



PAKISAMA

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TO THE MEDIA COMMUNITY

Dear Friends,

We are seeking help to **accompany and cover** the First Civilian Peace Mission to Marihangin and Bugsuk islands on July 6 to 10, 2024. Thirteen civil society leaders from Palawan and Manila will be visiting the indigenous peoples of Marihangin and Bugsuk islands to boost their morale and prevent violence from erupting between 130 families of mostly seaweed farmers of Molbog indigenous peoples' descent residing in Sitio Marihangin and the armed guards and goons of corporate giant San Miguel Corporation.

On June 29, the Corporation, using its newly set up subsidiary Bricktree Properties, sent 16 fully armed masked men, fired shots which nearly hit two kids, and invaded the island. Three hundred members of the community, mostly women and youth, faced the invaders with their bodies and cellphones. The guards retreated to the forest and prepared themselves to fire and kill in case the community wage an armed attack.

San Miguel Corporation plans a 25,000 hectare white beach tourism. It has already built an airport in the 11, 000 hectare Bugsuk island and has been clearing the mangroves to give way to a 20-km long white beach. The adjacent 38-hectare Marihangin island, a sitio of Brgy Bugsuk, has white beaches and kilometer-long white sand bars.

The Corporation started to harass the residents of Marihangin island since October 2022, deploying a lawyer and former army generals and colonels to convince the residents to leave the place. They offered the residents 100,000 pesos per family to dis-assemble their houses and transfer to the mainland, in Brgy Buliluyan, Bataraza. Or else they would not get any when the demolition team arrives. They offered P350,000 to Issah family/clan, Molbog Indigenous People, and known to be the ancestral owners of the island. Thirty of the 158 families already succumbed to fear and did transfer. Their current Molbog and community leader, Jomly Callon, who has received death threat, is leading a fierce, determined non-violent resistance. The majority stayed and are determined to fight it out, non-violently. New women and young leaders have risen to the occasion.

The next morning, the six Balabac policemen who came the day before, after 12 hours of the attack, left, leaving the community vulnerable to further harrassment. The security guards have stayed in the community since, to guard the place for their principal. The Molbog community leader, Jomly Callon, has released a statement, the guards are not welcome in the community and it is not giving consent or approval to the request by the guards to construct a guard house in the area, asking the guards to leave Marihangin immediately.

Please join and cover the First Civilian Peace Mission to Marihangin Island and neighboring Bugsuk and Pandanan islands. Please pass this forward. Thank you very much.

OUR CALLS:

Calling DILG PNP national to immediately intervene! Tension in the community is high esp when a boy was almost hit by a bullet from the masked men. For the past 50 years since danding cojuangco invaded the 10, 821 hectare bugsuk and pandanan islands, and evicted thousands of indigenous peoples and settlers, both the barangay and municipal governments have been captured by danding's corporations. In 2011, the sandiganbayan punished with 100,000 peso fine the Mayor of Balabac for leasing the municipal waters to Jewelmer Corporation without free and prior informed consent from the Molbog IP community.

Calling President Marcos, Jr. Please reverse the decision of DAR Secretary Estrella 3 lifting from CARPER coverage the 10, 821 hectare Bugsuk Lands (Bugsuk, Pandanan, Marihangin, etc) issued in 2014 by Secretary de Virgilio de los Reyes, now in favor of Ramon Ang' s SMC. Your administration has now the lowest record on land distribution with less than 15,000 hectares per year compared to Duterte's 28,000 hectares and Ramos 350, 000 hectares. But your current DAR Administration is getting to be prolific in reversing or cancelling issued Certificate of Landownership Award (e.g. Ati Boracay 3 hectare land and Nasugbu thousand hectare land) and Notice of Coverage (e.g. Bugsuk). Please review the performance of your Secretary. He maybe undermining your avowed thrust of supporting agrarian reform beneficiaries starting with your Amortization Condonation Law. Please correct the historic injustice done by your father by awarding the 10,821 hectare Bugsuk islands to his crony Danding Cojuangco and mobilizing the military for mass evictions.

