



According to the Itogon Ecology Profile 2020, Itogon covers a total land area of 49,800 hectares, accounting for about 18.75% of Benguet's total provincial land area. Barangay Dalupirip is the largest barangay with 17,119 hectares (34.38%), followed by Tinongdan with 12,516 hectares (25.13%) and Ampucao with 11,332 hectares (22.76%). As of July 2024, data from the Philippine Statistics Authority shows that Itogon has a population of 59,736, with Ampucao as the most populous barangay (10,512 residents) and Gumatdang as the least (1,794 residents). The IP groups in Itogon are Ibaloi, Kankanaey, and Kalanguya.

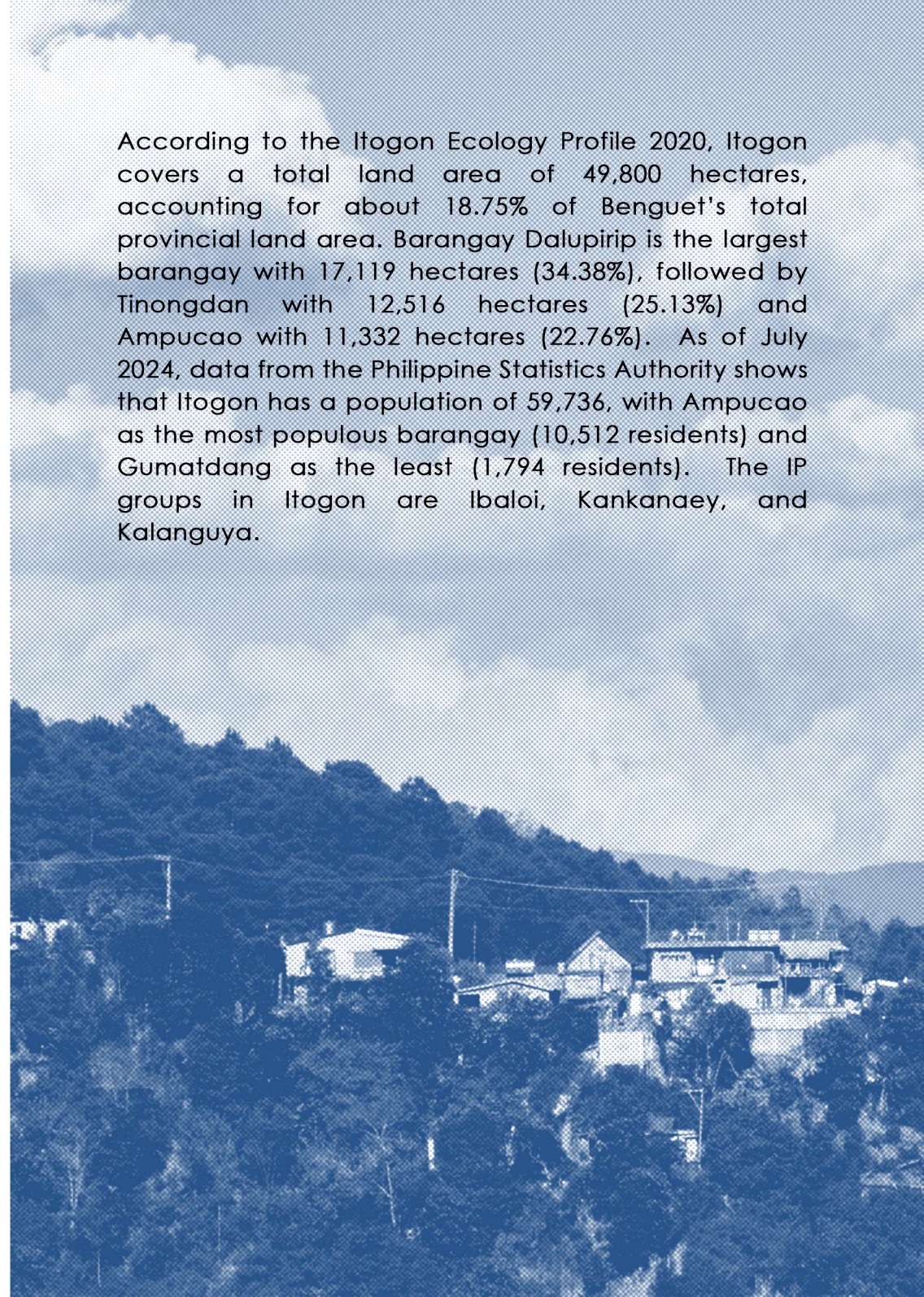
## PUBLISHED BY:



ASIA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES  
NETWORK ON EXTRACTIVE  
INDUSTRIES AND ENERGY



CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE  
FOR THE DEFENSE OF ANCESTRAL  
DOMAIN AND SELF-DETERMINATION





A combination of mining and agriculture characterizes the economy of Itogon, Benguet. It is rich in mineral resources particularly on gold, copper, and silver. Evident to this is the presence of large and small-scale mining industries and activities in the locality.

