies, and analyses made during the conduct of SIPA 2025, complemented by LRC's research on the economic, political, and socio-cultural conditions of IPs in the Philippines. Relevant literatures are included to complement analytical framing. Names and particular details have been omitted or changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

Teduray Timuay Labi bearing the bow and arrow used in the opening ritual for SIPA 2025. Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by A. Villaruel/LRC



# Introduction

The global struggle of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) for self-determination and territorial integrity characterizes one of the defining human rights and environmental challenges of the 21st century. From the Amazon, the Sierra Madre mountain range, to the Kabulnan watershed, indigenous communities are disproportionately impacted by climate change and large-scale development while standing as primary guardians of the world's remaining forests and biodiversity.

The situation of IPs in the Philippines presents a critical case study that illustrates the profound divergence between advancing legal frameworks and their implementation amidst competing state priorities. Derived from the discussions in SIPA 2025, this introduction explores how national policies, such as the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) project, the Low Carbon Investment Act framework, and the Social Forestry and Land Management Agreement (SFLMA), among others, intersect with global pressures of mining, energy transition, and infrastructure development, often at the expense of IPs and their rights.

The international framework for indigenous rights has significantly advanced with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), establishing the right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), territorial charge, and cultural preservation as fundamental principles (United Nations, 2007). The Philippines was an early regional leader with the passage of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 (Republic Act No. 8371), legally recognizing ancestral domains and mandating FPIC. It has been noted all too often, however, that while IPRA was pioneering, its implementation has been fraught with challenges.

For one, a meaningful FPIC process must be based on respect and equality, and crucially, it must include "acceptance of the Indigenous Peoples' right to reject developments" (Cariño, 2005, p. 20). In practice, the process often fails to meet this standard. Notwithstanding legal recognition, IPs and their rights are often subordinated to State priorities—couched as parts of the national agenda for development and security.

Compounding this challenge is a growing international practice that undermines the specific legal recognition of IPs. As noted in a 2025 UN Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples (UNSRIP)



**Datu of the Kirinteken-Ilentungen Menuvu traversing the contested woodlands within their Ancestral Domain. Bukidnon, 2024. Photo by J. Demigillo/LRC**

report, there is an "increasing practice, particularly among actors working on issues pertaining to climate change and biodiversity conservation, of conflating Indigenous Peoples with local communities, including merging the two concepts through the abbreviation 'IPLC'" (United Nations General Assembly, 2025, para. 56).

This conflation creates a "fundamental misconception that the rights of Indigenous Peoples and those of local communities are the same," even though the term "'local communities'... is neither referred to nor protected in the [UNDRIP]" (United Nations General Assembly, 2025, para. 56). This conceptual confusing pose a challenge in the Philippine context, where the distinct and inherent rights of IPs under the IPRA, recognized to be rooted in historical continuity, collective identity, and ancestral domain, stand to be diluted when projects or policies address groups as undifferentiated "local communities."

An example of this tension is the Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project, a World Bank-funded initiative administered by the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), that aims to subdivide collective land awards into individual titles (Department of Agrarian Reform, 2022). While framed as an effort to improve land tenure security for agrarian reform beneficiaries, the program poses a direct threat to indigenous communities where collective Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOAs) overlap with ancestral domains.

By promoting individual, alienable land titles, SPLIT undermines the communal land tenure systems protected under IPRA and facilitates the fragmentation and potential sale of ancestral lands without genuine community consent. This State-led development and land titling project imperils the collective dimension of indigenous land tenure, thereby eroding the very foundation of indigenous identity and survival; and pits one marginalized sector with another.

The global imperative for climate action, underscored by the Paris Agreement's mandate to align financial flows with climate goals, has created a new and potent vector of pressure on indigenous territories. While the Agreement represents a landmark moment by clearly establishing the need for financial flows to align with climate goals and mobilizing \$100 billion annually for developing countries, its implementation creates contradictions on the ground (United Nations General Assembly, 2023, para. 9).



A Menubo Dulangan family experiences night light for the first time from their solar micro-grid. Sultan Kudarat, 2024. Photo by J.M. Ferraris/LRC

Climate action has become a strategic priority for financial institutions, yet this finance has largely failed to support initiatives led by Indigenous Peoples or advance the recognition of their collective land rights (2023, para. 11). In fact, the UNSRIP posits that to achieve just transition, it must include the necessary "component of the green finance objective... to support Indigenous Peoples in securing their collective land rights and self-determination over their territories, which are instrumental for the conservation of biodiversity and climate change adaptation" (2023, para. 70).

The global push for a "green transition" further complicates this circumstance, often within frameworks that conflate rights-holders. While initiatives like the proposed Low Carbon Investment Act are framed as essential climate action with its market-based approach to attract critical investment and meet climate targets, the associated expansion of renewable energy (RE) infrastructure, among such, mega-dams, geothermal plants, and wind farms, have often been observed to replicate patterns of "green grabbing," dispossessing Indigenous communities of their territories or making their territories as conflict sites.

This dispossession is closely linked to the militarization of indigenous territories. In the Philippines, with many mines located in areas with insurgent activity, the state has militarized areas near mining projects, ostensibly to provide security (Capuyan, 2009; Carreon, 2009; Mora, 2009). What makes this militarization troubling is the concern that it aims to intimidate IPs into discontinuing their opposition to mining (Capuyan, 2009; Carreon, 2009).

This creates a vicious cycle: the government armed forces often justify militarization by framing IPs as potential insurgent recruits, a process of "othering" that fuels stereotypes and makes repression easier (Holden et al., 2011); a situation made even more possible by weaponizing laws such as the Anti-Terrorism Act (Republic Act No. 11479).



Mining and energy conflicts are typical examples of accumulation by dispossession, where they involve the "suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption" to open new fields for capital accumulation (Harvey, 2006, p. 153 in Holden et al., 2011, p. 148). International financial institutions often fail to treat IPs as rights holders rather as vulnerable affected peoples, resulting in inadequate safeguarding and the replication of human rights risks.

This condition is reflected in the UNSRIP report, "Typical human rights risks in the context of green financing include forced evictions and resettlement, lack of consultation regarding land use and decision-making, environmental degradation, limited information provided on the governance of natural resources and inadequate environmental and social impact assessments" (United Nations General Assembly, 2023, para. 11).

The contradiction is glaring when considering the formal and international recognition of the indispensable role of IPs in combating the climate crisis. At the climate COP, parties acknowledge the important role of IPs and their scientific knowledge for mitigating the crises of global climate change and biodiversity loss (United Nations General Assembly, 2023, para. 10). Scientific evidence, including from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), gives credence to the indispensable participation of IPs and supports their self-determination as vital to reducing climate risks (2023, para. 10). IPs contribute minimally to emissions and are custodians of vast carbon stores, yet climate finance and official development aid consistently fail to direct sufficient funding to preserve their ways of life, shield their lands from encroachment, or protect them from violence (2023, para. 11).

At the same time, instruments like the Social Forestry and Land Management Agreement (SFLMA), while designed for community-based tenure, operate within a constrained state framework. While SFLMA and similar social forestry programs can offer benefits, they often fail to address fundamental issues of tenure security for IPs. These instruments do not equate to the recognition of ancestral domain rights guaranteed under IPRA and can prioritize state-managed conservation or commercial objectives over indigenous self-determination (RECOFTC, 2017, p. 1). The implementation of such programs risk furthering the conflation criticized by the UN, as benefits or consultations intended for IPs under IPRA may be administratively blended with those for general local communities, diluting the specific remedial and protective measures required for historically marginalized Indigenous groups.



A village ensconced in the misty forest highland. Kalinga, 2024. Photo by M. Klarenbeek/LRC

This dynamic is helpful to unpack framed from the conceptualization of the “political forest” as introduced by Peluso and Vandergeest (2020). “Political forest” challenges the idea of forests as apolitical wilderness, instead, forests are continuously shaped by power, i.e. by states claiming territory, by experts designing management plans, and by the communities living within them. In Southeast Asia, colonial and national regimes were seen to use “scientific” forestry to declare areas “empty”—or considered as a terra nullius, invent “customary rights,” and methodically restrict community access, turning forests into areas of social control (Peluso & Vandergeest, 2020, p. 1089).

Moreover, the story of these political forests is also a story of violence. It reveals communities being pushed off their land, and persistent conflict over who gets to control these valuable spaces (Peluso & Vandergeest, 2020, p. 1099). This convention has evolved new modes that now includes “political conservation” through carbon market schemes and high-tech monitoring, but continues the exclusion of IPs and local communities (Peluso & Vandergeest, 2020, p. 1096-1097).

Central to these conflicts is the systematic erosion of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Processes are marred by intimidation, the deliberate creation of divisions within communities, a lack of accessible information, and the presence of state security forces. This erosion is compounded by significant barriers to Freedom of Information (FOI), which hinder communities’ ability to access critical documents like Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), project contracts, and finalized FPIC agreements. Without transparent and accessible information, indigenous communities cannot effectively participate in decision-making or hold corporations and government agencies accountable.

The experience of IPs in the Philippines resonates with a global pattern wherein legal recognition is consistently made subordinate to national economic and development agendas. This pattern is starkly illuminated in the climate finance arena, where the global recognition of IPs as essential climate stewards clashes with the on-ground reality of "green" projects that dispossess them. This pattern, understood through the lens of accumulation by dispossession, reveals how neoliberal policies enable the extraction of wealth from indigenous lands through displacement, environmental degradation, and the suppression of self-determination. The SPLIT project, low-carbon energy initiatives, and SFLMA programs, though differing in their objectives, collectively exert pressure on the communal fabric of indigenous land tenure and stewardship.

To align with both climate goals and human rights, a fundamental rechanneling of climate finance is required, away from large-scale infrastructure that replicates historical injustices and toward initiatives that support indigenous land tenure, self-determination, and knowledge systems. This realignment must be anchored in concrete legal guarantees and their meaningful implementation. Unless IPs' tenurial rights are upheld, FPIC is treated as an enforceable right with a corollary guarantee of meaningful access to information through robust FOI mechanisms, and mandatory social safeguards are in place, their hard-won rights will remain diluted and compromised. Only development models that truly respect, rather than undermine, the indigenous systems of governance and ecological knowledge will ensure their cultural survival and bring us closer to global sustainability.



The terraced landscape of the Cordilleras, whose idyllic peace is beset by multiple land and environment conflicts. Kalinga, 2024. Photo by A. Villaruel/LRC

## National Situation

The territories of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) are interwoven with forest landscapes in the Philippines. Ancestral Domains overlap with 75% of the country's remaining forest cover and 29% of the country's Key Biodiversity Areas (Bukluran, 2021). In our previous reportage, we estimated that these forests comprise 5.6 million Ha or 38% of all indigenous territories (Taqueban et al., 2022).

These forest environs helped shape indigenous cultures through a mutual interaction process between people and the environment (Memmott & Long, 2002). In the Cordillera region, the Ifugao people believe that many endemic trees harbor the spirits of their ancestors or Anitos (Camacho et al., 2015). In the Chontog forest management system of the Kalanguya and Karao people, the forest is seen as alive and responsive to the various physical, spiritual, and cultural needs of their tribes (Rabang, 2020).

Similarly, the Taboli Manobo people of South Cotabato believe there are Fu Tudok and other spirits who own the various aspects of the forest, from whom they need to ask permission before they hunt, gather, or plant in the forest landscape (LRC, 2025a). In contrast, the Tagbanwa people of Palawan believe there are evil spirits called Pahadlok dwelling among enormous mangrove trees, and therefore they rarely visit and stay long in mangrove forests (Fabro, 2022).