Calling the Commission on Human Rights to start a full-scale investigation. You initiated already a community dialogue at Puerto Princesa on Dec 11, 2023. It was boycotted by SMC, Jewelmer, and Balabac LGUs. Perhaps it is time for a full investigation of the case. A clear historic injustice needing transitional justice has to be asserted by CHR in this case. While 11, 000 victims of Martial Law were compensated with a 10 billion peso fund, these Martial Law victims, including the Marihangin residents whose grandparents were evicted from Bugsuk and Pandanan islands, are instead experiencing the second wave of eviction.

Calling civil society forces including the Church and media to accompany the community. The three Palawan Bishops have started mobilizing. Various civil society organizations in Palawan and at national and international levels are also mobilizing. The first CSO Peace Mission will be conducted to accompany the besieged community and the Sambilog Balik Bugsuk Movement, composed of victim farmers and fishers of the Corporation's land and sea grab settled in neighboring barangays of Bataraza and Balabac who will be supporting their members in Marihangin Island. A series of Peace Missions will be conducted to support Community Based Ecotourism to counter the conventional Corporate Ecotourism Project, being proposed by San Miguel Corporation. A public hearing was conducted on May 2, 2024 in Bugsuk Island about the proposed ecotourism project of Bricktree Properties, an SMC subsidiary. Two hundred SAMBILOG-BBM members in 37 bancas mobilized and attended to register their NO-VOTE! Local media stations have been covering the case and one station has visited the community. It is important for the national and international media to start to take notice and accompany the besieged community.

Calling the Filipino people, please help. Only the Court of Public Opinion maybe able to tilt the balance in favor of this community and of social justice. The PAKISAMA Confederation, which Sambilog-Balik Bugsuk Movement is a member, has started to mobilize its member organizations nationwide to work in solidarity by waging boycott of SMC products until the the guards and SMC vacate the Bugsuk islands and render justice.

The Story Behind

We need your help We need you to help 3,000 indigenous peoples, farmers and fishers from [Bugsuk islands, in Balabac, southernmost of Palawan](#) to get back their 10,821 hectare “paradise islands abundant with fish and fertile land which were [grabbed](#) from them by Danding Cojuangco in 1974, almost 50 years ago, with full military support of the Marcos Sr Martial Law. The eviction transformed their lives miserably, many were forced to clear the forest for firewood and charcoal to earn some money for food. We need the broadest civil society networks who would help them as they mobilize to [push this government to implement CARPER](#) , [IPRA](#), and the Fisheries Code in [Bugsuk Republic](#), continuously controlled militarily by the Cojuangcos, and now by Ramon Ang, as if no EDSA Revolution happened and as if it was not sequestered by [PCGG in 1987](#), as if no [Notice of Coverage](#) has been issued in June 26, 2014. In fact, the current Secretary has lifted

The Balik Bugsuk Movement was formed following EDSA in Calasaguen, Brookes Point, a settlement of hundreds of evicted residents and SAMBILOG was formed in 2000, by mostly indigenous peoples-fishers around Bugsuk islands banned by [Jewelmer Corporation](#) from fishing in their ancestral and municipal waters. They now formed a broader organization SAMBILOG-Balik Bugsuk Movement, a member organization of [PAKISAMA](#), numbering more than 500 with chapters in six communities, and they are now more determined than ever to get back their land. They marched to Puerto Princesa, stayed in front of the provincial office for two months in 2004, [mobilized 102 boats](#) to enter the prohibited pearl zone in 2005, participated in three Congressional hearings initiated by then Congresswoman Risa Hontiveros, stayed for two weeks in front of DAR’s central office in 2014, succeeding to get Sec. Gil de los Reyes to issue the NOC. We also succeeded in getting the Mayor of Balabac punished and [fined by the Ombudsman](#) for violating IPRA Section 59, not getting Free Prior and Informed Consent from IPs in the community when it entered into a 25-year Marine Lease Agreement with Jewelmer Corporation. But the DAR did not finish the job of even going to the next step of identifying the farmer beneficiaries. Nor the illegal operations of Jewelmer stopped. Thus, after nine years, SAMBILOG leaders came back here in Metro Manila five months ago and started to inform our network about their case. They engaged DAR and NCIP officials in their offices, and the [public in a press conference](#).