Operations of large and small-scale mining are concentrated to barangays Ampucao, Gumatdang, Loacan, Poblacion, Tuding, Ucab and Virac. On the other hand, barangays Dalupirip and Tinongdan are agricultural communities and employ gold panning along the stretch of Agno River.

This abundance of minerals has long made Itogon a target for large-scale mining operations, often at the expense of its Indigenous Peoples. Currently, the municipality is a host of four large-scale mining operations for more than decades and century.



## PROJECT PROFILE: ITOGON-SUYOC RESOURCES, INC. (ISRI)

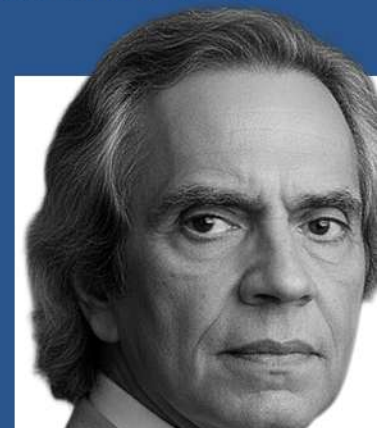
ISRI has a long history in Itogon, dating back to the 1930s when it operated as Itogon-Suyoc Mines, Inc. (ISMI), which operates the Sangilo Mine in Itogon and the Suyoc Mine in Mankayan, both located in Benguet Province,

In 2007, Anvil Mining, an Australian company, partnered with Itogon-Suyoc Resources, Inc. (ISRI) to explore and develop a mining project in Itogon, covering nearly 2,896 hectares, including the Sangilo gold mine. The plan involved drilling 20 holes near the Frog Vein, which raised concerns among residents of Barangay Ampucao. The community feared damage to the fragile water table and contamination of important water sources like the Pitang springs. Despite assurances from the project proponent that any damage could be

repaired, the community, especially small-scale miners, opposed the project, believing it would lead to harmful large-scale mining. Due to strong community resistance, Anvil eventually withdrew from the agreement.

In 2015, ISRI was acquired by Apex Mining Co., Inc., which is owned by ports and casino magnate Enrique Razon Jr. – the richest person in the Philippines according to the 40th annual Forbes World's Billionaires list. To continue expanding its operations and profit, ISRI applied for a production sharing agreement for its mining expansion – the APSA 103.

Indigenous Peoples in the affected communities have long suffered from the impacts of large-scale mining on their ancestral lands, which is why they have resisted this application since 2012. Their struggle is not only for their rights and survival, but also for the future generations.



Enrique Razon Jr.  
Chairman of Apex Mining Co.

Photo: Gambling Insider

# WHAT IS APSA 103?



Application for Production Sharing Agreement is one form of application where the government grants the contractor the right to conduct mining operations within the contract area for a period of 25 years, renewable for another 25 years. The government is entitled to a share of the production output from the contracted area.

In 2012, Itogon-Suyoc Resources, Inc. applied for production sharing agreement (APSA 103) covering a total of 581-hectares within the land area of three barangays (Ampucao, Poblacion, and Virac) belonging to the municipality of Itogon.

ISRI's application includes residential areas, water source, churches, schools, cemetery, and other community infrastructures of Ampucao, Poblacion, and Virac. Ironically, according to ISRI, these built-up areas and water source are declared as NO MINING ZONE yet it is still within the 581-hectares of their application.

The project's most directly affected area is Sitio Dalicno in Barangay Ampucao, where the remaining rich gold ore deposits remain. If this destructive project proceeds, it will pose serious risks to the residents' livelihoods, water sources, environment, and overall well-being of the community.

Furthermore, ISRI's large-scale mining operations will inflict irreparable harm to an already fragile environment. It will significantly increase disaster risks, further jeopardizing the safety and welfare of surrounding communities.