This interface between IPs and their forest environment since time immemorial produced indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSPs) that have formed effective forest management systems, such as the Muyong land-zoning system of the Ifugao people in the Cordilleras, (Camacho et al., 2015) or the Sulagad agro-ecological practices of the Teduray and Lambangian people in Maguindanao (FoEI, 2022).

The fundamental needs and concerns of IPs are rooted in the forest economy. A study covering five provinces in the country (of which three have significant indigenous populations) noted that majority of forest products collected in the rural economy went primarily to domestic subsistence, with 75% of surveyed households gathering firewood for cooking fuel (Wiebe et al, 2022).

A World Bank report showed that 52% of IPs in the Philippines are employed in agriculture (Perez-Brito & Belhaj, 2024). Furthermore, whether being situated within forest uplands or downstream in the watershed, agricultural production is reliant on the water provisioning and regulating functions of forests (Wu et al., 2021).



Lake Seloton, one of the major lakes at the headwaters of the Kabulan Watershed, Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by L. Dulce/LRC

The report further showed that among the identified top priority concerns of IPs are health, which 31% of surveyed IPs rated as second most important, followed by access to clean water, with 21% (Perez-Brito & Belhaj, 2024). With increasing global recognition that the vitality of forests plays a pivotal role in ensuring a healthy life (Konijnendijk et al., 2023), forest-based solutions are crucial to addressing the health and water needs of indigenous communities.

## Land and Environmental Conflict

This interdependence of indigenous territories and forest landscapes means pressures on one affect the other—and as recent trends would show, both are suffering from increasing pressures of extractivism and regulatory capture.

A global satellite tracking of deforestation pinpointed the Philippines as having incurred a loss of 1.5 million Ha of tree cover over the past two decades, including the loss of 200,000 Ha of primary rainforests (Sims et al., 2025). The ecological impacts of deforestation were acutely felt in the extreme typhoon and flooding disasters the nation faced this year, where devastation could be readily traced to upstream deforestation (Gera & Hutchcroft, 2025; Robles, 2025).

Over the same two decades, agricultural expansion is the leading culprit, accounting for a total of 1.39 million Ha of tree cover loss from permanent agriculture and shifting cultivation combined. This was followed by forest plantations and other logging activities (56,000 Ha), infrastructure such as roads, settlements, and urban buildup (16,000 ha), hard commodities such as mining and energy infrastructure (13,000 ha), and natural and human-induced wildfires (8,800 ha) (Sims et al., 2025).

We explored the further contexts of these deforestation drivers in the Philippines and compared them with our monitored trends in ancestral domains. We found that there are bigger threats and impacts beyond the direct forest loss: a total of at least 2.8 million Ha of tenurial instruments for these land and environment uses are in potential conflict with indigenous territories. This area is equivalent to 51% of the total land area covered by Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) in the records of the NCIP.

# Drivers of Deforestation, Drivers of Displacement

**1.5-M hectares**

of the Philippines' tree cover were lost from 2001 to 2024. These were driven by extractive, destructive land use changes.

**200k**

of this area size was primary tropical rainforest cover.



**1.39-M**

Permanent agriculture and shifting cultivation

**8,800**  
Human induced wildfires

**13,000**  
Mining and energy infrastructure

**16,000**  
Urban buildup

**56,000**  
Forest plantations and logging activities

**143,251**  
Infrastructure projects



**335,389**  
Renewable energy projects



**1.08-M**

Forest tenurial instruments

**761,000**

Oil, coal, and other fossil fuels



**37,032**  
Certificates of Land Ownership Award



**424,830**  
Large-scale mining projects



**2.8-M hectares**

of the same drivers of deforestation are also estimated to be potentially overlapping with Ancestral Domains. This is

**51%**

of the total land area of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADT) currently registered in the Philippines.



The M&S Inc. Coffee plantation encroached into Taboli Manobo territory. Lake Sebu, n.d. Photo by LRC

## Forest Grabbing

While logging activities contribute less to overall deforestation compared to agriculture, a look at the country's forest categorizations reveals that 7.3 million Ha or 46% of the total forest area, are classified as **production forests**.<sup>1</sup> Compared to natural forests, production forests are greatly simplified in biological complexity and structure, often characterized by genetically modified trees, single-species monocultures, and significantly altered ecosystem processes (Dellasala, 2020).

Currently, government-issued forest tenure instruments cover 1.7 million Ha (DENR-FMB, 2024). While these are supposedly managed through a multiple-use approach to balances economic utilization and environmental conservation, an analysis of forest greenhouse gas emissions particularly of **Community-Based Forest Management Agreements (CBFMAs) and Integrated Forest Management Agreements (IFMA)** reveals that both have produced significantly increasing emissions over time. (Fallarcuna et al., 2024) This indicates that deforestation is rising within these tenements and implies they are more extractive than sustainable in practice.

We found that approximately 1.1 million Ha (66%) of these tenements potentially overlap with CADTs of Indigenous Peoples. Forest tenements also comprised 39% of the total land area of monitored spatial conflicts with indigenous territories (LRC, 2025b).

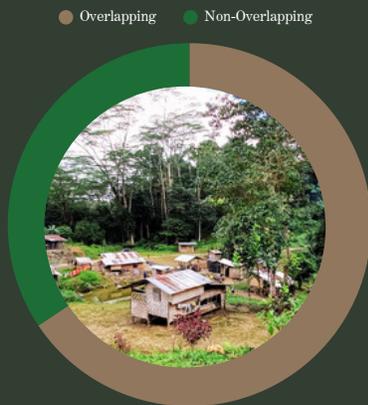
Beyond enabling forest uses that drive deforestation into indigenous territories, tenurial instrument conflicts also create unfavorable power dynamics and an unjust playing field especially for IPs (Perez-Brito & Belhaj, 2024) and encourage various government agencies and private groups to disregard or selectively respect IP rights in contested areas (Quizon et al., 2018).

---

<sup>1</sup> DENR Administrative Order No. 2019-22 or the Adoption of the Forestry Investment Road Map (FIRM) 2018-2028

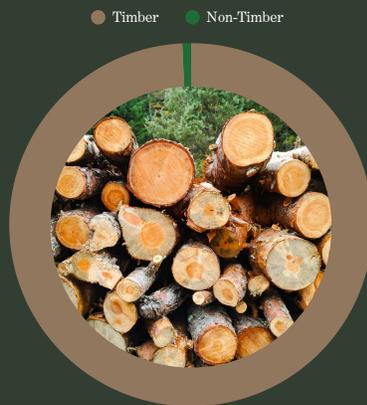
# The Political Economy of Forest Grabbing

Compared to the regenerative nature of Ancestral Domains, forest tenements are timber-intensive, carbon-positive, and exclusionary to the livelihoods of forest-based communities.



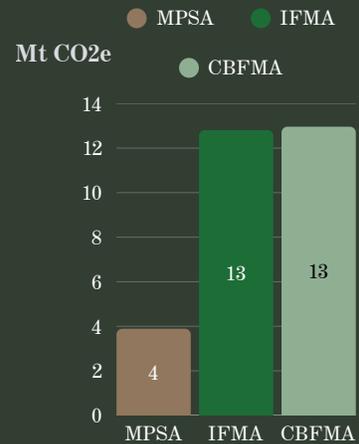
**66%**

of forest tenements potentially overlap with Ancestral Domains.



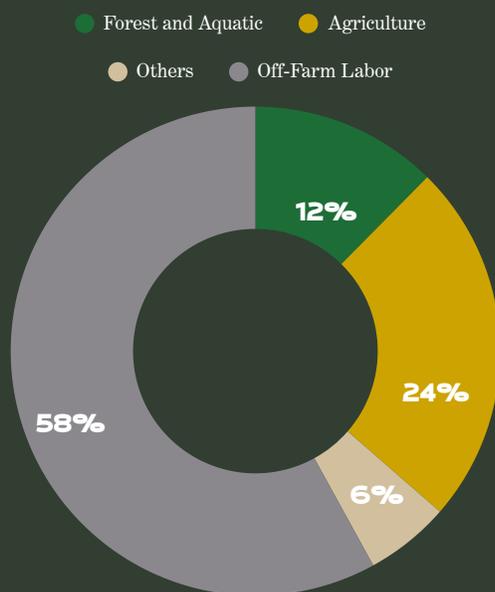
**99%**

of forest revenue came from timber-based products.



**26 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e**

carbon dioxide equivalent emissions generated from IFMAs and CBFMAs from 2001-2020



**Only 1 of 10**

Forest-based households actually generate income from forest and aquatic products.



To understand why forest tenements encroach on indigenous territories, we examined the economic motives of tenure holders. In 2023, the Philippines exported forest-based products worth P41.44 billion value, representing only 0.97% of the country's total exports. The top exported products were all timber-based, such as lumber, paper, charcoal, and other manufactured wood-based articles (FMB, 2024).

In contrast, Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) generated only P300.30 million in the same year—just 1% of the value generated by timber products. These NTFPs mainly included exports of almaciga resin, anahaw leaves, bamboo and anahaw poles, nipa shingles, salago fiber, and rattan (FMB, 2024).

This context helps explain the findings of a previously cited study on the forest economy, which noted that 58% of the surveyed forest-based households derive their income not from forest resource, but from off-farm wage labor, including day labor on others' farms, remittances, and non-forest and non-agriculture businesses (Wiebe et al., 2022). Only 24% were engaged in agriculture, and a mere 12.4% generated income from harvesting forest and aquatic products.

These figures demonstrate that it is not forest communities who benefit from the forest economy, but rather big businesses capitalizing on the multi-billion peso forest industry.

As the forest economy remains dominated by timber production and exclusionary to forest communities, forest tenements become enmeshed in conflict with indigenous territories due to their fundamentally opposed orientations on managing forests. Case studies reported by participants in the 2025 SIPA national gathering, as well as external reports documented throughout the year, affirm this adversarial relationship between indigenous communities and big businesses operating forest tenements in their territories. (See Box 1)

## **Box 1: Forest fortresses within indigenous territories**

**In the South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and Maguindanao del Sur Triboundary**, the 29,085-Ha IFMA No. 18-2007, held by Magsaysay & Sons Inc. (M&S), continues to operate illegal coffee and other cash crop plantations. This IFMA was illegally extended in 2016 without securing FPIC of the Taboli Manobo, Menubo Dulangan, and Teduray tribes whose lands it encroaches upon, a move achieved by consolidating it with another IFMA set to expire until 2032.

This IFMA, linked to the Consunji family, continues to operate despite a Stating Cease and Desist Order from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and a Writ of Kalikasan by the Regional Trial Court of Isulan. Its history of human rights violations, including the filing of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) against Indigenous communities and the massacre of eight Taboli Manobo leaders and members by Philippine Military, a crime for which justice has yet to be served.

**In Gutalac, Zamboanga del Norte**, the IFMA No. 021-A, held by the Sirawai Plywood & Lumber Corporation, was granted a Certificate of Non-Overlap (CNO) by the NCIP despite being clearly situated within the CADT of the Subanon people. This IFMA was also illegally extended without FPIC until 2032 through consolidation with other IFMAs.

The IFMA, also affiliated with the Consunjis of DMCI, employed more than 500 security guards, who according to the community, have instilled widespread fear. The community claims these guards are responsible for approximately 200 deaths among the Kolibugan and Subanon tribes, alongside numerous other violent attacks.

**In R.T. Lim, Zamboanga Sibugay,** DMCI operates both portions of IFMA No. 021-A and CBFMAs it has leased. The company has barred Subanon communities from accessing even their own private lands along the tenement peripheries, cleared native trees to plant invasive commercial species such as mangium. The agrochemical spraying over the IFMA tenement has also negatively impacted the rice farms of the community.

