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# Mining company secures mineral ore export permit despite lockdown

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The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) has granted the application of a mining company to export chromite ore concentrate to China, a move described by anti-mining groups as “defiant” of existing general community quarantine put in place by local officials over the province of Leyte.

The Mineral Ore Export Permit was granted by the MGB Region 8 to Chromiteking Inc. allowing it to haul and transport around 7,000 wet metric tons of ores valued at P61.23 million from Homonhon Island in Guiuan, Eastern Samar, to any main point in China.

The ore was sold to Lee-Mah Trade Limited, for which the Philippine government will earn P2.45 million in excise tax, according to the Mineral Ore Export Permit issued by Leo Van V. Juguan, regional director of the MGB Region 8 on March 31, 2020.

Jaybee Garganera national coordinator of the Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) said the permit was granted on March 31, when the entire Leyte is under general community quarantine.

The province was placed under general community quarantine to prevent the entry and spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in the province via an executive order signed by Leyte Gov. Leopoldo Dominico Petilla.

The order placed under general community quarantine and enhancing the implementation of mandatory precautionary measures against the contagion.

The general community quarantine period covers 12 midnight of March 18 and will last until April 17.

“How could the MGB officials go to their office? There is a lockdown order by Governor Petilla, including Tacloban City,” he asked.

He also said that the local government of Guiuan, including the barangay with jurisdiction over the mines, was not informed about the permit despite their opposition to any mining operations since 2016.

Garganera also said the previous permit of the company was suspended because of lack of transparency and the suspension order of then-Secretary Gina L. Lopez.

“I don’t think the conditions [for the lifting of the suspension order] have been met to warrant the issuance of a new permit,” he said.

Garganera said the continuous operation of the mining company entails great risks of spreading Covid-19.

“What are the assurances and measures that the crew of that Chinese ship are free from Covid-19?” he said.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/06/mining-company-secures-mineral-ore-export-permit-despite-lockdown/>