

## Domogan lashes out at usurpation charges

Written by Dexter A. See  
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BAGUIO CITY May 18 – Outgoing Mayor Mauricio G. Domogan lashed out at the usurpation charges being initiated against him by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on the issuance of tree-cutting permits for dead trees and those that pose danger to the public, saying that such charges are obviously in violation of the due process as enshrined in the fundamental law of the land.

The local chief executive claimed that the usurpation charges against him being floated by Undersecretary Benny Antiporda is another effort by some interest individuals and groups to subject him to trial by publicity when he was never given a chance to formally respond to such charges as part of due process accorded to people being accused of committing offenses.

He said that it is best for the DENR to file the supposed usurpation charges against him so he can answer the same in the proper forum as the DENR is not the authority that will resolve the cause but the duly constituted authorities.

"We do not even know if the usurpation charges were filed in the first place. We are wondering why such charges are being floated in the media and not the proper forum so that we can present our arguments that will dispute such unfounded and unfair allegations," Domogan stressed.

He explained that the emergency tree-cutting permits issued by his office passed through stringent investigation by personnel from the concerned offices of the local government who are experts in ascertaining whether or not the trees subject for the issuance of tree cutting permits are dead or those that pose eminent danger to life and limb.

According to him, he even issued an administrative order sometime in 2012 that required the conduct of a joint inspection of the trees being applied for the issuance of tree-cutting permits by the personnel of the concerned offices of the local government and representatives from the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) but such arrangement did not push through because CENRO officers often reasoned out that they have no personnel to do so when requested to conduct inspections on trees being applied for cutting permits.

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Domogan emphasized the city government does not want a repeat of the incident inside Camp John Hay (CJH) where a bright 16-year old high school student died after he was hit by a dead tree that fell when the same was not actually cut.

He asserted that the tree-cutting permits issued by his office are properly documented and passed through the process as prescribed under existing law, rules and regulations.

Local executives are authorized by law to issue emergency tree-cutting permits on trees that are either dead or those that pose eminent danger to life and property based on the assessment of personnel and certified by barangay officials who have jurisdiction on the areas where the tree subject to be cut are located.

He pointed out the supporting documents of the issued tree-cutting permits will speak for themselves that there was no usurpation committed in the first place considering that all issued tree cutting permits passed through the prescribed processes.

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