



## **Justice Delayed - Thirty villagers win decades-old case against Canadian gold mine in Philippines**

Ottawa/Montreal/Manila/Boac - June 21 - Legal proceedings initiated in the Philippines in 2001 finally brought a measure of justice to thirty plaintiffs from two villages on the Island of Marinduque on May 16, 2022.

On December 6 of 1993, a newly built siltation dam burst at the Marcopper copper/gold mine co-owned and managed by then-Canadian mining company Placer Dome. The resulting torrent of mine waste that surged down the Mogpog River in the dark of night terrorized villagers living along the river, sweeping away houses and livestock, flooding rice fields, and burying two small girls.

While the failed dam was rebuilt, this time with an overflow, it soon fell back into disrepair allowing a steady flow of highly acidic and metal-laden silt to continue to contaminate the Mogpog River to this day.

A subsequent catastrophic tailings failure in 1996, this time flooding the Boac River with mine tailings, led Placer Dome to divest its 39.9% holding from Marcopper, in 1997, and subsequently leave the Philippines. In 2006 Placer Dome was acquired by Barrick Gold. While the mine has not operated since 1996, none of the severely mining affected areas have ever been rehabilitated, nor people compensated for nearly 30 years of irresponsible mining.

Beth Manggol, director of the Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns has supported the plaintiffs since the filing of the case. Commenting on the human costs of delays in justice Manggol noted: "Of the 61 villagers from Booboc and Magupua in Mogpog who filed the suit 22 died without justice, others gave up as the case dragged on, so that only 30 of the original 61 have enjoyed this victory."

The Manila-based Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center, which provided legal services to the plaintiffs, [announced](#) the [damages](#) awarded: "Judge Emmanuel Recalde of Branch 38 of the Marinduque Regional Trial Court granted 200,000 pesos in temperate damages and 100,000

pesos in moral damages to each of at least thirty plaintiffs in the case filed in 2001. Another one million pesos as exemplary damages was awarded to all the plaintiffs.”

“This is a welcome positive legal outcome to the decades-old case against Marcopper for the 30 victims of the two villages on the Island of Marinduque devastated by this disaster, says Patricia Lisson, Montreal-based Chairperson for the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines. “However, we stand in solidarity with environmental advocates and human rights defenders pushing to scrap the Mining Act of 1995, which continues to allow mining companies to plunder the environment and implement thousands of human rights violations.”

“It is good to finally see a legal victory, even if it is just for some of the many victims of nearly [30 years of irresponsible mining in Marinduque under Placer Dome’s management](#)” says Catherine Coumans of MiningWatch Canada, “I can only hope that Marcopper will settle the case with these elderly plaintiffs and not further delay justice by appealing the ruling.”

**For more information contact:**

Catherine Coumans, Asia-Pacific Program Coordinator, MiningWatch Canada,  
[catherine@miningwatch.ca](mailto:catherine@miningwatch.ca); 613-256-8331

Beth Manggol, Director, Marinduque Council for Environmental Concerns,  
[macec.secretariat@yahoo.com](mailto:macec.secretariat@yahoo.com)

Atty. Mai Taqueban, executive director of the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center,  
[mai.taqueban@lrcksk.org](mailto:mai.taqueban@lrcksk.org)

Patricia Lisson, Chairperson for the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines-Canada, [pmlglb@gmail.com](mailto:pmlglb@gmail.com)