Because of these threats, the people of Dalicno has immediately and strongly opposed the APSA 103 of ISRI ever since they have learned about this project.

In 2024, to further fast-track its operations, ISRI filed for an 82-hectare Special Mining Permit (SMP) located within the 581-hectare area covered by APSA 103. This move appears to be one of the company's strategies to continue its operations, as it has faced difficulties in advancing the APSA 103 process due to the strong and sustained opposition from the community.

Early 2026, the Sangilo Mines Expansion Project (APSA 103) by ISRI proposes to expand underground mining operations from 35.26 hectares to over 300 hectares in Itogon, Benguet. It also plans to increase its annual production capacity to achieve an operating capacity of 1,900 tonnes per day (tpd) for a possible 34 years of operation. The proposed production capacity will not only come from the Patented Claims of ISRI but also from the small-scale mine within the APSA 103. Plus, the preliminary technical review indicates that the current Tailings Storage Facility structure appears to be steeper than what is allowed by DENR regulations. This constitutes an apparent violation of established safety standards.

The people of Sitio Dalicno, Brgy. Ampucao and Brgy. Poblacion are now exhausting all legal means combined with mass actions to resist the company's application and to assert their rights to ancestral domain and self-determination. However, ISRI is not the only adversary in this struggle, but a part of a larger system that continues to exploit the country's natural resources and oppress Indigenous Peoples.



The APSA 103 (white outline) map illustrates ISRI's area of application, encompassing community-developed infrastructures, water resources, and the locals livelihoods. Outside APSA 103 is another application of ISRI - APSA 67.

# VIOLATIONS OF THE PROJECT AND COMMUNITY RESISTANCE

The National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) is accused of bypassing the proper process in approving the mining project APSA 103, issuing a Certification Precondition, and signing a Memorandum of Agreement without obtaining genuine Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) as required under the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA). The community asserts that their petitions, appeals, and requests for documents were ignored, leaving them in the dark from the progress of the application. Elders and other IP groups were excluded from consultations between the NCIP and ISRI where the Itogon Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (IIPO) misrepresented the direct affected communities prioritizing their personal interests. In addition, key legal safeguards under the IPRA and the Philippine Mining Act were also violated. These actions endanger everything that the people of Dalicno rely on, which only fuels their call to nullify APSA 103 and other related permits.



This timeline highlights the key events and actions taken by the community to oppose APSA 103 and the related MOA and Certification Precondition.

## 2012

ISRI filed APSA 103 for a production-sharing agreement within the Itogon Ancestral Domain.

## 2020

Sitio Dalicno, Camp Lolita, Tangke, and Simpa or Barangay Ampucao opposed APSA 103 through a petition which was supported by the barangay officials and passed Resolution No. 54. Sangguniang Bayan of Itogon endorsed the resolution opposing APSA 103.

After the passage of these LGU Resolutions, the community had heard nothing further about APSA 103, thereby arriving to believe they had successfully stop the project.

# 2023

## AUGUST 14

However, on or around this day they were shocked to discover—together with other Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous Peoples (ICCs/IPs) of Ampucao—that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for APSA 103 was set to be signed between ISRI, the project proponent, and the Itogon Indigenous Peoples Organization (IIPO) scheduled on August 18, 2023. Because of this the community was advised to attend the August 15 meeting.

## AUGUST 15

Indeed, a meeting was held on this day, which the community attended. Upon arriving at the ITC Building in Bua, Itogon, Benguet, they saw the presence of Provincial Board Member Johannes A. Amuasen, Rosita Bargaso of IIPO, Engr. Eric Andal of ISRI, and Atty. Severino M. Lumiqued of the NCIP Benguet Provincial Office. The residents immediately realized that this was not a community assembly exclusively for IPs, as an ISRI representative was in attendance. Nevertheless, the residents of Dalicno and other ICCs/IPs firmly expressed their opposition to any MOA concerning APSA 103.

## AUGUST 16

Kankanaey IPs submitted a petition letter opposing the MOA.

## AUGUST 17

A meeting was convened at Dalicno Elementary School by NCIP-CAR, where the community strongly voiced their opposition to the proposed project. Attendees aside from Atty. Lumiqued and other officers of NCIP-CAR are Engr. Eric Andal and other representatives from ISRI, as well as IPMR Ernani Pis-oy, Kagawad Marlon Pettoco, and members of the Ampucao Indigenous Peoples Organization (AIPO). During the meeting, Atty. Lumiqued of NCIP delivered a 40-minute PowerPoint presentation outlining the proposed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between ISRI, IIPO, and NCIP.

