

# Duterte: Mining firms funding opposition's 'destabilization' plot

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President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday accused some mining companies of funding the political opposition in support of what he called a “destabilization” plot against his administration.

Duterte made the revelation in a joint press conference with Senate President Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel and Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez in Malacañang.

“Kayong mga mining (You miners), I know you are funding the opposite side. I know that some of you are funding the other side to destabilize [my administration]. If the police and the military will allow it, that’s their problem,” the President said.

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Showing photos of the ill effects of destructive mining, Duterte added: “Look at what mining does to our country. Is (Environment Secretary) Gina (Lopez) a liar? No... How can you argue with Gina when she’s confronting you with a visual case? What can your P70 billion do with the government? Nothing.”

While presenting his case, Duterte dropped the names of CitiNickel Mines and Development Corporation and OceanaGold , among other firms.

The President also said he was considering a total mining ban “in the meantime.”

Duterte earlier expressed support for Lopez’s anti-mining stance despite continued criticisms against her competence to head the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. In a speech in Baguio City on Saturday, the Chief Executive said the

country “can live without” billions in profit from the mining industry as he reiterated his support for Lopez’s policies.

The Commission on Appointment said Lopez, who is on a personal trip abroad, was deemed bypassed since she would not be able to attend its hearing before Congress takes a break this week. The CA will come up with a decision on Lopez’ appointment after an executive session on Tuesday. *ac/rga*

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