After Danding passed away, [Ramon Ang](#) started developing the property into a [world class white beach 20 km resort](#), now with an airport aimed to cater to foreign tourists. The corporation is now in the process of evicting 158 families of mostly seaweeds farmers out of 38-hectare Marihangin island, an island included in the NOC. A law firm handed 11 residents with a [warning letter](#) to leave the area ASAP before a case is filed against them and suffer a 2 -million -peso damage and attorney’s fees. The [DAR Regional Director](#) has declared the island, after a validation exercise with DA and DENR, most likely with SMC support, ill -suited for agriculture thus, must not be included in any agrarian reform program.

Our [Motion for Reconsideration](#) to the order of the RD has been [denied](#). On September 20, 2023, DAR Secretary Conrado Estrella III lifted the Notice of Coverage of the Bugsuk lands and awarded them back to the landgrabbers. On May 2, 2024, a public hearing was conducted in Bugsuk island, for an Environment Clearance Certificate to cover 5,568 hectare ecotourism project in Brgys Bugsuk and Sebaring. Sitio Marihangin is part of Brgy Bugsuk.

For further information, pls see [here](#) the case folder of Bugsuk. Our team of lawyers is led by Atty. Chris Monsod. We need more as we battle against a formidable 93-year old Atty Estelito Mendoza and ACCRA Law office. This may need the scale of the [Sumilao campaign](#), possibly even bigger, given the trillion-peso tourism business at stake.

Thank you very much



Raul Socrates C. Banzuela,
Campaign Coordinator,
Sambilog-Balik Bugsuk Movement/
National Coordinator, PAKISAMA

Chronology of Events

Salaysay ng mga Pangyayari ukol sa Bugsuk

Bago ang 1972: Masayang namumuhay sa kanilang mga lupaing ninuno ang mga Palawanen, ang mga orihinal na nakatira sa napakagandang Bugsuk at Pandanan Islands. Dumating ang mga CagayanCillo tinanggap sila ng mga Palawanen. Ganoon din ang mga Molbogs, tinanggap din sila. Dumating din ang mga mangingisda mula sa kabisayaan, tinanggap din sila. Namuhay silang magkakasama, nagtanim ng mga niyog, kamote, kamoteng kahoy, gabi, iba't ibang gulay. Humuhuli sila ng baboy damo sa gubat at namumulot ng malalaking itlog ng mga ibon. Sagana sila sa sari saring isda. Sa loob lamang ng isang oras na pangangisda sa may dalampasigan, makakahuli sila ng isang metrong tuhog ng mga isda. Maliban diyan, napakaputi at pino ng mga nakapaligid na beach ng dalawang isla.

Setyembre 21, 1972: Dineklara ang Martial Law. Hinuli at ikinulong ang mga lider ng oposisyon. Kinitil ang kalayaan sa pamamahayag at pag-oorganisa. Nagkaroon ng Curfew at sinara ang mga institusyon ng peryodiko, radio, at telebisyon. Nag umpisa ang kroniyismo o pagpabor sa mga kaibigan ng Pangulo: Kay Benedicto ang industriya ng asukal. Kay Florendo ang industriya ng pina. Kay Cojuangco ang industriya ng niyog.

1974: Sinakop ni Danding Cojuangco at militar ang 10,821 ektarya sa mga isla ng Bugsuk, Pandanan at iba pa. Libu libong mamamayang katutubong magsasaka at mangingisda ang sapilitang pinalayas at napadpad kung saan saan, sa mga barangay ng Puring, Tagnato, Buliluyan, Calasaguen ng Batarasa at iba pang lugar. Ang iba sa kanila napunta sa Marihangin Island, isang 38 -ektaryang isla malapit sa Bugsuk island, sa munisipyo ng Balabac. Isa itong lupaing ninuno ng mga Molbog.