**In Pigcawayan, Cotabato,** an individual named Mr. Marfil used deception to apply for and obtain an Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) title within the territory of the Eruamanen Menuvu people. The ISF was later renewed for another 25 years without the tribe's knowledge and consent. The community discovered its existence only when they were barred from entering their own lands. Marphil also applied for a Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) for the same area, raising serious questions about the NCIP, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) for issuing or renewing these instruments despite the prior existence of the Eruamanen's CADT.

**In Don Carlos, Bukidnon,** the Kirinteken-Ilentungen Menuvu peoples are troubled by land titles issued to migrant settlers without regard for the indigenous communities living on "untitled" ancestral lands. The national government also issued overlapping CBFMAs and Certificate of Stewardship Contracts (CSCs), alongside older tenurial instruments such as the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim-Community Based Forest Management Agreement (CADC-CBFMA) and Certificate of Ancestral Land Claim-Community Based Forest Management Agreement (CALC-CBFMA) dating back to 1992. These instruments have been used by settlers to legitimize their encroachment, often also by leasing the land to agribusiness firms like Kennemer and its subsidiary, Green Arrow Agri-Ventures Inc. (GAAVI), for banana plantations, all under the guise of systematizing forest land management.

**In San Luis, Agusan del Sur,** IFMA No. 01-011 held by Provident Tree Farms Inc. (PTFI) and IFMA No. 03-2008 held by Casilayan Softwood Development Corporation (CSDC) overrode the right to FPIC, information, transparency, and prior public consultation, and other rights that emanate from CADTs of the Banwaon, Talaandig, and other Lumad tribes in the area, particularly approval and renewal processes.

Across these cases, local governing bodies are often complicit with the logging companies operating under IFMAs. Armed security, including company guards and state-linked Civilian Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) Active Auxiliaries (CAAs) function as a repressive apparatus that enforces the IFMA over all other land uses and rights.

**In Candoni, Negros Occidental,** a 6,652-Ha IFMA oil palm plantation under the Consunji-linked Hacienda Asia Plantations Inc. (HAPI) was documented in a recent International Learning and Solidarity Mission to be involved in human rights violations, labor exploitation, and environmental destruction, particularly affecting more than 300 farming households including Ati people.

The forestland-classified IFMA area is home to various farms planted with corn, pineapple, sugarcane, and vegetables, with some already inhabited and cultivated for over 60 to 70 years already. With police and military assistance, these farms were bulldozed while community members reported drone surveillance and indiscriminate firing of weapons. The FPIC rights of the Ati people were also not respected.



Signage put up by the M&S Inc. to assert their illegal occupation of Taboli Manobo territory, Lake Sebu, 2023. Photo by J.M. Ferraris/LRC

A crucial development is the DENR's latest policy<sup>2</sup> move to consolidate all forest tenure instruments into the **Sustainable Forest Land Management Agreement (SFLMA)**. SFLMAs allow multiple zones with various management strategies within a single area, touted by the DENR as a shift from the previous framework of offering a "single investment option for a single forest land" (Gozum, 2025a).

However, the SFLMA contains various contentious provisions, and alarmingly these align with current deforestation trends. The policy conflates forest carbon projects with protection forest management strategies,<sup>3</sup> operating on the assumption that carbon mitigation is an environmental enhancement activity that does not have potential adverse environmental or social impacts. But a global study demonstrated that forest carbon projects have actually led to a 55% decrease in ecosystem functions and benefits of biodiversity (Wang et al., 2025).

Forestlands designated for the development of timber production and renewable energy projects are exempted from the SFLMA requirement to ensure at least 50% of the area is restored or maintained as protection forests.<sup>4</sup> This incentivizes the expansion of sectors that are not only already identified as major deforestation drivers, but are also anticipated to grow exponentially as part of the global energy transition and carbon market trends.

The DENR also created a conversion and renewal process<sup>5</sup> that allows existing forest tenements to become SFLMAs. While it states that conversion is subject to a performance evaluation to determine the tenure holder's compliance with pertinent laws, rules, and regulations, it does not mention FPIC and prior public consultation as part of the process.

We see this as a deliberate move because the policy does not mention the NCIP's FPIC certification within the SFLMA application process.<sup>6</sup> While there is also a mention of LGU and EIS requirements<sup>7</sup> in the application, there is no mention at all of any prior public consultation requirement in the policy.<sup>8</sup>

This is seen as an attempt by the DENR to reinforce the notion that renewals are mere extensions that do not require reassessment and reconsultation, which violates the constitutional safeguard regarding the duration of any exploration, development, and utilization of natural resources.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> DENR Administrative Order No. 2025-22 or the Rules and Regulations Governing Sustainable Forest Land Management Agreement (SFLM)

<sup>3</sup> Sec. 5.5 of DAO No. 2025-22

<sup>4</sup> Sec. 5.8 of DAO No. 2025-22

<sup>5</sup> Sec. 6.2, 12.2, and 12.3 of DAO No. 2025-22

<sup>6</sup> Sec. 11.10, and 12.1 d. and f. of DAO No. 2025-22

<sup>7</sup> Sec. 11.13 and 11.15 d. of DAO No. 2025-22

<sup>8</sup> As required by Sec. 26-27 of Republic Act No. 7160 or the Local Government Code of the Philippines

<sup>9</sup> Article XII Sec. 2 of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines

A Kirinteken-Ilentungen Menuvu farmer points at a signage put up by banana plantation owner Kennemer. Bukidnon, 2024. Photo by J. Demigillo/LRC



There is also a dangerous incentive of providing a blanket exemption for established tree plantations from logging bans,<sup>10</sup> which would allow continuous deforestation even if a forest landscape reaches a critical level of degradation that might endanger indigenous communities and other communities further downstream.

**Forest carbon projects** were particularly examined during the SIPA 2025 gathering. A carbon credits mechanism established under the Paris Agreement<sup>11</sup> of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) allows countries and corporations to cooperate in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by letting emitters buy 'credits' from owners and developers of carbon sinks, especially forests, to offset the pollution they generate.

The global carbon forest industry is estimated at 25.8 billion USD, and is expected to grow up to 105.2 billion USD by 2034 ([GM Insights, 2025](#)). The Philippine government has long been courting investments from the carbon market but lacked the enabling policies to do so.

Aside from the SFLMA, there are presently moves to enact legislation and executive measures to finally lay down the rules of the game and kickstart the carbon forest industry in full force. There are currently six proposed versions<sup>12</sup> of the Low Carbon Economy Investment Act filed in Congress, which aims to legislate the governance framework, the carbon market mechanisms, and the systems and plans to implement carbon trading.

This makes the utilization of forestlands within indigenous territories complicit in the justification of continued greenhouse gas emissions at source (Llavero-Pasquina et al., 2025), which in turn contributes to the worsening climate crisis to which Indigenous Peoples are highly vulnerable (Ford et al., 2020).

<sup>10</sup> Sec. 16.7 of DAO No. 2025-22

<sup>11</sup> Article 6.4 of the Paris Agreement establishing the Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism

<sup>12</sup> House Bills No. 2055, 2481, 3685, 3820, 6407, and 6890 filed in the current 20th Congress



A Kirinteken-Ilentungen Menuvu farmer shows the contested boundary between the Kenemer banana plantation and their ancestral domain. Bukidnon, 2024. Photo by J. Demigillo/LRC

## Agribusiness

The conversion of forests into agricultural lands is the biggest contributor to deforestation, but contrary to mainstream notions that swidden agriculture is the main driver of forest to agriculture land conversion, tree cover loss from permanent agriculture is actually double the size of shifting cultivation's contribution (Sims et al., 2025). Government estimates put the area size of issued Collective Certificate of Land Ownership Titles or CCLOAs that overlap with timberland and protected areas at 126,975 Ha (DAR, 2020a), with at least 37,032 Ha overlapping with ancestral domains (DAR, 2020b).

On one hand, the massive land use conversion of agricultural lands into non-agriculture use, and on the other, increasing pressures from market demand are pushing agricultural activities to encroach into forestland.

Government data reveal that from 2012 to 2022, a total of 620,399.48 Ha of irrigated lands were converted into other uses (PSA, 2023). Studies have pinpointed urbanization as a major culprit, particularly the expansion of built-up infrastructure and proximity to primary roads (Araza et al., 2026; Del Moro et al., 2024).

Despite this, latest government data demonstrate that agricultural lands expanded by 224,000 Ha from 2022 to 2023. The top export commodities, namely coconut, banana, pineapple, rubber, and tobacco, contributed to 69,600 Ha or 31% of this expansion, while major cereals, rice and corn, contributed 26,700 Ha or 12% (PSA, 2024). The top three biggest crops, rice, corn, and coconut, comprise 81% of the total planted area in the country (PSA, 2024), and all operate mostly as monocrops and, particularly in the case of rice and corn, as agrochemical-intensive farming (Bello et al., 2025; Bauita et al., 2025; Magcale-Macandog et al., 2016).

Documented cases of indigenous communities attest to the socio-economic displacement and ecological harm they experience from the unchecked land grabbing by agribusiness of their ancestral lands (See Box 2).

## Box 2: Agribusiness encroachment into indigenous territories

In **Wao, Lanao del Sur**, communities of diverse ethnicities such as the Higaonon live in untitled lands and thus remain prone to land grabs and exploitation. Various monocrop plantations such as pineapple are accumulating lands in the municipality, as exemplified by the 26,000-Ha agro-industrial complex being developed by the Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA), a government-owned and controlled corporation.

These monocrop plantations are causing soil degradation, biodiversity loss, water pollution, siltation and landslides, pest infestation, and aerial spraying pollution. Farmers are compelled to lease their lands to plantations but are not informed of the potential harmful impacts.

In **Don Carlos, Bukidnon**, Collective Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CCLOAs) issued in 2011 have also been used by the previously mentioned migrant settlers and even factions of the Kirinteken-Ilentungen Menuvu peoples to contest ownership over the tribe's ancestral domain.

The Kennemer-GAAVI banana plantation harms the community members' health, livestock, and water sources with its intensive use of aerial spraying. A 2023 study by the Department of Health (DOH) confirmed the severity of the crisis, finding a 146% increase in suspected chemical poisoning cases between 2022 and 2023.

The World Bank-funded Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project of DAR is a major agrarian redistribution program. SPLIT seeks to resolve the conflicts between overlapping agrarian lands covered by the project and ancestral domains through its Indigenous Peoples Policy Framework or IPPF (DAR, 2025). However, by citing DAR's amended guidelines and procedure for SPLIT,<sup>15</sup> the framework ignores the Native Title Rights<sup>16</sup> of IPs and upholds the Regalian Doctrine framework by validating CCLOAs issued prior to the passage of the IPRA.

Beyond SPLIT, the standing policy that attempts to interface land tenure mandates and instruments of various government agencies is the Joint Administrative Order No. 1 s. 2012 (JAO No. 1) between DAR, DENR, LRA, and NCIP. As discussed in the previous year's SIPA report (Taqueban & Dulce, 2024), other agencies continue to disregard Native Title rights as well as CADTs that remain partially processed.

## Mining and Energy

Hard commodities, particularly mining and energy, have smaller direct impact on deforestation but poses broader risks with its bigger area overlap with forests and indigenous territories. Both commodities are especially entangled in the rapidly accelerating global energy transition, as so-called critical energy transition minerals such as nickel, copper, cobalt, silver, and rare earths are necessary to advance renewable energy (RE) technology (LRC, 2023).

As much as 27% of the country's energy transition minerals were found to overlap with key biodiversity areas, protected areas, and other biodiversity zones, while 27% overlap with Ancestral Domains (GW & KPNE, 2024). In our own latest projections, 424,830 Ha or up to 54% of all approved mining agreements' total area potentially overlap with Ancestral Domains (LRC, 2025b).

