

January 24, 2008

GOLDCORP Inc. in HONDURAS:

LEAD, MERCURY, ARSENIC FOUND IN SIRIA VALLEY POPULATION LIVING NEAR TO MINE OPERATED BY GOLDCORP Inc.

Rights Action presents here a news article (complete article below, en espanol), as translated and summarized by Rights Action, reporting on how official governmental studies have found heavy metal contamination of people who live close to Goldcorp's "San Martin" mine in the Siria Valley, Honduras.

MULTIPLE HARMS AND VIOLATIONS

These health harms must be understood as part of a series of harms and violations caused by Entremares / Goldcorp Inc. in the Siria Valley: lack of transparency and initial consultation with the affected municipalities; deforestation; damaged homes due to massive use of explosives; overuse and depletion of surface and sub-surface water sources; contamination of water due to cyanide leaks and release of heavy metals into surface and subsurface waters; dust pollution and air contamination; undermining of the local agricultural economy, leading to marked increase in migration north of men to the U.S..

For the past few years, Rights Action has been denouncing the health and environmental harms, and human rights violations, being caused directly and indirectly by Goldcorp Inc.'s open pit, cyanide leaching mine in the Siria Valley. Our information has come from numerous site visits to the region and from our partner group the Siria Valley Environmental Committee (Comité Ambientalista del Valle de Siria) and Madre Tierra, a Honduran NGO.

UNJUST ENRICHMENT and NO ACCOUNTABILITY

Thus far, this information has fallen mostly on deaf ears in Canada, where Goldcorp is incorporated.

- there are effectively no laws, criminal or civil, in Canada to attempt to hold a company such as Goldcorp Inc. accountable for these harms and violations;
- the Canadian government continues to promote mining as a good "development" model;
- Canadian investors, from Canadian Pension Plan beneficiaries, to numerous pension funds to private investors, continue to benefit from their investments in Goldcorp Inc., even as the local population and environment suffer greatly.

Please re-distribute this information far 'n' wide. If you want on-off this elist: info@rightsaction.org. WHAT DO DO: see below.

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LEAD, MERCURY, ARSENIC FOUND IN SIRIA VALLEY POPULATION

By Dina Meza, Tegucigalpa, www.revistazo.com, January 22, 2008

Preliminary results, from lab tests done in Colombia from samples taken from the Siria Valley population, show presence of arsenic, mercury and lead in the people examined. The affected people of the Siria Valley demand actions against the Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.] company.

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Although waiting final conclusions from the (Ministerio Publico) Public Ministry's technical team, the Office of Forensic Medicine (la Dirección de Medicina Forense) has concluded that arsenic, mercury and lead have been found in samples taken from people who live in the Siria Valley where Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.] operates.

Over the past years, people living in the Siria Valley have been denouncing that the open pit mining of [Entremares / Goldcorp Inc.] has caused a series of harms to the people of the region. Yes, there is arsenic, lead and mercury says the [Honduran] Environmental Prosecutor.

Samples were taken from 40 people that live in the region where Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.] has been mining for a number of years. [RA: Since 2000] Of the 40 people, presence of the heavy metals was found in 28 of

them, according to information provided by Aldo Santos, [Honduran] Environmental Prosecutor.

Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.] has argued that diseases in the municipality of San Ignacio are not a result of mining but rather are due to poverty, to malnutrition, to mosquito bites and poor hygiene.

Due to the gravity of the results found in the studies done in Colombia, Santos said “we will take actions to have a meeting with the Secretary of Health because the results of the studies merit that the Secretary of Health take concrete actions to intervene, as there is the presence of heavy metals in the people evaluated.”

[...] He said also that it is up to the Secretary of Health to make a final determination as to whether mining is the cause or not.

With respect to actions, he said that although the company is leaving the country the Honduran Criminal Code provides procedures to be followed so as to determine responsibilities.

Carlos Amador, of the Siria Valley Environmental Committee (Comité Ambientalista del Valle de Siria) said: “Yes, there are contamination problems in the Siria Valley and the studies carried out were done by the State and the results prove what we have been denouncing.”

[...] Amador said: “We are going to carry out protests in Tegucigalpa and we will bring legal actions nationally and internationally so that [Goldcorp Inc.] is held responsible for the damages caused.” [...]

“I feel very bad” says a woman when she was looking for medical help. Modesta Arteaga, 54 years old, and Andrés Velásquez Turcios, 74, came to seek medical attention from Doctor Juan Almdares Bonilla, because they said they feel very bad and they have pain in their skin and in their bones.

They are from the community of El Pedernal, [municipality of] El Porvenir, where they have lived since they were born. But their lives changed radically, they say, ever since Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.] came to the Siria Valley. Their tired faces shout out for the authorities to do something about this situation.

They fear that due to the high costs they will not be able to purchase the medicines they need for the skin problems and pain in their bones.