Following the presentation, Atty. Lumiqued remarked that not all members of Dalicno could be consulted, and that only a preselected council of elders had participated in the consultations. This statement sparked strong reactions from the community and other ICCs/IPs, approximately 370 people in total, who vehemently opposed the MOA signing.

## AUGUST 18

The community of Dalicno went to the ITC Building, Bua, Tuding, Itogon, Benguet where the scheduled MOA signing was to be held. The day ended without the MOA being signed despite the presence of the following people who were supposed to participate in the signing.

## SEPTEMBER 20

Despite community protests, it was discovered by the residents of Dalicno that a MOA was signed between ISRI and IIPO at the ITC, Bua, Tuding, Itogon, Benguet on this day. The signing of the MOA is without basis as no genuine FPIC was conducted in accordance with the guidelines set in NCIP Administrative Order No. 3, Series of 2012 (NCIP A.O 2 . 3).

## OCTOBER 9

422 IPs filed an appeal asking NCIP and MGB to expunge from the records the endorsed APSA 103 indicative map reflecting those identified in the FPIC-MOA as “No Mining Zone”. The appeal also emphasized that the MOA was signed without the two required community assemblies under Section 22 of NCIP A.O. 3. Because of this, ISRI never presented its proposed project, its operation plan, its scope, or any measures it planned to take to avoid or lessen adverse impacts. With no community meetings, there was likewise no genuine open forum where the ICCs/IPs could ask questions or raise concerns about APSA 103.

The appeal further noted that the Council of Elders was appointed solely by NCIP-CAR in a manner favorable to APSA 103. No notices were posted, and no validation assembly was held, as required under Section 22 of NCIP A.O. 3.

## DECEMBER

Community resolution entitled “A Resolution for the Adoption of the Appeal of the Dalicno Community of Barangay Ampucao to Expunge from the Records the Endorsed APSA 103 Indicative Map Reflecting those Identified in the FFPCI-MOA as No Mining Zones Particularly Residential Houses and Water Sources Situated in Dalicno, Ampucao, are Indeed Outside and/or Beyond the Coverage of the APSA 103 Project Area” was submitted to the Barangay Council of Ampucao signed by 348 IPs of Dalicno reiterating their opposition to APSA 103.

# 2024

## JANUARY

Multiple letters and appeals were submitted to NCIP and local government officials requesting action against APSA 103 and the MOA.

## FEBRUARY

Follow-up letters were sent to NCIP-CAR requesting FPIC process documents.

## MARCH

NCIP-CAR confirmed no Certification Precondition was issued for ISRI's Special Mining Permit application.

## MAY

DOMAPMA (Dontog Manganese Pocket Miners Association) an association of Indigenous Peoples engaged in small-scale mining operations set a barricade in defiance against a stoppage order issued by the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRB) chaired by MGB-CAR. The stoppage order was issued because of regulation and environmental issues. Before the stoppage order, Benguet Corporation Inc.'s (BCI) revived their long-standing Application for Production Sharing Agreement 105 (APSA 105) that covers the areas mined by DOMAPMA, including some parts of barangays Ampucao and Virac. There is reason to believe then that the stoppage order against DOMAPMA's mining site coincides with BCI interest to hold claim. By prohibiting DOMAPMA from mining the area, BCI is free to do as it pleases while the affected pocket miners are made to suffer a loss of livelihood brought by an unfair policy guised in the name of “regulation.”



DOMAPMA's barricade to resist the stoppage order against SSM operations issued by the PMRB



## JUNE 13

The community organized a Protest Caravan against APSA 103, with 148 individuals participating in 22 vehicles. The caravan's route began in Dalicno, proceeding to the Municipal Office of Itogon, then to the Provincial Capitol of Benguet. After the Capitol, it proceeded at National Commission on Indigenous Peoples – Cordillera Administrative Region (NICP-CAR) where the community had an unfruitful dialogue with its Regional Director Roland Calde. The caravan concluded with a short program at the Mines and Geosciences Bureau – Cordillera Administrative Region (MGB-CAR).

