

# Illegal logging rampant in Aurora national park

by MANNY GALVEZ  
Philstar.com

**M**A. AURORA, Aurora—Illegal logging continues to go rampant at the famous Aurora Memorial National Park here despite the presence of police and environment personnel and a crackdown waged by the provincial government.

The illegal operations have angered Gov. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo who expressed disgust that illegal loggers manage to pass through checkpoints.

In a forum with the Army, the Philippine National Police and local officials at the Capitol in Baler last week, Angara-Castillo said illegal logging at the 5,676-hectare AMNP, is bringing shame to the province. "It is not only logging trucks but also vans and tricycles loaded with forest products that are passing unchecked there. *Nakakahiya na* (It's shameful)," she said.

The governor, who said anti-illegal logging is one of her crusades in line with her platform of good governance, confronted Mayor Ariel Bitong for the continued operations of illegal loggers in the park, particularly in Barangay Villa. The *barangay* gained notoriety due to illegal logging after calamities in 2004 triggered flash floods that destroyed a steel bridge and killed 13 people.

Angara-Castillo reacted after a concerned citizen informed her that vehicles loaded with logs con-

tinued to pass Barangay Villa despite the crackdown she ordered against illegal loggers. The loggers reportedly transport their smuggled forest products in the wee hours of the morning. "Either *ang mga tao sa checkpoint e tulog o nagtutulog-tulugan* (the people manning the checkpoint are asleep or pretending to be asleep)," the governor said.

She took Bitong to task for failing to stop illegal logging despite the presence of the Army and the PNP in the area. "It boggles the imagination why you have the Army and the PNP with you yet logging vehicles continue to go unchecked," she told the mayor.

Bitong said they were not remiss in the campaign against illegal logging, adding that in fact, they have seized 1,500 board feet of forest products in recent operations.

But Angara-Castillo was unimpressed, saying smuggling of forest products in the park should be completely stopped as critics claimed the illegal operations have the blessings of the Angaras.

"You fail to stop illegal logging *tapos palalabasin nila alam ng senador, congressman at gobernador ito. Magpakita kayo ng ebidensiya na me kinalamang kami* (then they would make it appear this has the knowledge of the senator, congressman and the governor)." ■

# Violence erupts again over land in Boracay

by NESTOR P. BURGOS JR.  
Inquirer.net

**I**LOILO CITY—Disputes over prized lots on Boracay Island erupted into violence anew on Tuesday, May 19 after security guards of a property developer opened fire on two employees of a property claimant.

Workers Danny Cordero and Rico Marbete suffered wounds in their legs after security guards of the Winace Holdings Philippines Inc. allegedly shot them as they built a fence near a disputed lot in Barangay Balabag, according to a report of the Boracay Special Tourist Police Office (BSTPO).

The workers, both employees of property claimant Ruth Tirol, were setting up the fence when they were fired at by security guards Ponciano Tayco Jr. and Florencio Zabala, the BSTPO reported. The guards belong to the Winace Holdings Philippines Inc., developer of the One White Beach Resort.

The victims were brought to the Boracay Municipal Hospital



for treatment.

Lawyer Norman Tayag, Winace legal counsel, said on Wednesday, May 20 that the firm's security guards were caught by surprise when the workers started putting up a fence at the area that included the One White Beach resort property.

He said in a telephone interview that the guards fired warning shots, which triggered the shooting to prevent "further encroachment."

Tirol's lawyer, Romeo Gerochi, said the land was titled and part of the property of the Tirol family, one of the oldest residents of the island.

"We have authority from the court to fence that property," Gerochi said in a telephone interview.

This is the second case of vio-

lence in the piece of property this year. Last Jan. 17, employees of Winace and the Fridays Boracay also clashed, leaving one Winace employee wounded.

The two sides have traded accusations on who started the shooting.

The shooting is the latest in a series of heightening conflicts involving ownership claims over prized lots in the world famous 1,032-hectare island-resort.

Development in Boracay has gone unchecked in recent years, with individuals and businesses trying to cash in on the influx of tourists to the island's world famous white sand beaches.

Sanitation on the island was put in a cloud of doubt in the past as coliform, bacteria from human waste, was found to have contaminated its waters. ■

# NBI's findings: Failon's wife committed suicide

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committed suicide."

Mantaring said that the NBI, supported by all its findings and investigative leads after a month-long investigation, has now established and concluded that "no other person was present, or was with Trina inside the bathroom the moment the trigger was pulled and that the victim has the capability, motive and means of doing such act."

The NBI extensively focused on an essential part of the investigation.

Part of its official report revealed the findings of the NBI Neuro Psychiatric Section (NPS) in its psychological autopsy conducted which declared that the victim suffered from "Major Depressive Disorder."

The NPS explained that this mental condition is characterized by the presence of depressed mood most of the day, nearly everyday as indicated either by subjective report (Trina expressed her sadness regarding losing their money) or observation made by others (Trina was described by her family and friends to be tearful and at times, in deep thought); insomnia nearly everyday (Trina mentioned to her friend Joy Tan that she was unable to sleep much during her trip to Cebu).

The disorder includes feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt (Trina mentioned that she cannot face Ted with what she had done, and that she will feel worthless if Ted would not trust her

anymore); diminished ability to think or concentrate (Trina had exhibited poor judgment as she was planning to falsify bank statements just to buy some time); recurrent suicidal ideation, with a specific plan for committing suicide (Trina mentioned this not just to Joy Tan and Criselda Francisco but also to her sister Pamela in her last text message in which she asked forgiveness for what she was about to do).

National Capital Region (NCR) Division chief lawyer Edward Villarta, head of the investigating team, released the report to media.

The report said that the NBI-NCR also conducted a time and motion study on the possibility that Failon might have perpetrated the act, that he went to the second floor of their house, particularly to the room of their daughter Kaye, took the victim inside the comfort room, shot her, closed and locked the doors and returned to the kitchen.

However, the NBI pointed out that Failon did not have the time to do these acts.

The report also cited that during the case conference held between NBI investigators and forensic experts and the Quezon City Police District-Scene of the Crime Operatives on April 28, among the agreed points was that the concentration of blood was found in Kaye's bathroom, indicating that the shooting took place in the area.

The NBI also said the point of entry of the gunshot wound is the right temple area while the point

of exit is the left temple area with the slug producing massive destruction intracranially, particularly of the brain substance and basal aspect of the cranium resulting in death. ■

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