Gamit ang P900 milyong piso ng Cocolevy Fund, o buwis galing sa tatlong milyong magniniyog ng bansa, pinundohan ng Chairman ng Philippine Coconut Authority na si Danding Cojuangco ang Bugsuk Coconut Hybrid Nursery project na pag-aari ng Agriculture Investors Inc, na pag-aari rin ni PCA Chairman Danding Cojuangco.

1981: Sinakop ng Jewelmer Corporation, pag-aari ng kapatid ni Danding Cojuangco, ang libu-libong ektarya ng mga karagatan sa paligid ng Bugsuk, Pandanan, at Marihangin islands. Isinara noong Setyembre 21, 1981 ang Pandanan Channel, sa pagitan ng Bugsuk at Pandanan islands, isang tradisyunal na pangisdaan at daanan ng mga sasakyang pandagat. Ang mga mamamayan ng munisipyo ng Balabac island ay nagdagdag ng tatlong galong gasolina sa kanilang mga bangka upang marating ang Rio Tuba dahil kailangan na nilang umikot.

1986: People Power Revolution. Tumakas ang pamilyang Marcos kasama ang pamilya ni Danding Cojuangco papuntang Hawaii. Itinayo ang Philippine Commission on Good Government upang bawiin ang mga nakaw na yaman ng pamilyang Marcos at mga kaibigan. Sinampahan ng kaso ng PCGG sina Cojuangco, Lobregat, Enrile at iba pa sa mga pagnanakaw sa Coco levy Fund.

Itinayo ang Balik Bugsuk Movement sa Calasaguen, Bataraza sa pamumuno ni Mel Bundac, isa sa mga biktima ng malawakang pananakop ng Bugsuk. Isa siya sa mga napadpad sa gubat ng Calasaguen. Mahigit silang dalawang daang pamilyang napadpad doon, binigyan ng lupang gubat, kelangang mamutol ng kahoy upang maibenta nang makabili ng bigas. Kinalauan sa hirap ng buhay halos lahat sila nagbenta ng kanilang karapatan sa lupa upang mabuhay. Nabuhayan sila ng loob dahil sa bagong pamahalaan. Sumulat sila sa PCGG at iba pang opisyal ng pamahalaan upang kilusan ang Bugsuk at makabalik sila sa lugar.

February 1987: Niratipika ng 76 posriyento ng mga botanteng Pilipino ang bagong Saligang Batas. Pagsulong ng Katarungang Panlipunan ang puso ng saligang batas. Nakasulat mismo ang pagpapatupad ng malawakang repormang agraryo, ang paggalang sa mgankarapatan ng mga katutubo sa kanilang lupaing ninuno, at ang pagbibigay ng kontrol sa mililiit na mangingisda sa kanilang katubigang munisipal.

June 10, 1988. Ipinasa ang Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law. Sa batas, limang ektarya lamang ang maaring matira sa mga malalaking may-ari ng lupa at ang sobra ay ipapamahagi sa mga walang lupa o tenants o manggagawang bukid sa lugar o pinakamalapit na lugar.

1999: Lumabas ang dokumentaryo ni Howie Severino sa Probe Team ukol sa kalagayan ng mga naninirahan sa paligid ng Bugsuk at Pandanan Islands, at ng mga mangingisda sa isla Marihangin. Sa 8

minutong pelikula, pumunta sa gusung gusong o sagradong sand bar ang daan daang mga Palawanen, Molbog at nagsayaw ng kanilang tradisyunal na Runsay. Unang pagpapakita ito ng lakas ng mga biktima ng pananakop ng Bugsuk islands at karagatan. Nagsubok lumapit ang bangka ng mga guwardiya upang paalisin ang mga tao. Nguni't di sila nakalapit dahil sasadsad ang bangka nila sa bahura. Nguni't nainterview sila ni Howie Severino at natanong bakit bawal. Bawal daw dahil kay Cojuangco ang lugar. Pinahayag ng mga tao sa maiksing pelikula ang paghahari ng takot sa lugar, ang mga pagbabawal sa kanilang mangisda sa tradisyunal nilang pangisdaan, at ang kanilang pangarap na muling malayang makapangisda at makabalik sa Bugsuk island.