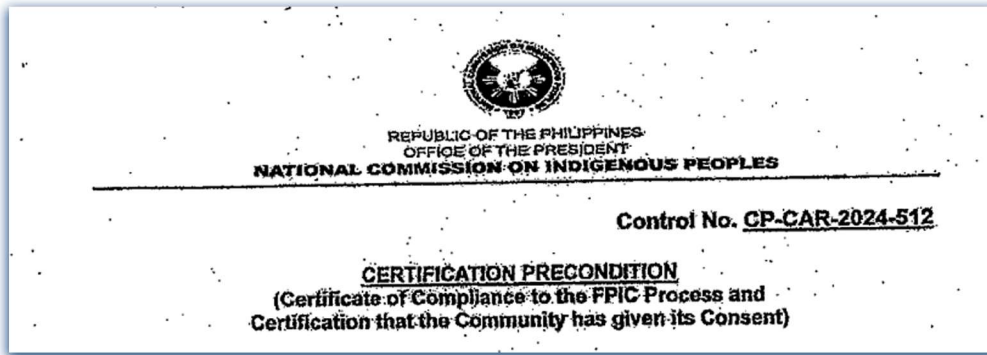
On the same day, the community submitted a position paper titled "*No to APSA 103, No to ISRI's Special Mining Permit (SMP)*," to the mentioned government agencies above.

However, while the caravan was ongoing, a joint team from MGB-CAR, the Benguet Provincial LGU, ENRO, Benguet Corporation, PNP Itogon, and armed military personnel arrived at the community's mining portal in Manganese. They padlocked the portal based on a questionable Stoppage Order.

In addition to opposing ISRI, Dalicno is also facing the threat of Exploration Permit Applications (EXPA) 122 and 123 of Benguet Corporation. The community finds itself caught between two large-scale mining companies - ISRI and Benguet Corporation.

## DECEMBER 23

NCIP issued Certification Precondition CP-CAR-2024-512 for APSA 103.



# 2025

## MARCH

It was only this month that the community learned that CP-CAR-2024-512 dated December 23, 2024 was issued by the NCIP and that this document was submitted by ISRI to MGB-CAR which, in turn, endorsed CP-CAR-2024-512 and other documents to MGB Central Office in fulfilment of the requirements for ISRI's APSA 103.

## JULY 15

Representatives from Dalicno filed a complaint seeking the nullification of the MOA, CP-CAR-2024-512, and APSA 103, along with a Temporary Restraining Order and injunction against further processing or approving APSA 103 on the grounds that it was issued in violations of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, the Philippine Mining Act, and NCIP Administrative Order No. 3. They also seek any other reliefs

that the court may deem just and equitable under the circumstances.

However, the Regional Trial Court Branch 62 in La Trinidad, Benguet dismissed the case. The court's decision weighed more on the technical argument and not on the merit of the case. Petitioners with their lawyers filed for a Motion for Reconsideration.

## NOVEMBER 13

The Motion for Reconsideration filed was dismissed. Petitioners with their counsel still continued on with the case and has raised it to the higher courts.

## NOVEMBER 25-26

Representatives from Sitio Dalicno joined the delegates from the other provinces of Cordillera region in the *Kalampagan Laban sa Korapsyon, Pribatisasyon, Terorismo ng Estado, at Pandarambong sa Lupang Ninuno*, held in observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW), which coincided with Mine (Un)Safety Week.

Delegates staged series of protests, including demonstrations in front of the House of Representatives and the central offices of the MGB, DENR, and NCIP. They also submitted position papers opposing these destructive projects and engaged in dialogues with the representatives of the Cordillera and Makabayang Koalisyon ng Mamamayan (MAKABAYAN Bloc), a political coalition of Philippine progressive parties, including Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela, ACT Teachers, and Kabataan.

