

April 5, 2005

GUATEMALA: DEATH THREATS AGAINST COMMUNITY LEADERS OPPOSING the MINING OPERATIONS of GLAMIS GOLD, a CANADIAN/U.S. MINING COMPANY

One death threat stated: "The same will happen to you Mr Carlos Humberto for interfering in these stupid social issues, tomorrow will be your day to disappear from this world. Every pig eventually gets slaughtered, also Ms. Dominga [Vasquez] and her husband Alfonso Guarquez". ("eso te pasa Señor Carlos Humberto por estar metido en babosadas de la sociedad, mañana llegará tu día de desaparecer en este mundo, a todo coche [cuche] se le llega su sábado, también a la Señora Dominga y su esposo Alfonso Guarquez").

COMMENTARY of Rights Action:

We forward this urgent action from Amnesty International, as follow-up to recent documented cases of repression and death associated with the business-mining interests of the Glamis Gold mining company. There now appears to be an established pattern of repression and death associated with this mining operation, a big business "development" project that has been imposed on Guatemala with no real consultation with the affected local populations. Glamis Gold's Marlin mine has not yet begun to mine for gold - it is still in the pre-mining construction stage. Given the wide-spread opposition to this Canadian-US business, we fear that the repression and death will continue.

WHAT TO DO:

It is important to continue to let Canadian and US government officials (and World Bank officials, as the WB is a major investor in this "development" project) know about the repression and death associated with this mine, and to insist that all mining operations be suspended so that -A- justice can be done for the deaths and cases of repression that have already occurred; and so that -B- a full and public dialogue can take place in Guatemala, without fear of further repression, as to the real 'pros' and 'cons' of the global mining industry; as to what kind of "development" model the Guatemala people do want for their country.

[At www.rightsaction.org, you can down-load and print Rights Action's recent report "A Backwards, Upside-Down Kind of Development" about mining issues in Guatemala and Honduras, including a close look at the Glamis Gold company's interests. To get more informed and involved in these issues in the U.S. and Canada: info@rightsaction.org / 416-654-2074]

Thanks. www.rightsaction.org.

If you want on-off this elist: info@rightsaction.org. Please re-distribute and re-publish this information.

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April 5, 2005

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGENT ACTION

[AI Index: AMR 34/016/2005, Central America team, Amnesty International, International

Secretariat, Peter Benenson House, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom, equipoca@amnesty.org/ www.amnesty.org]

DEATH THREATS in GUATEMALA, AGAINST COMMUNITY LEADERS OPPOSING the MINING OPERATIONS of GLAMIS GOLD, a CANADIAN/U.S. MINING COMPANY

Carlos Humberto Guarquez, prominent member of indigenous rights group the Fundacion Maya (FUNDAMAYA), Maya Foundation, local mayor Dominga Vásquez and her husband journalist Alfonso Guarquez, have received death threats in an apparent effort to intimidate them into stopping their opposition to expansion of mining in the local area. Their lives are in serious danger.

On 25 March at about 11.45pm, villagers in Tablón near the town of Sololá in western Guatemala alerted the police to a burning vehicle, which had been doused in petrol before being set alight. The vehicle belonged to FUNDAMAYA and was used by one of the organization's staff, Carlos Humberto Guarquez. Five written death threats directed at Carlos Humberto Guarquez were found around the burning vehicle. One threat stated: "The same will happen to you Mr Carlos Humberto for interfering in these stupid social issues, tomorrow will be your day to disappear from this world. Every pig eventually gets slaughtered, also Ms. Dominga [Vasquez] and her husband Alfonso Guarquez". ("eso te pasa Señor Carlos Humberto por estar metido en babosadas de la sociedad, mañana llegará tu día de desaparecer en este mundo, a todo coche [cuche] se le llega su sábado, tambien a la Señora Dominga y su esposo Alfonso Guarquez").

Carlos Humberto Guarquez, Dominga Vásquez and Alfonso Guarquez are among five indigenous people who have been accused of inciting a protest on 11 January, against the transportation of equipment belonging to mining company Montana Exploradora (a subsidiary of the Canadian-US firm Glamis Gold), which owns two gold mining projects in Guatemala. The local governor for the department of Sololá presented a complaint to the local Prosecutor's Office which then filed criminal charges against them in relation to the protest, and is continuing its investigations.

FUNDAMAYA forms part of the recently created coalition Frente Nacional contra la Minería, National Front against Mining, which campaigns to raise awareness of the potential environmental damage caused by mining and the negative impact on indigenous communities living close to mines. Carlos Humberto Guarquez is FUNDAMAYA's representative to the coalition.

Dominga Vásquez received an anonymous threat by telephone on 5 January, after speaking out against mining in the area. The caller told her that she would "suffer the consequences for having led [this] . and be careful with what will happen to you" (que debía atenerse a las consecuencias por haber encabezado [esto].ten cuidado con lo que te puede pasar). The threats have been reported to the national police, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Presidential Commission of the Office of Human Rights (COPREDEH). Her husband Alfonso Guarquez, who is also the brother of Carlos Humberto Guarquez, is a journalist for the national information service Cerigua and has reported on local opposition to mining.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or

your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Dominga Vásquez, Alfonso Guarquez and Carlos Humberto Guarquez, after they received a death threat on 25 March;
- calling on the authorities to take immediate measures, in accordance with the wishes of those concerned, to guarantee their safety;
- calling for an immediate and thorough investigation into the death threats, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to ensure that any criminal investigation against indigenous leaders involved in opposition to local mining comply with domestic and international standards regarding fair trials;
- reminding the authorities of their obligations to respect the principle of free, prior and informed consent of communities to be affected by development projects, as stated under the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, ratified by Guatemala in 1996;

APPEALS TO:

Vice President of Guatemala
Eduardo Stein Barillas
Vicepresidente de la República de Guatemala
Casa Presidencial, 6ª. Avenida 4-18 zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
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Attorney General
Fiscal General
Juan Luis Florido
8a. Avenida 10-67, Zona 1, Antiguo Edificio del Banco de los Trabajadores
Ciudad de Guatemala, GUATEMALA
F: 502 2251 2218

Presidential Commission for Human Rights
Comisión Presidencial de Derechos Humanos (COPREDEH)
Frank La Rue, 13 Calle 15-33 Zona 13, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
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Montana Exploradora de Guatemala, S.A.
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Oficina No. 20, Guatemala City, Guatemala
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and to diplomatic representatives of Guatemala accredited to your country.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT:

- James Lambert, Canadian ambassador in Guatemala, gtmla@international.gc.ca
- Ginette Martin, Advisor, Canadian embassy in Guatemala, ginette.Martin@international.gc.ca
- Monica Izaguirre, Monica.Izaguirre@international.gc.ca

WORLD BANK:

- James Wolfensohn, President, Attention to: Minneh M. Kane [Asst. to the President], F: 202-522-1677, E: mkane@worldbank.org
- 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: Jswetye@ifc.org, F: 202-974-4323
- Carmen Gadala, World Bank External Affairs Officer, E: cgadala@worldbank.org
- Jane Armitage, Country Director, Central America, E: Jarmitage@worldbank.org, F: (202)676-1464
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