<sup>15</sup> Sec. 3.12 of DAR Administrative Order No. 02-2024

<sup>16</sup> Sec. 11 of Republic Act No. 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997



The scarred landscape of Mt. Bulanjao, where nickel mining has ravaged the sacred lands of the Palaw'an for over 50 years. Palawan, 2025. Photo by FOE Japan

The Philippine government currently has no publicly available figures on the area size and location of RE projects in the country, much less their spatial overlaps. Using a combination of available actual project data and projections based on computed averages, particularly for land-intensive RE types such as hydro, solar, wind, and geothermal, we were able to roughly estimate that at least 335,388.65 Ha potentially overlap with ancestral domains (LRC, 2025b).

The focus on RE also created an unintended effect: the fossil fuels industry continues to be perpetuated by energy companies and government agencies under the radar. At least one operating and two prospective coal mine blocks, along with a massive petroleum service contract in Mindoro, Surigao del Sur, and South Cotabato are seen as drivers of conflict in indigenous territories in these provinces (Gozum, 2025b; EJ Atlas, 2022; Gutoman, 2025), with an estimated 761,000 Ha of indigenous territories affected by these resource grabs (LRC, 2025b).

These commodities are linked to the most monitored cases of conflict with indigenous communities in this iteration of SIPA, raising the alarm over the rapid, unchecked expansion of these industries and the persistent lack of robust social, economic, and environmental safeguards (See Box 3).

### **Box 3: Unjust transition undermining indigenous communities**

In Kalinga province, a 265,487.00-Ha key biodiversity area corridor that is de facto protected by native title lands and Indigenous Peoples' community conserved territories and areas (ICCAs) is threatened by multiple projects representing the entire energy transition value chain.

Various large-scale mining projects, such as the Makilala Copper-Gold Mine and the 16,200-Ha Yamang Mineral Copper-Gold-Molybdenum exploration project, are racing to harness critical energy transition minerals to feed demand from RE development. Actual RE projects, ranging from the hydro-power projects along the Saltan, Mabaca, and Chico rivers, and a massive 200-Megawatt wind power project, are overlapping with indigenous communities without securing FPIC or conducting prior consultations.

These procedural violations are feared to escalate into worse harms as they feed into a pre-existing context of armed conflict in the region. Just recently, encounters between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and communist rebels under the New People's Army in Pinukpuk, Kalinga sparked incidents of harassment against red-tagged civilian activists in the province such as woman leader Elma Awingan-Tuazon of the Limos tribe.

In **Maporac, Cabangan, Zambales**, the National Grid Corporation Philippines (NGCP) is constructing transmission infrastructure specifically linked to solar power development in the region within the ancestral domain of the Ayta Abellen people. The NGCP has filed a complaint through a Writ of Possession to take over portions of the indigenous territory, invoking power of eminent domain without conducting a meaningful FPIC process.

In **Rodriguez and Antipolo, Rizal**, renewable energy projects such as the 600-Mw Wawa Pumped-Storage Hydropower Project and the 603-Mw Vena Wind Power Project are encroaching into the territories of the Dumagat-Remontado people and threatening diverse ecosystems.

The Dumagat-Remontado have reported that their traditional fishing grounds have dried up after the initial phase of the dam project was concluded, likely due to the project's water diversion. Meanwhile, critics of the Vena wind farm raise its overlapping with fragile limestone karst ecosystems within the Masungi Georeserve, conflicting with the strict protection zonation of the area.

In **Calinog, Iloilo**, the 28,300-Ha Jalaur River Multi-Purpose Project commonly known as the Jalaur Megadam continues its construction activities amid persisting opposition from the Tumandok people. At least 32 Tumandok families have been relocated after their homes were submerged within the dam reservoir.

Human rights defenders supporting the Tumandok struggle filed complaints against the Korean Export-Import Bank and Korean firm Daewoo Engineering & Construction before the OECD national contact point in Korea, for providing financial and technical assistance to the project despite the project's various violations of the KEXIM Bank's own environmental and social safeguards.

In **Mankayan and Itogon, Benguet**, various Igorot tribes have mounted opposition to large-scale mines prospecting copper and gold. The Ibaloi of Sitio Dalicno in Itogon have been sustaining protests against the Application for Production Sharing Agreement No. 103 of the Itogon-Suyoc Resources Inc., which covers a 581-Ha area within their ancestral domain. They filed a civil case challenging the APSA for lack of genuine FPIC.

Kankanaey villagers in Mankayan meanwhile mounted a barricade against the 534-Ha copper-gold mine project of Crescent Mining Development Corporation (CMDC) over threats posed to water sources for the rice paddies and vegetable farms of the 600 affected farming families. The Kankanaey people assert that no FPIC was secured in the issuance of CMDC's Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA).

In **Kasibu and Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya**, various actions against copper-gold mining have been mounted by Indigenous Peoples and other local community members with the support of the Diocese of Bayombong.

Together with Bishop Elmer Mangalino, representatives of the Tawali people's organization Didipio Earth Savers Multi-Purpose Association (DESAMA) alongside other local community petitioners escalated the 2024 Certiorari petition they filed against the lack of prior public

consultation in the renewal of Aussie-Canadian mining firm Oceanagold's Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) to the Supreme Court. The 8,314.42-Ha copper-gold mine has longstanding adverse impacts on biodiversity, water, and agriculture.

Meanwhile, Igorot people and other villagers under the Dupax del Norte Environmental Defenders (DDNED) staged barricades that prevented the entry of exploration equipment by British company Woggle into the forest watershed area. Woggle filed for an injunction against the barricaders to move forward in its operations across a 3,101-Ha area. This case constitutes a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP) as it diverts from the prior consultation and conflict resolution requirement into a costly court battle with the villagers.

In **Bataraza, Palawan**, for nearly fifty years, the Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation linked to Japanese mining corporation Sumitomo Metal Mining Co. has relentlessly mined out huge tracts of land and vegetation in Mt. Bulanjao, a sacred landscape and important source of livelihood to the Palaw'an people. Genuine FPIC was never secured by the project, which employed divide and conquer tactics to placate the tribe.

Water tests continuously and independently conducted over the last 19 years have in fact found dangerous amounts of the highly toxic and cancerous chemical hexavalent chromium in the community's river, exposing them to deadly health risks. Despite this, Rio Tuba and Sumitomo are now seeking to expand operations to cash in on the growing global demand for critical minerals necessary to enable the renewable energy transition.

In **Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro**, a fact finding mission found various energy projects entangling the indigenous territories of the Mangyan people, including fossil fuel projects such as the 8,000-Ha Bulalacao Coal Mining Project currently under Filipinas Prefab Systems Inc., and the massive 724,000-Ha petroleum exploration service contract covering substantial parts of the east, west, and southern areas of the island; but also at least five wind power projects covering an estimated 50,830 Ha of lands.

The Mangyan and their allied human rights groups point to these energy development projects as the motivation for aerial bombardments and sustained military operations in their ancestral lands, noting pronouncements of the Southern Luzon Command of the AFP as early as 2015 that their aim is to make the province 'conflict manageable and ready for further development.'

In **Cantilan, Surigao del Sur**, a recent international investigation revealed how water pollution, farmland degradation, and worsening floods are linked to the continuing operations of the 4,799-Ha nickel mine of Marcventures Mining and Development Corporation, feeding into the electric vehicle value chains of Tesla, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, BMW, and Audi.

Dynasties such as the political clan of House of Representatives Speaker Martin Romualdez were identified as connected to the mining operations, links that are seen as among the reasons the operations are able to constantly override regulations. In the process, the Manobo people and other environmental defenders in the area continue to face death threats, intimidation, harassment, and killings.

In the **South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and Sarangani triboundary area**, the B'laan people's ancestral domains are threatened by the impending Tampakan Copper-Gold Project, a 26,501-Ha (ha) mining project with a 9,605-ha Declaration of Mining Project Feasibility (DMPF) area. 74% of the DMPF overlaps with the ancestral domains.

The La Bugal B'laan Tribal Association Inc., an IP organization representing the communities

Coal mining operations of San Miguel-linked companies DAMI and SEPC. These mines are expanding without FPIC from the Taboli Manobo. Lake Sebu, 2025.  
Photo by A. Villaruel/LRC



from the Columbio, Sultan Kudarat area, and their broader network, the Columbio Multi-Sectoral Ecology Movement (CMEM), are opposing the Tampakan mine as it not only threatens their indigenous territories, but also a 121,000-Ha watershed complex.

Similar to the case of Oceanagold, the FTAA of the Tampakan mine was illegally extended in 2020 without securing FPIC and without conducting prior public consultations. Together with the Diocese of Marbel and various irrigator associations, La Bugal and CMEM filed a Certiorari case in 2024 against the extension, citing its undermining of constitutional safeguards.

In 2025, LRC and the Diocese of Marbel filed a subsequent petition for Certiorari and Mandamus to challenge the restrictive Freedom of Information (FOI) Manual of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), for preventing the public release of pertinent environmental documents necessary for communities to have an informed and meaningful decision regarding the mine.

In **Lake Sebu, South Cotabato**, the Taboli Manobo people are reforesting the headwaters of the Kabulan River Watershed Forest Reserve (KRWFR), a 116,451.83-Ha critical watershed area covering eight (8) municipalities in the South Central Mindanao area that connects three key biodiversity areas.

However, a 17,000-Ha coal mining corridor linked to the San Miguel Corporation (SMC), one of the largest business conglomerates in the Philippines, has encroached into the watershed and their territories. The coal corridor has consistently violated FPIC rights of the Taboli Manobo in its expansion activities. It is estimated that the mine's destruction of topsoil and vegetation has quadrupled over the past two years.

In **South Upi, Maguindanao del Sur**, a 3,566-Ha proposed Mineral Reservation Area (MRA) is encroaching into the forests and sacred places within the indigenous territory of the Teduray and Lambangian people. The MRA area is situated within the Teduray and Lambangian Ancestral Domain Claim (TLADC), a 208,258-Ha indigenous territory within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao that is a contested territory still unrecognized by the Philippine government since the tribe first filed their petition for tenurial recognition in 1996.

Forests were cleared in Infanta to give way to wind power infrastructure. Quezon, 2026. Photo by F.P. Bermejo



The Marcos government continued to pursue the **'streamlining' of mining permitting processes** (Philippine Resources, 2025), building on our previously reported government efforts to shorten the time to operationalize mining projects at the expense of community rights (Taqueban & Dulce, 2024).

A new executive order establishing a framework on critical minerals is also expected in the first quarter of 2026, seeking to lengthen the duration of mineral processing permits, hasten the disposition and activation of mining assets and agreements, and to truncate royalty tax negotiations with IPs (Mayuga, 2025).

The Marcos administration recently passed a new **mining fiscal regime law** to cash in on the transition minerals windfall (Lagare, 2025). Concerns have been raised that the law's margin-based windfall profits tax mechanism<sup>17</sup> will incentivize high-cost, low-income mining operations that require greater production output—and consequently greater extraction (LRC, 2024a).

While the policy includes transparency and accountability mechanism<sup>18</sup>, it is noticeable that earlier proposed versions of the law that, which sought to introduce instruments to address externalized environmental costs, such as a Natural Resource Trust Fund<sup>19</sup> or social and environmental funds for restoration, rehabilitation, and liability insurance<sup>20</sup>, did not make it to the final version.

Indigenous communities hosting mining companies can thus expect more aggressive extractivism and greater environmental destruction, but with even fewer trickle down of benefits and no guaranteed just compensation for damages.