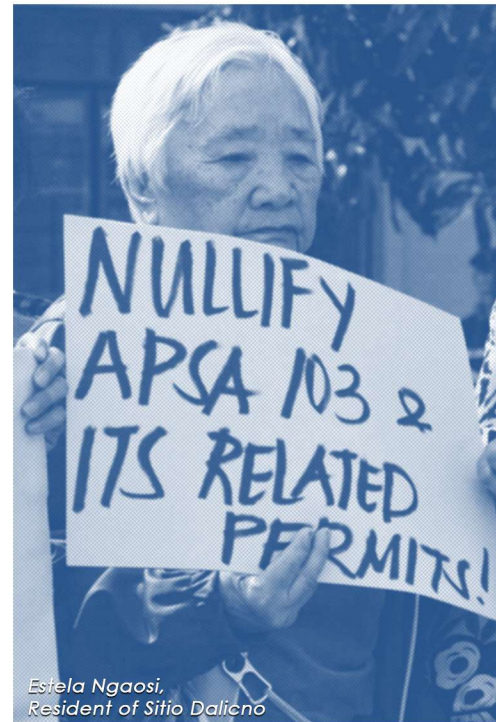


# 2026

## JANUARY 27

A Public Scoping for the Sangilo Mines Expansion (APSA 103) Project was held at the ITC, Bua, Tuding, Itogon, Benguet organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Management Bureau. The residents came to know of this consultation after it was forwarded to them thru Facebook messenger, 13 days before the actual date.

Instead of participating in the consultation, they chose collective action to register their opposition against this project. The public wasn't given enough time to review a highly technical 170-page report. At the same time, the supposed public document isn't really "public" since it cannot be accessed offline. There was no enough information dissemination until sitio level effort was conducted. With these, the community cannot be expected to come up with an informed opinion or decision on the project.



*Estela Ngaosi,  
Resident of Sitio Dalicno*



*Sister Jane Gasilang, Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary (SIHM), also a resident from Sitio Dalicno*



*Reynald Velasco, KAIABANG*



*Napoleon Fianza,  
Resident of Brgy. Poblacion*

## FEBRUARY 16

The residents of Sitio Dalicno, Brgy. Ampucao and Brgy. Poblacion attended the joint committee hearing to address the issues on APSA 103. This came after the success of the protest-action that happened during the Public Scoping. Representatives from ISRI, Itogon Indigenous Peoples Organization (IIPO), MGB-CAR, Environmental Management Bureau - Cordillera Administrative Region (EMB-CAR), NCIP-Benguet, Local Government Unit of Itogon, and barangay Ampucao at Poblacion also came. The hearing was facilitated by the Chairperson of the Committee on Mining and Energy, Hon. Johannes A. Amuasen, with the presence of Hon. Thomas K. Wales Jr. (Chairperson, Committee on Environment and Natural Resources), Hon. Romeo K. Salda, Hon. Ruben L. Tinda-an, Hon. Oliver K. Paus, Hon. Meica B. Cayat, and Hon. Reachelle C. Takinan-Balagsa.

The hearing became a space for the residents to bravely and sharply raise all the issues regarding APSA 103 while the application continues to advance. Some of the issues raised are:

- FPIC process violation – the residents were not involved in any consultation on the matter. Full report on the result of the FPIC consultations was once again requested from the NCIP.
- IIPO misrepresenting the voice of the community.
- The total area of application of ISRI was questioned. Also, the construction of their Tailings Storage Facility.
- Negative impacts of this project on the overall wellbeing of the community.

In the Facebook post of SP Benguet page, it said that the Sangguniang Panlalawigan will assist in gathering official reports from concerned agencies and prepare a consolidated report for presentation during the next scheduled joint committee hearing.



*Cristeta Caytap,  
Resident of Sitio Dalicno*



*Myline Sabiano,  
Resident of Sitio Dalicno*



*Sister Jane Gasilang,  
Resident of Sitio Dalicno*



*Erlinda F. Toquero  
Resident of Brgy. Poblacion*





Representatives from Sitio Dalicno, together with their lawyer and CPA as support, filed a civil case to nullify APSA 103



Residents from Sitio Dalicno joins the protest action during the commemoration of Bonifacio Day 2025



Dalicno IP Day, 2023



Residents from Sitio Dalicno and Brgy. Poblacion protested outside of ITC in Tuding during the Public Scoping for the APSA 103



Residents from Sitio Dalicno preparing for their protest caravan against APSA 103 in 2024

Cesar Carbone,  
Dalicno Indigenous Peoples  
Organization (DIPO),  
Dalicno Small-Scale Miners  
Association (DASSMA)

## CALLS AND DEMANDS:

Communities in Itogon call on the Philippine government and Itogon-Suyoc Resources, Inc. to uphold and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the meaningful and genuine exercise of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). They should also recognize that responsible small-scale mining is a legitimate livelihood and an indigenous practice of the community. Instead of endorsing more applications of large-scale mining companies owned by foreign countries, it should prioritize pro-people programs and policies which safeguards the long-term wellbeing of the environment and the people, ensuring a genuine and sustainable future for all.

