
Updates on Illegal Fishing Case

1 message

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Dear Members of the TPAMB,

Yesterday, at around 6pm, the 26 illegal fishers were finally committed to the Provincial Jail. It took us three days to process all the documents for the filing of appropriate charges. We filed 6 cases for the violation of the TRNP Act, the Wildlife Act, and the Fisheries Code.

We turned over the estimated 5 tons of fish and some dried fish from the fishing boat to the Provincial Jail. They sent personnel to help our rangers and WWF staff haul the fish out of the boat.

The WWF-Philippines boat crew was very helpful in the turn over of the catch and in providing transfers, being very generous with their time, resources, and effort.

The BFAR provided the vessel, MCS 3001, to escort the fishing boat back to Puerto Princesa. It also issued the required certification and sent its personnel to collect and examine the fish.

The PCSDS was represented by its young lawyer, Atty. Sarah Diva, who spent a good part of the day, and the following one, notarizing documents, and by Atty. Adelle, who provided legal advice, as always. The PCSDS legal staff was very helpful in facilitating the work.

But our deepest gratitude goes to the Philippine Coast Guard, who did most of the heavy lifting, as they always did during our heavy enforcement days. From escorting the fishers back to Puerto, to guarding the fishers and boat, taking care of the antingen/medical examination of the accused, to providing transport and security services. Wescom and the Naval Forces West extended support in many ways too.

Engr. Purisima of the Provincial Capitol came to our rescue, when we lost all hope of getting the fishers committed to jail yesterday. Another antigen test and x-ray were required, which he organized with the Palawan Health Office and the Provincial Jail.

Our deepest appreciation goes to the rangers in the field, to the Philippine Navy, PCG, Cagayancillo LGU that they represent, who take to heart the work of protecting Tubbataha. Lastly, to the staff of TMO, who were prepared to move heaven and earth, sleep or no sleep, food or no food, to file the cases on time, that the labors of our law enforcement personnel do not go to waste.

We are now working on the transfer of the custody of the vessel to the Municipality of Cagayancillo for its beneficial use. We filed the motion yesterday and we hope to hear from the Prosecutor's Office soon. We also await the result of the examination of the samples of what we believe to be explosives collected from the fishing boat. The PNP SOCO informed us the results may be ready by next week and advised us to file a case.

With everyone helping in many ways, this heavy burden became lighter. Thank you for your assistance and support.

Sincerely,

Angelique Songco
PASu



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