



THE SILENT TRAGEDY IN OUR LANDS: Professional Squatting and Land-Grabbing

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?



The Free Patent Law was created to grant landless individuals land for themselves.

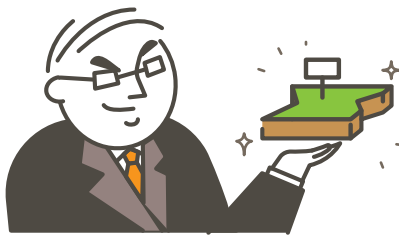


Instead, it is being used by able individuals with financial capacity to acquire huge tracks of public and limited land for free (professional squatting).



This is exacerbated by corruption and lack of organised control mechanisms within the agencies involved.

WHY IS THIS AN ISSUE?



Precious limited land resource of the country is being given away to financially-able individuals for free and as a business.



Forest Lands and Protected Areas are compromised and converted, instead of conserved, due to illegal occupation.



Land ownership, and the benefits that come with it, do not effectively reach the group it is meant to serve – farmers with the DAR program, Indigenous People with their Ancestral Domains, and Organisations with a legal contract serving public aims.

WHAT ARE THE AGENCIES INVOLVED?



Municipalities who receive taxes paid for land (titled or tax declaration).



Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) who grants tenurial instrument and monitoring on the ground.



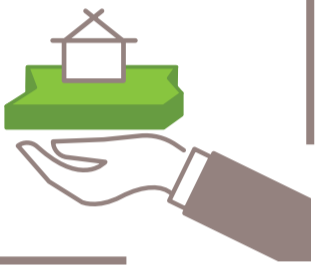
Regional Environment and Natural Resource Office, Land Management Bureau and Central DENR Legal Group who monitors and audits all processes.



HOW DOES CORRUPTION COME INTO PLAY?

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HELP LAND-GRABBERS BECAUSE OF THE PROMISE OF:

- 1 Share in the extorted amounts
- 2 Parcel of land grabbed.

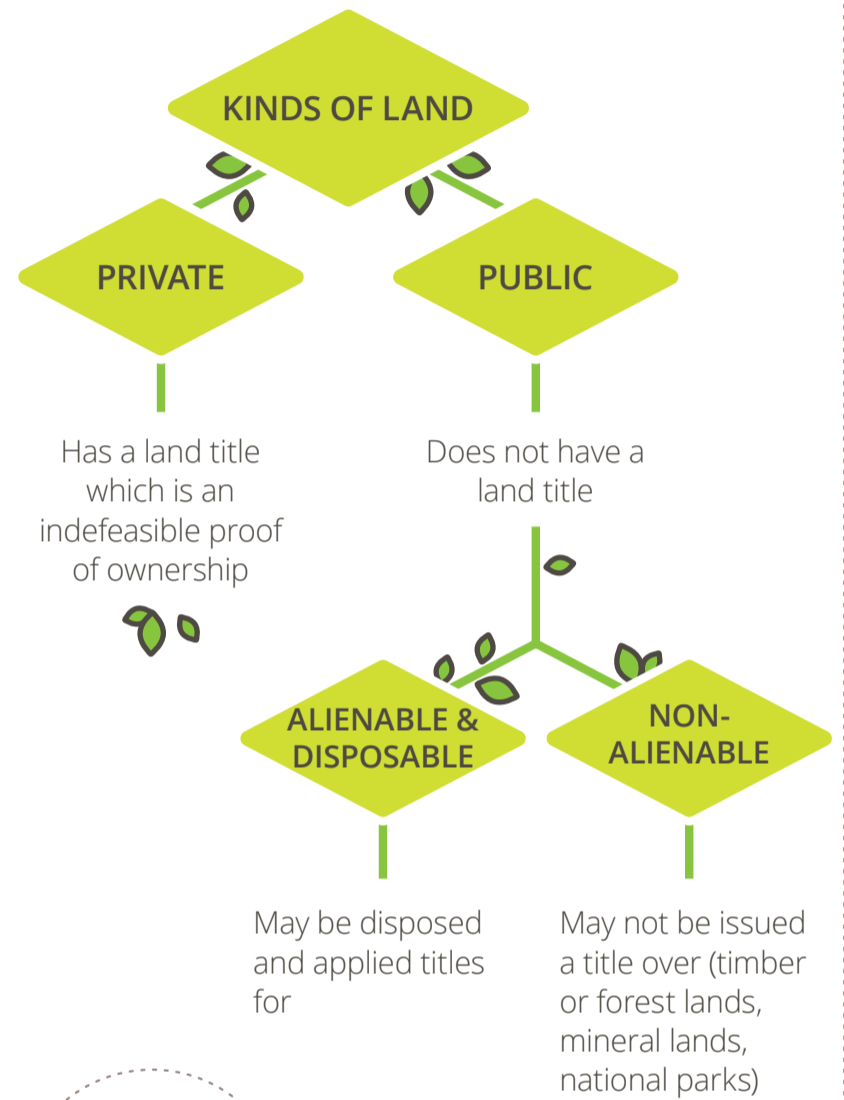


GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SUPPORT THE PRACTICE WHEN THEY:

- 1 Inaction
- 2 Non-intervention despite glaring violation of law and private rights
- 3 Tampering of public records
- 4 Issuance of irregular, inaccurate, or fraudulent documents and certifications
- 5 Assisting personally, physically, and providing political clout and even law enforcement (PNP, AFP) presence
- 6 Similar acts of omissions



OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION



WHAT IS NEEDED?

- ✓ Incorruptible and knowledgeable DENR officers on the ground to manage the limited land resource of the country.
- ✓ Halt granting of tenurial instruments and create reevaluations as needed.
- ✓ Police and military assistance in combatting professional squatting syndicates.



ARE TAX DECLARATIONS PROOFS OF OWNERSHIP?

Tax declarations and real property tax payments are not proofs of ownership. These may be paid for even without legal ownership to an area. Payment of these do not guarantee a title in the future.

