

January 2007

GUATEMALA MINING UPDATE:

SKYE RESOURCES ORDERS CHRISTMAS EVICTION: Mayan Q'eqchi' Communities on High Alert (Rights Action, El Estor, Guatemala – December, 2006)

After a series of illegal and violent evictions that took place on Sunday, November 12th, at 03:00, (more information: info@rightsaction.org), it appears that the Canadian Skye Resources nickel mining company (operating in Guatemala as the Guatemala Nickel Company ñ CGN) was attempting to go ilegalí with a Christmastime eviction.

Having recuperated lands – unproductive and unused for decades, that CGN/Skye Resources claims to own – in September 2006, hundreds of Mayan Q'eqchi' families faced their second potential eviction last week.

On December 8th, 2006, the Public Minister of Guatemala ordered the eviction of one community (Chac Payla, Lote 8), and thirty one individuals who are purportedly occupying lands that belong to Skye Resources. Chac Payla is the only piece of land that is actually owned by CGN/Skye Resources, though they have ìProperty of CGNî signs up all over the place.

The other five communities, including Barrio Revolucion, are owned by other private owners or by INCO, and thus are not technically property of CGN/Skye Resources.

Moreover, many Mayan-Q'eqchi' families in this region most assuredly have prior claim to these lands historically that would be established in a (non-existing) decent justice system.

Among the individuals named in the eviction order are environmental activist Loida Mejía [sic], Federico Pop Caal and his wife Carmelina Can from the Indigenous and Peasant National Coordination (CONIC), Emilio Yat, an ex-labourer for CGN/Skye Resources, and journalist Santiago Caal, who has covered issues relating to mining for Radio Sonora.

None of these individuals lives in a concessioned or recuperated community.

The inclusion of their names on the eviction order appears to be defamation and fear-mongering tactics by the company.

A notice from the National Police indicated that they planned to convene at the headquarters of CGN/Skye Resources and begin the evictions at 8am on December 27th.

Members of the community of Barrio Revolucion, along with the four other communities not listed on the eviction notice, were verbally informed just before Christmas that they too would be evicted on the 27th.

Rights Action arrived in Barrio Revolucion on the 27th to show our solidarity with the historic rights of the people living there, as well as to document whatever might go down should the evictions happen. When we arrived, men were convened in a small hut, and were summoned by a community leader to a large, covered area that they use as a gathering place. There were few women or young children, having been evacuated from the area in preparation for the worst.

It was through a local radio station that people in Barrio Revolucion found out that they would not be evicted that day. There were no written documents to inform them that the police and army would not enter, just second or third hand information. It is still not clear why the eviction did not take place, though some strings were probably pulled from higher up, as it was likely not considered to be in the national interest to remove hundreds of people from their lands two days after Christmas.

When we thanked community members for welcoming us on the special day of the supposed evictions, one man answered back for us, every day is special. Members of these communities live in a constant state of instability and insecurity, though many of them have hereditary and ancestral claims to the land.

WHAT TO DO:

Show your support for communities defending their right to life by contacting Skye Resources, as well as the other contacts listed below, and demanding that they not evict the Mayan-Q'eqchi' communities in El Estor, Guatemala.

Ian Austin, President and CEO, Skye Resources Suite 1203-700 West Pender Street Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6C 1G8 info@skyeresources.com

With copies to your own politicians and to: Better Business Bureau, Vancouver, inquiries@bbbvan.org; Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, contact@business-humanrights.org; INCO nickel company, General Inquiries, inco@inco.com; INCO, Investor Relations, investor@inco.com; INCO, Media Relations, media@inco.com.

Upon request, Rights Action can forward extensive information on the harms and human rights violations associated with nickel mining in the El Estor region over the past 40 years, or so. The 1999 United Nations Truth Commission implicated INCO in a series of human rights violations, including killings.

* The #1 line of work in favour of global justice, equality and the environment is to fund and support local organizations leading their own struggles in defense and promotion of development, the environment and human rights. In Guatemala, Rights Action channels your financial donations to grassroots human rights organizations that are taking a lead role in pushing this case forward;

* Get involved in education and activism work in your home community concerning the negative impacts of North American investors and mining policies on community-controlled development, the environment and the human rights of local populations in Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Chiapas, El Salvador;

* Consider coming to these counties on an educational-activist delegation and invite us to give educational presentations in your home community;

* Get on our e-mail and snail-mail lists.

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS: Make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail

to: UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887; CANADA: 509 St.

Clair Ave W, box73527, Toronto ON, M6C-1C0. CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: www.rightsaction.org.

QUESTIONS: info@rightsaction.org; 860-352-2152, www.rightsaction.org.

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