Similar efforts to shorten the operationalization process for RE projects are also underway, such as the fast-tracking of FPIC processes<sup>21</sup> under the **Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop (EVOSS) Act**, and the establishment of **Green Lanes**<sup>22</sup> for expedited permit processing for RE, which account for 77% of the total P5.95 Trillion worth of green-lighted investments (Desiderio, 2025).

The railroading comes with a dangerous assumption that RE projects are clean and free of adverse environmental impacts, a belief reflected in the exemptions they enjoy. For instance, in the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act grants conditional permission<sup>23</sup> for renewable energy projects within buffer zones of Protected Areas. Likewise, the SFLMA guidelines exempt RE projects from the requirement to maintain at least 50% of the project areas as protection forests.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Sec. 7 of Republic Act No. 12253 or the Enhanced Fiscal Mining Regime for Large-Scale Metallic Mining Act of 1995

<sup>18</sup> Sec. 14 of RA No. 12253

<sup>19</sup> Sec. 11 of House Bill No. 2014 in the 19th Congress

<sup>20</sup> Sec. 8 of House Bill No. 2245 in the 19th Congress

<sup>21</sup> Sec. 15 of Republic Act No. 11234 or the Energy Virtual One-Stop Shop Act

<sup>22</sup> Executive Order No. 18 s. 2023

<sup>23</sup> Sec. 13 of Republic Act No. 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) Act of 2018

<sup>24</sup> Sec. 5.8 of DAO No. 2025-22



## Infrastructure

The Philippine government does not have a centralized database of its infrastructure projects, which makes infrastructure planning difficult even for government agencies themselves (Barro, 2025). Our latest monitoring estimates the total area size of infrastructure overlapping with indigenous territories to be at 143,251.13 Ha, composed of highway roads, railways, bridges, tourism, real estate, and dam projects (LRC, 2025b).

It is important to emphasize that this figure is conservative, as we know of high-profile infrastructure projects within indigenous territories that do not have publicly available environmental impact assessment data, such as the Chico River Pump Irrigation Project (NIA-CAR, n.d.).

The Marcos administration's Build Better More (BBM) program continues its predecessor's prioritization of infrastructure development, currently pursuing 209 flagship projects with a combined price tag of P10.52 trillion (Austria, 2025). The Philippine Development Plan<sup>25</sup> frames infrastructure development as oriented toward green, adaptive, resilient, and low-carbon infrastructure systems, but the monitored cases of conflicts with indigenous communities tell a different story. (See Box 4).

<sup>25</sup> Chapter 12 of Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028

### Box 4: Built brazen and misguided

In **Morong, Bataan**, a proposed U.S. ammunitions production and storage facility is sited within the ancestral domains of the Ayta Magbukon and is now a heavily secured area that prevents the tribe's free access. Reports indicate that the proposed facility is part of the US government's intent of developing a forward-based manufacturing hub in the Indo-Pacific, making the area a potential target of geopolitical conflict.

Conservation groups have also raised the risks it poses to the Subic Bay Rainforest, a designated Important Bird Area (IBA) where various threatened, vulnerable, and endangered avifauna make their home.

In **Capas, Tarlac**, Ayta people blockaded the tourism trail to Mt. Pinatubo, which is located within their ancestral domain, in protest of the longstanding exclusion of the tribe from the tourism revenue that benefit private tourism operators and local government units. In addition to tours, restaurants and lodgings are also on the rise in the landscape.

In **Bugsuk Island, Palawan**, the Molbog people originally opted to secure their territory through an application for a CLOA over 10,821 Ha of indigenous lands, after previous attempts to apply for a CADT stagnated in 2000. The Notice of Coverage (NOC) they received from DAR in 2014 was overturned in 2023 with claims that the island was unsuitable for agriculture, and their homes were threatened with demolition to give way to a 25,000-Ha proposed luxury eco-tourism project reportedly linked to San Miguel Corporation.

In 2024, the Molbog launched a people's barricade to prevent the entry of the tourism project. Since then, they have faced constant armed intimidation, SLAPPs, illegal arrests, and other forms of human rights violations.

The reversal of the NOC highlighted the complex conflict situations created by slow titling processes and overlapping mandates. Despite the IPRA recognition of the Native Titles of Indigenous People dating back to time immemorial, these are easily disregarded when CLOAs and other legal tenure instruments come into play.

In **Boracay Island, Aklan**, the 2.1-Ha CADT and 3.2-Ha CLOAs collectively owned by the Ati people face land disputes and recently escalating tensions with security forces of private tourism interests. The CADT, currently inhabited by 265 individuals comprising 55 families with a pending additional claim for a further 40 Ha of ancestral waters, faces a petition praying for the cancellation of the CADT that was supposedly resolved by the Supreme Court with a finality of judgment in 2019, but remains unduly delayed to date.

The CLOAs, meanwhile, have been subjected to administrative petitions before the DAR in 2023 that caused their cancellation. In 2024, security forces from the private claimants forcefully occupied and fenced off portions of one of the CLOAs. In 2025, the same security force attempted to evict Ati people from another CLOA.

In **Abra de Ilog, Mindoro**, the Iraya-Mangyan face a highly securitized 30-Ha land grab from Pieceland Corporation, a real estate developer that fenced the land, preventing Mangyan residents from accessing food and separating them from their families. The tribe continuously faced harassments, surveillance, stolen or killed livestock, warrantless arrests, and torture by the police.

In **Rizal and Quezon provinces**, the Dumagat people who continue to resist the 9,318-Ha Kaliwa Dam project also continuously experienced various human rights violations ranging from harassment, hamletting, and red-tagging. Among them was Viole Dela Cruz, wife of Randy Dela Cruz who were among those killed by simultaneous military-police operations in the 2021 'Bloody Sunday' massacre in the Southern Tagalog region. Viole is pursuing legal action against the military personnel who murdered her husband.

In **Don Carlos, Bukidnon**, a 149-Ha domestic airport continues to be constructed in an area that overlaps with the CADT of the Kirinteken-Ilentungen Menuvu people without genuine FPIC.



## Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

A cross-cutting trend across the previous discussions is the national government's methodical denial of FPIC rights throughout the year. We saw the override of agreement renewal processes by DENR across its forest and mineral tenements, treating them as mere extension instead of constitutionally guaranteed reckoning points, and the curtailment of FPIC durations especially in mining and energy, in the name of ensuring ease of doing business.

Since last year, there have been continuing efforts by the NCIP to overhaul the omnibus guidelines for FPIC. Various indigenous groups and their supporters raised the alarm over the fast-tracked consultation process for the new guidelines itself, which denied the right to consultation and meaningful participation of IPs (LRC, 2024b).

After a year of silence from the NCIP on what the status of the guidelines, advocates were once again notified of a renewed consultation with a new version of the draft guidelines on November 6, 2025, using the same modus of short notices, limited circulation of invites, and other communication difficulties. After finally obtaining a copy of the latest draft, we initially reviewed and found the following major changes:

**01** The scope of the right to FPIC is narrowed down to exploration, development, and utilization of natural resources as manifested through agreements, licenses, and permits.<sup>26</sup> Natural resources are constitutionally defined<sup>27</sup> to cover public lands, waters, minerals, coal, petroleum and other mineral oils, energy, fisheries, forests, timber, and biodiversity, among others.

As was illustrated in the previously discussed cases of spatial conflicts with indigenous territories, there are many other types of projects that do not utilize natural resources but nevertheless have significant adverse impacts on the rights of IPs, such as carbon credits, tourism, and military activities, among others.

<sup>26</sup> Sec. 2 of the proposed 2025 Rules and Procedures on the Conduct of Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) Process

<sup>27</sup> Article XII Sec. 2 of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines

Even in the EIS system, there are loopholes where activities categorized as environmental enhancement can still undermine indigenous governance and rights, or even disrupt the environment, as was in the case of the Manila Bay Dolomite Beach Project (Pascasio, 2020).

**02** **Some of the NCIP's duties and responsibilities in the process have been watered down.** The Guidelines have been stripped of its Objectives, Declaration of Policy, and Operating Principles, which upheld operational frameworks ensuring empowerment, consensus-building, and the primacy of customary law, among others.<sup>28</sup> They also removed what was previously provided for as detailed duties and functions of the NCIP during the Field-Based Investigation (FBI), the FPIC proper, and the FPIC Report Regional Review.<sup>29</sup>

**03** **Much of the responsibility for operationalizing the FPIC process has been transferred to the Project Proponents applying for FPIC,** including public postings, the conduct of community assemblies (CAs), all financial and logistical costs, and the writing of the FPIC report itself, among others.<sup>30</sup> This puts the FPIC process at risk of regulatory capture, similar to how Social Development Management Programs (SDMPs) of mining companies lack safeguards against eventually replacing government spending for social services (Ragos, n.d.).

**04** **On the other hand, the NCIP was also granted particular powers that potentially constitute overreach.** NCIP has been given *motu proprio* powers<sup>31</sup> to initiate the FPIC process. While this is likely intended to safeguard against passivity or active circumvention by other regulatory agencies or project proponents, it might also be leveraged to initiate the process contrary to the will of the indigenous communities themselves. The NCIP FPIC Team was also given a direct role in the negotiations which, despite the qualifier that their participation is "for the benefit of the ICCs/IPs to ensure their full protection and guidance," still violates the IPRA's articulation of FPIC as a process that is "free from any external manipulation."<sup>32</sup>

**05** **The role of customary governance by indigenous political structures has been heavily stripped down.** Tribal elders/leaders, whose mandate comes from the indigenous political structure, are no longer included in FBI and FPIC Teams and are instead replaced by Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representatives (IPMR).<sup>33</sup> IPMRs are not required by policy to come from the customary governance structures of IPs,<sup>34</sup> and the position has been known to be vulnerable to political patronage (Rovillos & Dacquigan, 2024).

Duly authorized representatives of the IPs are now also allowed to negotiate in place of the bona fide elders/leaders of the tribe.<sup>35</sup> In the same vein, the NCIP seeks to establish a Trust Fund<sup>36</sup> supposedly to hold the financial benefits, royalties, and other monetary entitlements accruing to the IP communities. This removes fiscal authority from the IPs, conflicting with the recent Supreme Court ruling<sup>37</sup> that limits government control over indigenous trust funds.

---

<sup>28</sup> Sec. 2-4 of NCIP Administrative Order No. 3 s. 2012 or the Revised Guidelines on Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and Related Processes of 2012

<sup>29</sup> Sec. 9, 17, and 18 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>30</sup> Sec. 13, 16, 17, and 26 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>31</sup> Sec. 3 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>32</sup> Sec. 3 (g) of RA 8371

<sup>33</sup> Sec. 5 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>34</sup> Sec. 8 of NCIP Administrative Order No. 1, s. 2021 or the Revised National Guidelines for the Mandatory Representation of Indigenous Peoples in Local Legislative Councils and Policy-making Bodies

<sup>35</sup> Sec. 19 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>36</sup> Sec. 36 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>37</sup> *Corvera-Cirunay & De Guzman v. COA Chair Cordoba et al.*, G.R. No. 278177. May 20, 2025



Delegates from various tribes discussed common trends of FPIC violations in their respective forest landscapes during the SIPA 2025 Gathering, Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by A. Villaruel/LRC

## 06

**The FPIC process has been greatly shortened, imposing upon the right of IPs to self-determine according to their customary laws and traditional decision-making.**<sup>38</sup> The entire FPIC process is now limited to just 30-45 days, depending on the NCIP's determination of the applicant project's scale of impact.<sup>39</sup> Previous mechanisms such as the Pre-FBI Conference and the Final Review of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) by the NCIP Legal Affairs Office (LAO) have been removed,<sup>40</sup> and the minimum required number of community assemblies (Cas) to be conducted is reduced from two to just one.<sup>41</sup>

The Guidelines also particularly subsume the FPIC process to laws that accelerate government services and procedures, such as the EVOSS.<sup>42</sup> The intention of EVOSS is to shorten energy permit applications, but FPIC is not a mere permitting process but rather a constitutionally guaranteed right<sup>43</sup> that cannot be abridged by mere interests of business efficiency.

