

Inquirer Headlines / Regions

http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/inquirerheadlines/regions/view_article.php?article_id=127599

Lucio Tan firm seen behind plans vs Mt. Mantalingahan

By Redempto Anda
Southern Luzon Bureau

Posted date: April 01, 2008

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY – Antimining groups Monday accused MacroAsia, the flagship company of tycoon Lucio Tan, as the one behind moves to undermine the declaration of Southern Palawan's last remaining intact forest, Mt. Mantalingahan, as a protected area.

The Palawan NGO Network (PNNI) claimed that MacroAsia, which is applying for a large-scale nickel mining project in Brooke's Point, in the southern area of Palawan, had been using some tribal leaders to raise issues against the impending declaration of 120,457-hectare forest as a protected landscape, a plan recently endorsed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for approval by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We have reasons to believe MacroAsia is manipulating the tribal communities in the same manner it tried to do earlier with barangay captains who also tried to block the Mantalingahan protected landscape," Beth Maclang, PNNI advocacy officer, told the Inquirer.

Maclang claimed that MacroAsia was behind a press release that came out in some newspapers last week stating that the Brooke's Point Federation of Tribal Councils (Brofetrics) had petitioned President Arroyo not to issue the declaration.

Brofetrics claimed in a statement that the proposed protected area would deny the tribes their inherent rights over their ancestral lands.

Reached for reaction, MacroAsia vice president Rufo Cabanlig said he was not aware of the resolution made by Brofetrics.

"We are not doing anything like that. We are clean," Cabanlig said in a text message to the Inquirer.

He, however, declined to expound the company's position when asked whether it had plans to expand into the proposed protected area and that it regarded the creation of the protected area as conflicting to its future mining projects.

Brooke's Point Vice Mayor Jean Feliciano pointed out that the Brofetrics resolution, which was reportedly signed by 28 tribal leaders, was "spurious."

"Dulay does not represent the tribal leaders of Brooke's Point. He is not even credible among tribal communities as he is known to have been co-opted by mining companies," Feliciano said.

The mountain has been endorsed for classification as a protected area.

[^ Back to top](#)