

# Environmentalists call for closure of mining ops in Surigao

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Surigao City – An environmentalist group has joined President Duterte’s call to close down mining operations in Surigao provinces.

The Caraga Watch expressed its opposition to the environmental destruction caused mainly by mining.

The Caraga Watch alleged that mining operations in Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Dinagat Islands and parts of Agusan del Norte continue to displace the lives of both local fisher folks and farmers as a result of the adverse effects of the operations of large-scale mining companies, particularly on metallic operations.

Recently, DENR Secretary Gina Lopez already ordered the closure of 14 mining companies in these areas.

The Caraga Watch and also the Dinagat Diocese of the Philippine Independent Church alleged that the large-scale mining operations have changed the landscape of the once beautiful provinces.

They claimed that the mountains in the provinces mentioned are scraped and there are alleged several environmental violations done by the mining companies. The color of the sea has changed from blue to orange, they added.

Members of the Surigaonon Mangingisda Alang Sa Maayong Kaugmaon (SUMASAKA) also claimed that the siltation problem led to the loss of their livelihood as fish catch has dwindled and they cannot get shells anymore as siltation is now chest-deep.

President Duterte threatened mining firms operating in Surigao and Dinagat to clean up or pack up following the closure of at least 14 mining companies in Surigao provinces and Dinagat upon orders of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

“Kinahanglan mauli nila and ilang gikutkut dinha ngadto sa natural” (See to it that they (mining operators) return to normal what they dig there), the President said, speaking before the local officials and earthquake victims at Surigao City Gymnasium here on Sunday.

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