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News

## **National minorities up against mining**

National minorities will wage all-out resistance to the entry of foreign mining companies, announced KAMP (Kalipunan ng mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas). KAMP, an organization advocating the rights of national minorities, said it would conduct continuous protest actions both legal and meta-legal and launched collectively or separately to stop the entry of giant foreign mining companies.

KAMP said it would hold the Arroyo regime responsible for all catastrophes that would be wrought by mining. It demanded the abrogation of contracts entered into by the regime with imperialist companies. It revealed that 18 of the 24 priority mining project sites are in ancestral lands: ten in Mindanao, six in the Cordillera and one each in Palawan and Mindoro.

KAMP also condemned human rights violations, including economic dislocation, the forced eviction of minorities from their territories and ethnocide against tribal communities. The national minorities criticized the Human Security Act, saying that “mining and antiterrorism laws, undeniably to be carried out in tandem, will result in legalized political repression, massive land grabbing, and even the killing of people who oppose Arroyo’s mining agenda.”

On August 13, people affected by the planned resumption of operations of Philex Mining Corporation in Benguet picketed the company’s office. They also blocked the entry of excavation equipment at the Philex’s open pit mine site.

## **Massacre in Iraq**

Shiite leaders condemned the US Army bombing last August 8 of an impoverished community in Sadr City, which lies east of Baghdad. Up to 30 people were killed in the attack, including children and women. Helicopter gunships manned by joint US and Iraqi forces started attacking the community at dawn, claiming the area was a lair for Iraqi guerrilla forces.

The desperate attack by American soldiers and Iraqi puppet troops was due to their failure to quell the Iraqi people’s continuing resistance. Guerrilla forces downed two US Army helicopter gunships—an Apache AH-64 in Al Gedida district on July 31 and a CH-53 D in southern Baghdad early this month.

## **300,000 firearms missing in Iraq**

More than 300,000 assorted firearms and pieces of military equipment are missing from the inventory of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) as of July 2007. A US Congressional investigation revealed that firearms were being distributed loosely and that commanders could not be held

accountable for the issuance of military equipment. Among the missing firearms are up to 110,000 Kalashnikov rifles and 90,000 pistols.

Since 2003, the ISF has received more than 700,000 pieces of military equipment purchased through a \$2.8 billion budget for arms and equipment procurement. The amount forms part of the \$19.2 billion US allocation for the Iraqi Security Forces.

The US Department of Defense (DOD) is seeking from the US Congress an additional \$2.8 billion to purchase firearms for Iraq in 2008. The DOD, however, was hard put explaining why there were missing firearms and military equipment. DOD officials claimed that successive commanders charged with purchasing and issuing military equipment failed to conduct proper inventories due to lack of personnel. Neither could the DOD retrieve all of the signed receipts because it was allegedly difficult for American soldiers to go to Iraqi police stations and military camps. [AB](#)

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