2000: Nabuo ang SAMBILOG, ang Samahan ng mahigit 600 na pamilyang mangingisda sa limang barangay/sityo: Sebaring, Marihangin sa Balabac, Tagnato, Puring, Buliluyan sa Bataraza. Si Panlima Rudy Calo ang naging lider ng Samahan. Marami sa kanila ay mga biktima ng pagpapalayas sa Bugsuk at Pandanan islands. Pangunahin nilang pinaglaban ang karapatan nila sa malayang pangangisda sa kanilang tradisyunal na panisdaan.

2002: Lumabas ang ikalawang dokumentaryo ng Bugsuk, Pagbabalik sa Tribu ni Arthur Aristotle Solito Jr, kilala bilang Aureus Solito at ngayon Kanakan Balintagos. Dalawang oras ang pelikula ukol sa mga kuwento ng matatanda sa lugar paano sila pinalayas ni Danding Cojuangco sa kanilang lugar at ang paghihirap nila mula noon. Ang pelikula ay pinanood sa iba't ibang bansa at nagkaroon ng palabas sa University of the Philippines Film Center.

2004-2005: Tatlong Congressional Hearings ukol sa Bugsuk, pinamunuan ni Akbayan Congressman, now Senator Risa Hontiveros.

Abril 2005: Tinanggap ng National Commission on Indigenous People-Palawan Office ang aplikasyon para sa Certificate of Ancestral Domain Titles ng mga katutubong Palawan at Molbog sa mga barangay ng Marihangin/Bugsuk, Sebaring, Tagnato, Puring, at Buliluyan.

October 2005: Lulan sa 102 bangka, tatlong daang kasapi ng Sambilog naglayag upang makatawid sa pinagbabawal na Pandanan Channel. Buong puwersa ng kapulisan at guwardiya ng Jewelmer Corporation gamit ang kanilang mga matutuling bangka ang humarang at kinadena ang dalawang isla.

Oktubre 2005: Kinasuhan ng Jewelmer Corporation sa isang korte sa Puerto Princesa sina Cong. Risa Hontiveros at mga lider ng SAMBILOG sa salang trespassing at terrorism.

2011: Pinarusahang magbayad ng P100,000 ng Sandiganbayan si Mayor Astami ng Balabac sa pag isyu ng Lease agreement sa Jewelmer Corporation na walang naunang pahintulot (FPIC) ng mga katutubo.

2014: Naisyu ang Notice of Coverage sa 10,821 ektaryang lupa sakop ang 15 Special Patents ni Danding Cojuangco.

September 20, 2023: Nag isyu ng Order si Secretary Estrella 3, pinapaboran ang Motion for reconsideration ni Estelito Mendoza na huwag isama sa repormang panakahan ang 10,821 ektaryang Bugsuk lands.

Mayo 2, 2024: Nagdaos ng Public Hearing ang Environment Management Bureau ng MIMAROPA para sa application ng Bricktree Properties, isang subsidiary ng SMC, para sa pagtatayo ng 1,568 ektaryang ecotourism project sa Brgy Bugsuk at Sebaring. Kasama ang sitio Marihangin sa Brgy Bugsuk.

Hunyo 27, 2024: Pumunta ang DAR at SMC sa Marihangin upang ibigay ang kopya ng Order of Finality ng Pagbawi ng NOC sa Bugsuk lands.

Hunyo 29, 2024: Simula ng pananakop ng isla ng armadong puwersa ng San Miguel Corporation. Nag people power ang 400 mamamayan ng Marihangin. Dumating ang ilang pulis ng balabac.

Hunyo 30, 2024: Umalis pabalik ng Balabac island ang mga pulis. Nagtriple ang dami ng mga goons. Nag-umpisa mabalita ang isyu.

Hulyo 1, 2024: Lumabas ang nakasulat ng Pahayag ng Pakikiisa ng Vicariate ng Palawan pirmado ni Bishop Socrates Misiona. Lumabas din ang Pahayag ng Pakikiisa ng Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) at panawagan para sa Unang Civilian Peace Mission papuntang Marihangin Island upang Samahan ang mga taga Marihangin at mapayapang mapaalis ang mga mananakop na goons ng Korporasyon.