## 07

**The categorization of projects applying for FPIC into extractive/intrusive, large-scale and non-extractive, small-scale has been reconstituted into "High Impact" and "Low Impact" categories,** introducing different procedures, timelines, signature requirements, and MOA requirements based on area size, resource use, and project life.<sup>44</sup> The categorization greatly departs from the previous basis of determination, which was based on scale of impact on IP rights, such as on whether the project might lead to displacement and relocation of IPs, the disruption of traditions, customs, and ceremonies, or to the conduct of military activities, among others.<sup>45</sup>

## 08

**The MOA as an instrument of accountability has been watered down.** Minor changes are now allowed without renewed FPIC if the LAO finds them "purely administrative and beneficial."<sup>46</sup> Since what constitutes minor changes is not clearly defined, it can be interpreted in an overbroad manner to the detriment of IP rights. Previously mandated safeguards in the MOA on risk mitigation, transparency mechanisms on fund disbursements, measures for IP rights and values protection, and disaster assistance have been removed.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Sec. 2 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>43</sup> Article II Sec. 22, Article XII Sec. 5, and Article XIV Sec. 17 of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines

<sup>40</sup> Sec. 10, 11, of NCIP A.O. No. 3 s. 2012

<sup>41</sup> Sec. 17 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>42</sup> Sec. 2 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>43</sup> Article II Sec. 22, Article XII Sec. 5, and Article XIV Sec. 17 of the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines

<sup>44</sup> Sec. 14-15 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>45</sup> Sec. 19 of NCIP A.O. No. 3 s. 2012

<sup>46</sup> Sec. 43 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules

<sup>47</sup> Sec. 33 of the proposed 2025 FPIC Rules



Police forces violently dispersed the anti-mining barricade in Dupax del Norte to give way to the exploration equipment of British firm Woggle. Nueva Vizcaya, 2026. Photo by Altermidya

The passage of this proposed new FPIC Guidelines will surely heighten land, social, and environmental conflicts in indigenous territories, and further disempower indigenous communities from asserting their indigenous knowledge and governance over the forest landscapes they protect.

## Militarization and Violence

Another overarching trend is the persisting militarization and violence in indigenous territories, especially where IPs are actively asserting their rights and resisting the encroachment of development aggression.

A study found that war-torn and other conflict-afflicted biodiversity areas across the Philippines exhibited lower species richness, a lesser presence of wildlife, and reduced forest cover (Hilario-Husain et al., 2024). The study posited that security risks caused by socio-political conflicts prevent biodiversity and natural resources monitoring and protection measures from being conducted in affected areas.

This ties to the lived realities of IPs where militarization affects their ability to exercise their rights and governance over their forest landscapes. A systematic review of over 169 research publications found that most studies presenting positive outcomes for both social wellbeing and environmental conservation come from cases where IPs and other local communities play a central role through their decision making and tenurial rights, and posited that inattention to the customary tenure and rights of IPs is damaging to conservation goals (Dawson et al., 2021).

Despite this, the Philippine government continues to pursue the securitization of environmental and natural resource sectors, creating conflict with indigenous territories. A recent US Department of State (2024) report noted that Investment Defense Forces, composed of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and AFP-supported paramilitary groups, continue to protect various mining, agribusiness, and other corporate interests in areas considered vulnerable to attacks from communist rebels.

It is therefore not surprising that the Philippines is once again Asia's deadliest country for environmental defenders for the 12th consecutive year (Geronimo, 2025).



SIPA 2025 delegates watching the ongoing SONA speech of Pres. Marcos. Not a single mention of Indigenous Peoples were heard. Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by A. Villaruel/LRC

## State of the Nation Address 2025

The SIPA 2025 delegates once again listened to the SONA speech of Pres. Bongbong Marcos, already the fourth of his term. The collective response was that, despite the various indigenous territories everywhere in the nation being besieged by various development aggression projects, their plight and demands were still nowhere to be found in the present administration's reckoning.

SIPA Delegates raised that much of the investment and development programs highlighted—solar, wind and renewable energy; coconut farms; critical minerals; road networks and infrastructure; and CLOA distribution—are all major drivers of deforestation and conflict in indigenous territories. There was no mention of any safeguards to protect community rights, conserve the environment, and ensure a fair distribution of benefits.

Marcos announced that there are no longer any remaining guerrilla groups in the country, and that police, military, and former rebels in the BARMM continue to cooperate to maintain peace and order. SIPA Delegates lamented that this so-called peace was not felt at the ground level—in BARMM, lawless violence linked to political interests over land and natural resources continues to drive the killings of Non-Moro Indigenous Peoples; elsewhere, military and paramilitary groups themselves are linked to violence against communities, oftentimes still using the communist insurgency in the countryside to justify red-tagging and militarization.

Despite the many touted social and economic programs, SIPA delegates said these did not significantly address the widespread poverty and exclusion experienced by IPs. Some programs, such as the 4Ps conditional cash transfer, were observed to still be used for political patronage. No gainful employment awaits even those who graduate from scholarship programs, reinforcing the impoverishment of IPs and driving the selling of lands to exploitative, destructive economic interests.

The grand promise of cracking down on corruption in flood control projects made SIPA delegates wonder why one of the most obvious solutions, the restoration of the country's forests, was never mentioned. But the rhetoric on corruption resonated with them, with a young Kirinteken-Ilentungen Menuvu woman saying the entirety of the Philippine government's corruption was not covered enough in the speech. An Igorot woman leader pointed out that the Marcos administration itself is not without sin, as the practice of ghost projects continued under their administration.

As the Marcos government enters into its last half-term, it was raised that this iteration of the SONA is still a package of empty promises. Actual solutions were still nowhere to be found.

A Timuey from the Erumanen ne Menuvu tribe warned that the fact that not a single mention of IPs was made in Pres. Marcos' SONA speech meant that IPs are implicit targets by the government's machinations. The Timuey urged all SIPA delegates to sharpen their thinking in confronting the challenges of the State of the Nation as they would with two traditional weapons—as an arrow that sees and reaches far, and as a spear that makes decisive blows.



A young Higaonon woman leader bearing a leaf placard with a message of hope for our common future during SIPA 2025. Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by A. Villaruel/LRC

# Indigenous Peoples' Agenda

The present state of Indigenous Peoples is a 'Fortress World' of division, exclusion, and authoritarianism (Schnabel & Tantengco, 2025) that perpetuates historic injustices and leads to ecological collapse. It is a world where indigenous communities are besieged by corporations and government bodies, and pressured into disputes with other local communities and even fellow IPs themselves.

The SIPA 2025 Gathering aspired for the recognition and respect of Indigenous Peoples' territories and rights, which are seen as inextricable and synergistic with the protection and restoration of the forest landscapes that mutually reinforce their lands and heritage. This reflects a pursuit of a 'Forest World' (Schnabel & Tantengco, 2025) that recognizes a better world is possible where equity, inclusivity, and diversity is foundational, and which leads to a genuinely sustainable economy and society.

**Recognize and respect Ancestral Domains and other Indigenous Territories, and the Indigenous Peoples' Right to Self Determination.** Indigenous territories are globally renowned as among the most effective protection mechanisms of the world's remaining forest landscapes (IPBES, 2020). Towards this end, the issuance and registration of pending CADT claims and the delineation of overlapping tenurial instruments must be fast-tracked.

Government development plans must be harmonized with Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans (ADSDPPs), Community Conservation Plans (CCPs), or other forms of customary plans for indigenous territories. Where such plans are absent, there must be adequate support given to indigenous communities to develop these blueprints.

FPIC rights must be strengthened as a specially protected right instrumental in delivering economic, social, and environmental justice to IPs, and helping ensure the highest standards of prior socio-cultural and ecological assessment of development projects and programs.



A Taboli Manobo Datu points to the Balik Lasang or reforestation area of their tribe. Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by B. Sarmiento/Mindanews

**Strengthen Indigenous Peoples' governance over indigenous territories, forest landscapes, and natural resources.** Indigenous governance is characterized by context-adaptive mechanisms for collective leadership, conflict resolution, and livelihood development (Buendia et al., 2006). The customary Indigenous Political Structures (IPS) of tribes must be restored and revitalized, unfettered by external influences of patronage politics and neocolonial extractivism, and effectively interfaced with mainstream governance.

Cognizant that culture is not petrified and is constantly dynamic and innovating, best practices must be derived from the experience of various IPS and synthesized with global frameworks such as rights-based and ecosystem-based approaches.

A continuing example is the Indigenous Peoples Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (IPBSAP), a biodiversity protection and management blueprint for Indigenous Peoples and by Indigenous Peoples patterned after the 23 targets outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), the latest international roadmap by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for restoring biodiversity (IPBC, 2024).

Community organizing must be strengthened across all tribes and indigenous movements, acknowledging that only through empowered and consolidated indigenous communities can the hard-fought rights of IPs be asserted and enforced.

**Advocate for policy and governance reforms and accountability.** While the Philippines was among the first countries in the world to legislate the protection of the rights of IPs through the IPRA, there remain serious gaps in law and jurisprudence that undermine the full enjoyment of these rights 38 years after its passage (Hatta et al., 2024). Longstanding efforts to enact proposed laws on indigenous rights and natural resource governance must be decisively expedited.



SIPA 2025 delegates during the ceremonial seed exchange. Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by A. Villaruel

Chief of these are the 'Green Bills' advocated by a broad network of civil society groups—the Alternative Minerals Management Bill,<sup>48</sup> the Indigenous Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCA) Bill,<sup>49</sup> the National Land Use Act,<sup>50</sup> and the Sustainable Forest Management Act.<sup>51</sup> This set of 'greenprints' aim to create a harmonized spatial planning and governance system for forest landscapes and natural resources, with indigenous governance strongly represented at the core.

There are also existing policies and mechanisms covering the country's watershed forest areas that can be harmonized with the IPRA, which can be maximized at the territorial level (LRC, 2023b).

The NCIP and DENR, as well as their counterparts MIPA and MENRE in the BARMM region, were identified as primary targets for advocacy engagement. The NCIP has been described as having strayed from its mandate to "promote and protect the rights, interest, and well-being of ICCs/IPs."<sup>52</sup> SIPA delegates lamented the NCIP's lack of effective and meaningful response and actions to the plethora of rights violations IPs report to them. The agency has been consistently condemned as "tribal dealers" who "manufacture consent" for mining and other corporate interests (Asuncion et al., 2022).

The DENR, meanwhile, has been condemned for a wide range of sins of commission and omission, from continuously issuing conflicting mineral agreements and other tenurial instruments that encroach into indigenous territories, to the stalling on their issuance of permits for NTFPs.

Among the actions considered by SIPA delegates are lobbying, strategic litigation, and generating public pressure through information, education, and communication (IEC) campaigns.

**Build the capacities of indigenous movements, especially of indigenous youths.** To contribute to the legal empowerment and political formation of the current and next generation of indigenous leaders, SIPA delegates called for a sustained and iterative paralegal training program that will help indigenous communities establish and maintain community paralegal teams to monitor and document violations of IP rights and environmental laws.

