

New investigation reveals failure in government's promises to Filipino citizens on corporate greed and the environment; as attacks against land and environmental defenders escalate

- Global Witness uncovers shocking evidence of widespread attacks against land and environmental defenders, with the Philippines government failing to act on President Duterte's key election pledges to save the environment, eliminate corruption and protect marginalized communities.
- Global Witness's new report uncovers corporate greed driving systematic attacks against Filipino citizens, including the murder of a 57 year old grandmother, when they stand up to destructive coal, agribusiness, mining and tourism projects – projects with connections to major players Dole Philippines, Del Monte Philippines, San Miguel Corporation, Standard Chartered and the World Bank.
- The anti-corruption NGO is calling on the Filipino government to deliver on its election promises, and for companies and investors to take action now to avoid fueling a worrying pattern across the whole of the Philippines.

Tuesday 24th September 2019 – Global Witness today reveals a catalogue of failures by the Filipino government and businesses operating in the country regarding major issues of corruption, environmental degradation and the protection of marginalized communities.

The new report 'Defending the Philippines' exposes how fatal attacks against land and environmental defenders – ordinary Filipinos who have stood up against land grabs and the destruction of the environment – are linked to the presence of major industries including coal, agribusiness, tourism and mining, and a culture of commercial interests overriding those of local people and the environment.

The revelations come after the Philippines was named the world's deadliest country for land and environment defenders in 2018 back in July, sparking widespread international coverage of the issue.

The anti-corruption NGO also exposes how major global investors and companies - including Standard Chartered, the World Bank, Dole Philippines and Del Monte Philippines - continue to operate, despite allegations that business projects they are backing are linked to human rights violations and threats against defenders.

Coal: In one case, on the first day of Duterte's presidency, grandmother Gloria Capitan was killed when a man dismounted from his motorcycle, held her in a chokehold and shot her three times in front of her grandchildren. She had opposed coal-storage facilities and a San Miguel Corporation controlled coal power plant polluting her community in Bataan.

The plant was backed by the International Finance Corporation, Standard Chartered and Mizuho Bank, and continues to operate amidst a culture of fear. Three years on, her community still faces harassment, intimidation and attacks for demanding they be properly consulted about the power plant expansion demolishing their houses.

Agribusiness: The report also uncovers how Renato Anglao was fatally shot in the head while riding his motorcycle home with his wife and five-year-old son. He had protested the grabbing of indigenous land in Bukidnon, now being used by a local landowner to produce fruit for Del Monte

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Philippines. This follows [recent revelations by Global Witness](#) that another major agribusiness company, Dole Philippines, is linked to allegations of fraud and coercion to remove indigenous people from a nearby banana plantation on the part of its local partner.

Logging: Also uncovered is how the tourist boom in Palawan – a trend spread cheerfully across Instagram by travel and lifestyle “influencers” – is fuelling violence, with Ruben Arzaga, village head and member of a local environmental group, killed when apprehending illegal loggers. He was the twelfth group member murdered in less than two decades. Other members were subjected to threats made by local Governor and businessman Jose Alvarez. The group oppose the illicit hardwood logging fuelled by the island’s surge in hotels.

Mining: The anti-corruption NGO also looks deeper into the murder of farmers’ association leader, Jimmy Saypan, who had denounced the activities of gold and silver mining outfit AgPet. The company is linked to the Filipino beer and manufacturing giant San Miguel, which is controlled by Duterte donor Ramon Ang. Five members of the farmers’ association have been imprisoned on what appear to be trumped-up police charges, and others harassed by the army.

Ben Leather, Senior Campaigner, Global Witness said:

“When President Duterte came into power, he made three clear promises to his electorate: to eliminate corruption, to protect the precious environment of the Philippines, and to safeguard marginalised groups such as indigenous communities.

“Our new investigation could not be clearer – Duterte’s government has failed enormously on all three promises, and has left land and environmental defenders to be attacked with impunity. Businesses from coal to agribusiness, from mining to tourism, are allowed to run rampant and irreparably damage the lives of ordinary Filipinos. Corruption, within major government bodies, and conflicts of interest affecting well-known politicians is most certainly not under control.

“If the Filipino government is going to deliver on its promises, it has to protect land and environmental defenders and stand up to big business and corrupt politicians. And if companies and investors like Del Monte Philippines, San Miguel and Standard Chartered want their sustainability and human rights pledges to be anything other than poisonous hot air – then they too need to take immediate action to tackle the root causes of these attacks and support defenders.”

Notes to editors:

1. **An embargoed copy of the full report**, including details of all case studies is available on request. Please e-mail hiqbal@globalwitness.org.
2. **Interviews** with Global Witness spokespeople and organisations on the ground in the Philippines are available on request. Please e-mail hiqbal@globalwitness.org.
3. **Photography and video** B-roll, including nature and industry shots and interviews with local community members in Bukidnon (agribusiness, Dole case study) and with community members in Bataan (coal, Standard Chartered and San Miguel Corporation case study) are also available on request. Please e-mail hiqbal@globalwitness.org.