

Guatemala Urgent Action: 2 Campesinos Killed Protesting Global Mining Company Operation Supported by World Bank and Canadian Government

January 11, 2005

URGENT OPEN LETTER to officials with the Canadian government, Glamis Gold mining company and the World Bank.

CONCERNING: On January 11, 2005, Guatemalan farmers Raul Castro Bocel and Miguel Tzorin Tuy were killed by Guatemalan authorities while protesting the transportation of machinery to be used in the Glamis Gold "Proyecto Marlin" mining operation that is funded by the World Bank and promoted and supported by the Canadian government.

Dear Sirs/ Madams,

Below, you will find a declaration prepared by CNOG (National Coordinator of Farmers Organizations in Guatemala) concerning the killing of Raul Castro Bocel and Miguel Tzorin Tuy. You will also find a recent communiqué that had warned of potential repression related to this mining operation that is opposed by Indigenous communities in Guatemala. We can make available to you information that many groups, including our own, distributed last year, arguing that there never was a full and proper consultation process with respect to this mining operation and that there was growing opposition.

Please suspend operations of the Proyecto Marlin mining operation in the department of San Marcos, Guatemala. There are allegedly 2000 soldiers and police officers accompanying mining equipment to the site of the mining operation, presumably to ensure that work can go ahead – even in the face of widespread opposition. There is a risk of more repression.

Rights Action has supported community development projects for over 20 years in Guatemala. We are willing to collaborate in any way possible to avoid further blood-shed and to help bring about an open and transparent negotiation process with the affected communities about the future of this mining project.

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Letter sent to:

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT:

– James Lambert, Canadian ambassador in Guatemala,

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- Ginette Martin, Advisor, Canadian embassy in Guatemala,

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- Monica Izaguirre, Monica.Izaguirre@international.gc.ca

WORLD BANK:

- James Wolfensohn, President, Attention to: Minneh M. Kane [Asst. to the

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- Vice President David de Ferranti, E: Ddeferranti@worldbank.org

- Michael Swetye, Principal Investment Officer, Oil, Gas, Mining and Chemicals Department F8K-254, WB (International Finance Corporation), E:

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- Carmen Gadala, World Bank External Affairs Officer, E: cgadala@worldbank.org

- Jane Armitage, Country Director, Central America, E:

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- Neeta Sirur, Country Manager for Guatemala, E: Nsirur@worldbank.org

- Irma Yolanda Avila, civil society and indigenous peoples specialist Guatemala Country Office City, E: iavilaargueta@worldbank.org

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NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS - CNOC-

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To national and international attention:

We protest the death of two farmers in Los Encuentros, Solal., and we support the Indigenous peoples' rejection of mining operations in the west of the country.

CNOC, an organisation representing the interests of the Indigenous peoples and farmers of Guatemala, laments the death of Raul Castro Bocel and Miguel TzorIn Tuy, farmers who were killed today by Guatemalan authorities while protesting the transportation of machinery that the company Cropa Panalpina will use in the operation of mines in the west of the country.

The trickery of the transnational companies who, using stunning pretexts, want to destroy a community footbridge to transport their equipment provoked the rejection and wrath of the communities, who were then attacked by agents of the National Civil Police and Army soldiers at Los Encuentros, Solol., resulting in the death of two

people.

The local population in Los Encuentros organized to reject the exploitation of natural resources based on the following arguments:

1. The mining concession in Sololá or other departments of western Guatemala will not benefit Indigenous peoples in any respect.
2. That community works, like the footbridge of Los Encuentros, Sololá, should not be destroyed for the benefit of economic interests.
3. The central government never consulted with the rural communities regarding mining operations in Guatemala.

The transport of this machinery to the Department of San Marcos will serve to pillage natural wealth without the consent of the inhabitants. Therefore, the National Coordinator of Farmers Organizations (CNOO) joins the rejection of mining exploitation that the government of Oscar Berger has promoted during the 12 months of his mandate, concluding that this pro-mining policy will not benefit the rural communities in any respect, but will only further enrich national and transnational companies to the detriment of the communities.

The destruction of the natural wealth of Guatemala has not been properly dealt with by government authorities, as demonstrated by the breach of national laws and international treaties like ILO Convention 169 that protects Indigenous and Tribal Peoples world-wide. At the same time, Energy and Mining authorities have not achieved consensus with respect to the viability or not of mining, making it clear that certain economic interests favour interested sectors in the country.

Guatemala, 11 January 2005

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January 10, 2005, Press release / urgent action

The Guatemalan military may be called in to support the Canadian Glamis Gold mining operation (in Guatemala) that is supported by the World Bank, Canadian government, etc, at the expense of the development needs and human rights of local indigenous populations. Send messages urgently to the Glamis Gold company, World Bank, Canadian government and media about this on-going crisis situation.

40 DAYS OF PROTEST AGAINST GLAMIS GOLD'S GUATEMALAN MINE:

Monday, January 10 marks the fortieth day that platform trailers carrying milling cylinders for Glamis Gold's Marlin mine in the western department of San Marcos have been blocked from passing along the Panamerican Highway to the mine. Since December 3, the convoy – which cannot pass under a metal pedestrian crossing bridge 130 km northwest of Guatemala City – has been the object of a growing

opposition to metal mining in the largely indigenous populated highlands.

When the equipment reached the bridge, workmen from the transport company tried to cut away part of the bridge so that the trailer could pass. When the local population discovered that the equipment was for mining, they organized to protect the bridge and prevent the mine equipment from passing further. On the first day of protest more than 2000 indigenous farmers and villagers gathered, and tried to dissuade the convoy from traveling further.

When their demands were not met, one small vehicle carrying tools and fuel for the mine was set afire. The rest of the convoy retreated 2 km to a lookout point's parking area where it has remained since, guarded by private police under the vigilance of local villagers.

CALLING IN THE MILITARY:

Since December 3, the local mayor has stated repeatedly his determination to respect his constituents' demand that the equipment not continue to San Marcos where Glamis is constructing its Marlin mine.

The Guatemalan Interior Ministry stated on January 8 that it is prepared to call in troops to escort the convoy past the bridge despite local opposition. Villagers have stated that they will push the equipment over a cliff where it is parked if the military intervenes.

VIOLATION OF INDIGENOUS RIGHTS:

Opposition to the mining began when a mining license was granted by the previous administration in late 2003. Despite public assurances to the contrary, neither the company, nor the Canadian or Guatemalan governments ever properly consulted with the local communities, as required by national and international law. Once the communities discovered the extent of possible negative development impacts of the project, opposition formed around issues of violation of the rights of indigenous persons and environmental risks inherent to the cyanide leaching refinement process.

WORLD BANK INVESTMENTS:

The situation is further aggravated by the World Bank's International Finance Corporation's lending \$45 million to Glamis to develop the mine, despite written opposition to the mine project by local organizations, and the apparent non compliance of the WB-IFC to the Bank's own recommendations regarding extractive industries investments requiring their broad community support and clear poverty alleviating impacts.

WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION:

Local organizations and villagers have organized across four departments in support of the protest and demand a government /

company dialogue directly with the San Marcos communities affected by the mine project to reach an accord regarding the mine's future. As tensions rise and patience grows short, neither the company or government show signs of engaging those opposed to the mine, and the World Bank, having been informed of these problems since early December, has demonstrated no leadership or ability to address the situation.

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