<sup>48</sup> House Bill No. 1852 under the 20th Congress

<sup>49</sup> House Bills No. 5761 and 1586 under the 20th Congress

<sup>50</sup> House Bill No. 2130 under the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress, among other filed versions

<sup>51</sup> House Bill No. 2905 under the 20th Congress, among other filed versions

<sup>52</sup> Sec. 38-39 of RA 8371



Indigenous youths share a light moment with their elders after the opening ritual of the SIPA 2025 Gathering. Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by A. Villaruel/LRC

In particular, leadership trainings among indigenous youths as the second line of leaders after the current IPS leaders is seen as an important focus, emphasizing that the indigenous and forest futures we seek today, in the final analysis, belong to the youth. From using social media to promote public education and harness protections for their territories (Ortega & França, 2021) to bringing innovative skills, knowledge, and training to the territories (Sarigumba et al., 2023), the role of indigenous youth is recognized as indispensable.

A cross-exchange among indigenous youth groups hailing from the different tribes of the country was identified as an important way forward to let them learn from each other's distinct experiences and abilities.

**Respond to urgent human rights situations besetting indigenous communities.** Hotspots of conflict and violence are oftentimes the areas where the assertion and resistance of indigenous movements are at their peak—and consequently elicit the most violent retaliations. The Teduray and Lambangian people in the BARMM region have called for international attention to the continuing spate of killings in their territories, the deadliest hotspot with at least 103 NMIPs killed since the signing of the peace deal between the Philippine Government and the Moro-Islamic Liberation Front (Cabreza, 2025).

Aside from BARMM, other reported and monitored conflict hotspots because of securitization and militarization are the islands of Mindoro and Negros (Rodriguez, 2025), the island of Bugsuk in Palawan (Anda, 2025), the South Cotabato-Sultan Kudarat-Maguindanao del Sur tri-boundary (LRC, 2025a), and the province of Kalinga (Umil, 2025), among others.

Advocates and concerned members of the public for Indigenous Peoples, environment, and human rights from the Philippines to the rest of the world are urged to bear witness, share solidarity, and mobilize support for these indigenous territories facing the most atrocious attacks against their rights.



## References

SIPA 2025 delegates in the action planning workshop. Lake Sebu, 2025. Photo by A. Villaruel/LRC

Araza, A.B., Gagarin, W., Corales, M.C., Osorio, C.P., Mendoza, M.D., & Ancog, R. (2026). Land-use conversion from agricultural production areas to built-up areas in the Philippines for decades 2000–2020: Spatial analysis and policy implications. *Land Use Policy*, Volume 162, 2026, 107874, ISSN 0264-8377. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2025.107874>.

Anda, R.D. (15 June 2025). Mariahangin Island: A tale of indigenous land, power and resistance. Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. Retrieved from <https://pcij.org/2025/06/15/mariahangin-island-a-tale-of-indigenous-land-power-and-resistance/>

Asuncion, A.M., Ubaldo, J.E.T., Cauette, D., Besmanos, B., & Brunet, N.D. (December 2022). Challenging the binary of home vs. host state governance: Canadian transnational mining behavior and local communities in the Philippines extractive industry. *The Extractive Industries and Society*, Volume 12, 2022, 101166, ISSN 2214-790X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2022.101166>.

Austria, R. (1 December 2025). Marcos administration set to finish three flagship infra projects in 2025—DEPDev. Manila Bulletin. Retrieved from <https://mb.com.ph/2025/12/29/no-year-end-recovery-for-infra-spendingdbm>

Baita, A. A., Bugas, J. D., Saguibo, V. C., Yago, A. L. B., & Calubaquib, M. A. M. (2025). Comparative analysis of the profitability of small-scale monoculture and diversified yellow corn farms in Cabagan, Isabela, Philippines. *Asian Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.55493/5005.v15i2.5509>

Barro, D. (22 January 2025). Lack of centralized data hampers infra planning in Philippines, says PIDS. Manila Bulletin. Retrieved from <https://mb.com.ph/2025/1/21/lack-of-centralized-data-hampers-infra-planning>

Bello, G. E., Mondejar, C. L. C., & Sta. Ines, L. T. (2025). Spatial Patterns, Farmer Practices, Rice Yield, and Socio-Economic Profile of Triple-Rice Monocropping in the Bago River Irrigation System, Negros Occidental, Philippines. *Philippine Journal of Crop Science*, 50(2).

Buendia, R.G., Mendoza, L.C., Guiam, R., & Sambeli, L. (2006). Mapping and Analysis of Indigenous Governance Practices in the Philippines and Proposal for Establishing an Indicative Framework for Indigenous People's Governance: Towards a Broader and Inclusive Process of Governance in the Philippines.

[Bukluran] Bukluran ng mga Katutubong Samahan Para sa Pangangalaga ng Kalikasan sa Pilipinas. (2021). The Philippines: A national analysis on the status of territories of life. *Territories of Life 2021 Report*. ICCA Consortium. Retrieved from <https://report.territoriesoflife.org>

Cabreza, V. (31 December 2025). Congress body probes killings of non-Moro leaders in Mindanao: Conflict rooted in land disputes has claimed over 100 IPs since 2014. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2161238/congress-body-probes-killings-of-non-moro-leaders-in-mindanao>

Camacho, L. D., Gevaña, D. T., Carandang, †Antonio P., & Camacho, S. C. (2015). Indigenous knowledge and practices for the sustainable management of Ifugao forests in Cordillera, Philippines. *International Journal of Biodiversity Science, Ecosystem Services & Management*, 12(1–2), 5–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21513732.2015.1124453>

Carreon, E. B. (2009). Indigenous women and mining. In V. Yocogan-Diano, T. Kashiwazaki, M. Llanza, & H. Advani (Eds.), *Mining and Women in Asia: Experiences of Women Protecting their Communities and Human Rights against Corporate Mining* (pp. 104–109). Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. <https://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Women-and-Mining-in-Asia1.pdf>

Carino, J. (2005). Indigenous Peoples' Right to Free, Prior, Informed Consent: Reflections on Concepts and Practice. *Arizona Journal of International & Comparative Law*, 22(1), 1–18.

Capuyan, N. (2009). Resisting development aggression: Mining and militarization in Mindanao, Philippines. In V. Yocogan-Diano, T. Kashiwazaki, M. Llanza, & H. Advani (Eds.), *Mining and women in Asia: Experiences of women protecting their communities and human rights against corporate mining* (pp. 112–115). Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. <https://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Women-and-Mining-in-Asia1.pdf>

[DAR] Department of Agrarian Reform. (February 2020a). Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project: Environmental and Social Assessment (ESA).

[DAR] Department of Agrarian Reform. (February 2020b). Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project: Indigenous Peoples Policy Framework (IPPF). 2020 Version.

[DAR] Department of Agrarian Reform. (2022). Project SPLIT: Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling. Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.dar.gov.ph/project-split/>

[DAR] Department of Agrarian Reform. (June 2025). Support to Parcelization of Lands for Individual Titling (SPLIT) Project: Indigenous Peoples Policy Framework (IPPF). 2024 Version.

Dawson, N. M., B. Coolsaet, E. J. Sterling, R. Loveridge, N. D. Gross-Camp, S. Wongbusarakum, K. K. Sangha, L. M. Scherl, H. Phuong Phan, N. Zafra-Calvo, W. G. Lavey, P. Byakagaba, C. J. Idrobo, A. Chenet, N. J. Bennett, S. Mansourian, and F. J. Rosado- May. 2021. The role of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in effective and equitable conservation. *Ecology and Society* 26 (3):19. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-12625-260319>

Del Moro, F. N. N., Dungca, J. T., Cabral, C. C., & Cabauatan, R. R. (2024). Land conversion and industrialization and its impact on crop production. *International Journal of Environmental & Agriculture Research*, 10(10), 111–123.

DellaSala, D.A. (2020). "Real" vs. "Fake" Forests: Why Tree Plantations Are Not Forests. Editor(s): Michael I. Goldstein, Dominick A. DellaSala. *Encyclopedia of the World's Biomes*, Elsevier, 2020, Pages 47-55, ISBN 9780128160978. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-409548-9.11684-7>.

Desiderio, L. (28 October 2025). Nearly P6 trillion projects OK'd for green lane – BOI. *Philippine Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/10/28/2482946/nearly-p6-trillion-projects-okd-green-lane-boi>

Ebersold, F., Hechelmann, R., Völker, M., Oetzel, J., & Buchenau, N. (October 2025). Avoidable greenhouse gas emissions in the context of corporate carbon neutrality strategies. *Energy Conversion and Management: X*, Volume 28, 2025, 101321, ISSN 2590-1745. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecmx.2025.101321>.

Fabro, K.A. (29 August 2022). Healthy mangroves build a resilient community in the Philippines' Palawan. *Mongabay*. Retrieved from <https://news.mongabay.com/2022/08/healthy-mangroves-build-a-resilient-community-in-the-philippines-palawan/>

Fallarcuna, B., Ignacio, J.A., Soriaga, R. & Veridiano, R.K. (2024). Forest greenhouse gas emissions estimates in major forest tenure instruments in the Philippines from 2001-2020. *Ecosystems and Development Journal*, Volume 13, 1-16. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380405725\\_Forest\\_greenhouse\\_gas\\_emissions\\_estimates\\_in\\_major\\_forest\\_tenure\\_instruments\\_in\\_the\\_Philippines\\_from\\_2001-2020](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380405725_Forest_greenhouse_gas_emissions_estimates_in_major_forest_tenure_instruments_in_the_Philippines_from_2001-2020)

Ford, J.D., King, N., Galappaththi, E.K., Pearce, T., McDowell, G., & Harper, S.L. (19 June 2020). The Resilience of Indigenous Peoples to Environmental Change. *One Earth*, Volume 2, Issue 6, 2020, pp. 532-543, ISSN 2590-3322. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2020.05.014>.

Garnett, S.T., Burgess, N.D., Fa, J.E. et al. (16 July 2018). A spatial overview of the global importance of Indigenous lands for conservation. *Nat Sustain* 1, 369–374 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-018-0100-6>

Gera, W. and Hutchcroft, P. (08 November 2025). After Tino, imperative for national gov't to support urban reform in Metro Cebu. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/voices/thought-leaders/opinion-typhoon-tino-urban-reform-metro-cebu/>

Geronimo, J. (17 September 2025). Philippines still deadliest country in Asia for environmental defenders in 2024. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/deadliest-country-asia-environmental-defenders-2024/>

[GM Insights] Global Market Insights. (March 2025). Forestry & Land Use Carbon Credit Market Size. Report Summary. <https://www.gminsights.com/industry-analysis/forestry-and-landuse-carbon-credit-market>

Goldman, E., Carter, S., and Sims, M. (21 May 2025). Fires Drove Record-breaking Tropical Forest Loss in 2024. *Global Forest Review*. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute. Available online at <https://research.wri.org/gfr/latest-analysis-deforestation-trends>

Gozum, I. (26 June 2025). DENR: Multiple use of forest lands good for economy, environment. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/denr-multiple-use-forest-lands-good-economy-environment/>

Gozum, I. (27 September 2025). The long-running land struggle of the Lumad in South Cotabato. *Rappler*. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/land-struggle-lumad-south-cotabato/>

[GW & KPNE] Global Witness & Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment. (December 2024). The green transition's dirty footprint: How the militarisation of mining is threatening Indigenous defenders in the Philippines. <https://globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/land-and-environmental-defenders/how-the-militarisation-of-mining-threatens-indigenous-defenders-in-the-philippines/>

Harvey, D. (2003). *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.

Hatta, Y.O, Reyes, J.J., & Taqueban, E.M. (2024) Legal Landscapes: The Shaping of Indigenous Land and Resource Rights in the Philippines, 2009-2023. *Philippine Natural Resources Law Journal*, Volume 14, Issue 1. Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center.

Hilario-Husain, B.A., Tanalgo, K.C., Guerrero, S.J.C. et al. (2024). Caught in the crossfire: biodiversity conservation paradox of sociopolitical conflict. *npj biodivers* 3, 10. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44185-024-00044-8>

Holden, W., Nadeau, K., & Jacobson, R. D. (2011). Exemplifying accumulation by dispossession: Mining and Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 93(2), 141–161. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0467.2011.00369.x>

Ignacio, R. M. A. (2025). Evaluation of the growth performance of hybrid coconut as influenced by fertilization rates and intercropping in Leon, Iloilo (DOST-PCAARRD project report). Retrieved from <https://www.pcaarrd.dost.gov.ph/index.php/quick-information-dispatch-qid-articles/project-to-optimize-fertilization-rates-intercropping-system-for-coconut-hybrid-farms-in-leon-iloilo>

[IPBES] Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. (2020). Key messages from the IPBES Global Assessment of particular relevance to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany. 42 pages.

Kennedy, C.M., Fariss, B., Oakleaf, J.R., Garnett, S.T., Fernández-Llamazares, A., Fa, J.E., Baruch-Mordo, S., & Kiesecker, J. (2023). Indigenous Peoples' lands are threatened by industrial development; conversion risk assessment reveals need to support Indigenous stewardship. *One Earth*, Volume 6, Issue 8, 2023, pp. 1032-1049, ISSN 2590-3322. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.oneear.2023.07.006>.

Konijnendijk, C., Devkota, D., Mansourian, S., & Wildburger, C. (eds.). (2023). *Forests and Trees for Human Health: Pathways, Impacts, Challenges and Response Options. A Global Assessment Report. IUFRO World Series Volume 41.* Vienna.

Lacson, J. (12 July 2025). Low-carbon economy agenda moves forward. *Daily Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://tribune.net.ph/2025/07/12/low-carbon-economy-agenda-moves-forward>

Lagare, J.B. (5 September 2025). New tax regime seen to make Philippine mining globally competitive. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved from <https://business.inquirer.net/545204/new-tax-regime-seen-to-make-ph-mining-globally-competitive>

[LRC] Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center. (2023a). *Towards a Just Minerals Transition in the Philippines*. [https://www.lrcksk.org/\\_files/ugd/dc2292\\_f78878c495fd431a9e2fb07288fa99ba.pdf](https://www.lrcksk.org/_files/ugd/dc2292_f78878c495fd431a9e2fb07288fa99ba.pdf)

[LRC] Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center. (2023b). *Transforming Watershed Governance: An Overview of Watershed Policies and Governance in the Philippines*.

[LRC] Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center. (2024a). *Position Paper on Senate Bill No. 2826*. Unpublished paper.

[LRC] Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center. (2024b). *A Call for Effective and Genuine Consultations on the Revised FPIC Guidelines*. Retrieved from <https://www.lrcksk.org/post/a-call-for-effective-and-genuine-consultations-on-the-revised-fpic-guidelines>

[LRC] Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center. (2025a). *Assessing Target 22 of the KMGBF: A Case Study on the Kabulnan Watershed*. Unpublished paper.

[LRC] Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center. (2025b). [Comparative data matrix of compiled tenurial data from DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Environmental Management Bureau, Forest Management Bureau, NCIP's Ancestral Domains Office, and Department of Energy]

Magcale-Macandog, D.B., P.M.J. Paraiso, A.R. Salvacion, R.V. Estadola, S.G.L. Quinones, I.M.A. Silapan, and R.M. Briones. (2016). *An Overview of Agricultural Pollution in the Philippines: e Crops Sector*. Prepared for the World Bank. Washington, D.C.

Mayuga, J.L. (23 October, 2025). With new rules, DENR will unlock natural mining assets. *Business Mirror*. Retrieved from <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/10/23/with-new-rules-denr-will-unlock-natural-mining-assets/>

Mora, L. (2009). The Case of Soccsksargen Region, Mindanao. In V. Yocogan-Diano, T. Kashiwazaki, M. Llanza, & H. Advani (Eds.), *Mining and Women in Asia: Experiences of Women Protecting their Communities and Human Rights against Corporate Mining* (pp. 110–111). Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. <https://apwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Women-and-Mining-in-Asia1.pdf>

[NIA-CAR] National Irrigation Administration – Cordillera Administrative Region. (n.d.). *Chico River Pump Irrigation Project Rises in Kalinga and Cagayan*. Retrieved from <https://car.nia.gov.ph/?q=content/chico-river-pump-irrigation-project-rises-kalinga-and-cagayan>

Pascasio, R. (18 September 2020). No need for impact assessment for Manila Bay project, says EMB exec. *VERA Files*. Retrieved from <https://verafiles.org/articles/no-need-impact-assessment-manila-bay-project-says-emb-exec>  
Peluso, N. L., & Vandergeest, P. (2020). Writing political forests. *Antipode*, 52(4), 1083–1103. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12636>

Perez-Brito, C.T. and Belhaj, N. (27 May 2024). No Data, No Story: Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. World Bank. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/baa43cc91ec55266a538e9023c528bd7-0070062024/no-data-no-story-indigenous-peoples-in-the-philippines>

[Philippine Resources] Philippine Resources Journal. (24 February 2025). DENR, MGB holds stakeholders' consultation on streamlining mining permits. Retrieved from <https://www.philippine-resources.com/articles/2025/2/denr-mgb-holds-stakeholders-consultation-on-streamlining-mining-permit-applications>

[PSA] Philippine Statistics Authority. (2023). 2023 Compendium of Philippine Environment Statistics. Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Statistics Authority.

[PSA] Philippine Statistics Authority. (2024). 2024 Philippine Statistical Yearbook. Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Statistics Authority.

Quizon, A., Marzan, A., de Vera, D., and Rodriguez, M. (2018). State of Land and Resource Tenure Reform in the Philippines. Quezon City: Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC).

Rabang, R.E. (2020). Nurturing nature and culture: Policy and customary perspectives on the indigenous forest management system chontog of Barangay Ekip, Bokod, Benguet. University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies. Retrieved from [https://cids.up.edu.ph/discussion\\_paper/up-cids-discussion-paper-series-2020-02-nurturing-nature-and-culture-policy-and-customary-perspectives-on-the-indigenous-forest-management-system-chontog-of-barangay-ekip-bokod-benguet/](https://cids.up.edu.ph/discussion_paper/up-cids-discussion-paper-series-2020-02-nurturing-nature-and-culture-policy-and-customary-perspectives-on-the-indigenous-forest-management-system-chontog-of-barangay-ekip-bokod-benguet/)

Ragos, A.M. (n.d.). Mining Communities and Social Development: Assessing The Philippine Social Development And Management Program. Bantay Kita.

RECOFTC. (2017). Making social forestry work: Securing rights, promoting sustainable livelihoods and strengthening value chains for community forestry enterprises in the Philippines. RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests. <https://www.recoftc.org/sites/default/files/publications/resources/recoftc-0000156-0001-en.pdf>

Republic of the Philippines. (1997). Republic Act No. 8371: The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997. Official Gazette. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1997/10/29/republic-act-no-8371/>

Robles, R. (11 November 2025). Mountains protect Philippines from typhoons. Why isn't it protecting them? South China Morning Post. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/health-environment/article/3332239/mountains-protect-philippines-typhoons-why-isnt-it-protecting-them>

Rodriguez, D.A. (21 October 2025). Global mission exposes rights abuses in rural Philippines. Bulatlat. Retrieved from <https://www.bulatlat.com/2025/10/21/global-mission-exposes-rights-abuses-in-rural-philippines/>

Rovillos, R.D. & Dacquigan, E.L.A. (2024). The Indigenous Navigator: Human Rights, Sustainable Development Goals and the Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. A report on the implementation of the Indigenous Navigator Framework in the Philippines (D.L. Martinez, Ed.). Tebtebba Foundation.

Sarigumba, M.P., Soriano, M., Robson, J.P., Quivivivi, I., & Cabrera, O.L. (20 October 2023). Understanding the role of youth in Indigenous territorial governance. Front. Environ. Sci. 11:1200434. doi: 10.3389/fenvs.2023.1200434

Schnabel, S. & Tantengco, C. (Hosts). (03 March 2025). Forest or Fortress? The Fight to Save the Philippines' Green Heritage. In What's AP? Araling Panlipunan Rebooted. Pumapodcast. <https://open.spotify.com/episode/0cwxxhbU51VD9vqGg0UsMM?si=Ke225oIoQdyw89QePxyPqg>

Sims, M.J., R. Stanimirova, A. Raichuk, M. Neumann, J. Richter, F. Follett, J. MacCarthy, K. Lister, C. Randle, L. Sloat, E. Esipova, J. Jupiter, C. Stanton, D. Morris, C. M. Slay, D. Purves, and N. Harris. 2025. "Global Drivers of Forest Loss at 1 Km Resolution." *Environmental Research Letters* 20 (7): 074027. [doi:10.1088/1748-9326/add606](https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/add606).

Taqueban, E.M., Ferraris, J.M., Demigillo, J.A., Quirino, M., & Dulce, J.L. (2022). State of Indigenous Peoples Address: 2022 Report. Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center. [https://www.lrcksk.org/\\_files/ugd/dc2292\\_bdc69524a1f440ab6f68e1e9aa4086d.pdf](https://www.lrcksk.org/_files/ugd/dc2292_bdc69524a1f440ab6f68e1e9aa4086d.pdf)

Taqueban, E.M. & Dulce, J.L. (2024). State of Indigenous Peoples Address 2024 Report. Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center. [https://www.lrcksk.org/\\_files/ugd/dc2292\\_03550a9d18ed413da620508a14ee687a.pdf](https://www.lrcksk.org/_files/ugd/dc2292_03550a9d18ed413da620508a14ee687a.pdf)

Umil, A.M. (04 December 2025). Rights group, kin denounce harassment in Kalinga. *Bulatlat*. Retrieved from <https://www.bulatlat.com/2025/10/21/global-mission-exposes-rights-abuses-in-rural-philippines/>

United Nations General Assembly. (2023). Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Note by the Secretariat (A/HRC/54/31). Human Rights Council. <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/54/31>

United Nations General Assembly. (2025). Recognition of Indigenous Peoples: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/HRC/60/29). Human Rights Council. <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/60/29>

United Nations. (2007). United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295). <https://docs.un.org/en/A/res/61/295>

United Nations. (2009). State of the world's Indigenous Peoples (ST/ESA/328). Department of Economic and Social Affairs. [https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/674514/files/SOWIP\\_web.pdf](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/674514/files/SOWIP_web.pdf)

US Department of State (2024). Report to Congress on Steps Taken by the Government of the Philippines During the Preceding 12 Months to Document and Prosecute Human Rights Abuses Committed by the Philippines Police and Military. Section 7019(e) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2024 (Div. F, P.L. 118-47) and Senate Report 118-71.

Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Report-Philippines-Police-Military-abuse-006157-Accessible-9.5.2025.pdf>

Wiebe, P.C., Zhunusova, E., Lippe, M., Velasco, R.F., & Günter, S. (2022) What is the contribution of forest-related income to rural livelihood strategies in the Philippines' remaining forested landscapes? *Forest Policy and Economics*, Volume 135, 2022, 102658, ISSN 1389-9341. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2021.102658>.

Wu, Y., Mullan, K., Biggs, T., Caviglia-Harris, J., Harris, D.W., & Sills, E.O. (2021) Do forests provide watershed services for farmers in the humid tropics? Evidence from the Brazilian Amazon. *Ecological Economics*, Volume 183, 2021, 106965, ISSN 0921-8009. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2021.106965>.





Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center - Kasama  
sa Kalikasan - Friends of the Earth Philippines  
[lrcksk.org](http://lrcksk.org) | [lrckskfoeph@gmail.com](mailto:lrckskfoeph@gmail.com)

   @lrckphl