Modesta said that for three years she has been sick with diseases. “First it hit me in my face. Then in my arms, then my neck. The doctors said it was due to the sun and I became all afraid and now don’t go out in the sun.”

“I am a single mother and have raised my children working hard out in the sun, without any protection, harvesting corn and cleaning clothes in the river, and never before,” she says, “have I ever had this type of problems.”

She described the pain in her bones that prevents her from staying still, even lying down. “It is a pain that I have under my ribs and I can no longer work. I have lost my memory. I am impotent and cannot work due to this problem, even as I take lots of medicine.” She continued: “This has been for all of us a disaster for our lives. I ask myself ‘Where is the medicine we need and what will happen to us? The company is leaving!’”

She pointed out that her whole family had been affected. “I have a daughter who is studying in the capital and she tells me that when she is in her home she cannot stand the pain of the skin infection”

“Before, we were quite poor, but we were healthy. I raised my children and I didn’t have any problems. Since I was 14 years old I have worked in the sun.”

She denounced that everyone in the community of El Pedernal is sick. “The waters are contaminated. I can buy purified water to drink but not for all the other chores I do, like washing food. I need to use water from the region.”

I HAVE SKIN INFECTIONS ON MY FACE

Modesto has dark brown skin and explains that the problems got worse around Christmas time of last year. “Look”, he says, pointing to his heels, “all this has been ruined, it burns all the time and this has been very hard for me.”

Both Andres and Modesta explained how Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.] releases waste everyday and when this happens the water runs with a mandarine colored type of cream.

On Tuesday, members of the (Siria Valley Environmental Committee) Comité Ambientalista del Valle de Siria came to the Fiscalía del Medio Ambiente to have a meeting with Aldo Santos, head of this department, to learn of the results of the studies of the samples that were taken in July. Santos read to them the results of expediente 4038-06, which are the preliminary conclusions that were sent to the Dirección de Medicina Forense in late 2007.

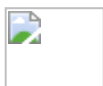
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VERSION ORIGINAL EN ESPANOL

PLOMO, MERCURIO Y ARSÉNICO FUERON ENCONTRADOS EN POBLADORES DEL VALLE DE SIRIA

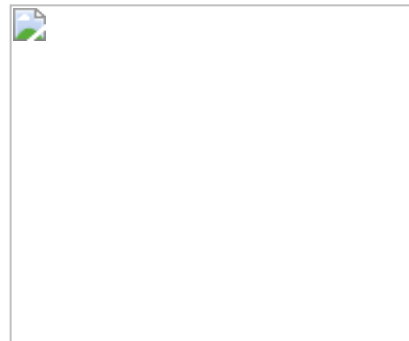
Por: Dina Meza, www.revistazo.com, January 22, 2008

Los resultados preliminares de los análisis de laboratorios realizados en Colombia, de exámenes practicados a pobladores del Valle de Siria, señalan la presencia de arsénico, mercurio y plomo en las personas evaluadas.



[ver video](#). Una afectada del Valle de Siria pide acciones contra empresa minera Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.]

Tegucigalpa. - Aunque todavía faltan las conclusiones de la parte técnica del Ministerio Público, la Dirección de Medicina Forense concluye que hay presencia de arsénico, mercurio y plomo, en personas que viven en el Valle de Siria, donde está la minera Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.].



Desde hace varios años los pobladores del Valle de Siria vienen denunciando que producto de la explotación minera a cielo abierto realizado por la compañía en mención, ha ocasionado una serie de daños a las personas que habitan en esa comunidad. Sí hay Arsénico, plomo y mercurio, dice Fiscal del Ambiente

La muestra tomada fue de 40 personas que viven en la zona de la actividad que minera que realiza la empresa Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.] desde hace varios años. De esas 40, la presencia de los tres metales pesados estaba en 28 de ellas, según los detalles proporcionados por el Fiscal del Ambiente Aldo Santos.

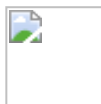
La compañía Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.] ha manifestado que las enfermedades en el municipio de San Ignacio no son consecuencia de la actividad minera sino de la pobreza, la mala nutrición, el mal manejo de la salubridad y de las picaduras de los zancudos. [Argumentos de la empresa](#).

Debido a la gravedad de la situación encontrada en los análisis realizados en Colombia, Santos dijo que "iniciaremos las acciones para sostener una reunión con la Secretaría de Salud, porque los resultados del estudio amerita que ésta pueda tomar acciones concretas para intervenir, ya que hay presencia de metales en las personas evaluadas.

Pero recalcó que dado que hay elementos reveladores en la opinión técnica, corresponde a la Fiscalía desentrañar si es producto de la actividad minera u otros factores exógenos.

Con respecto a la acción dijo que aunque la empresa minera se vaya del país, ya el Código Penal hondureño señala el procedimiento a seguir cuando eso sucede y haya que deducir responsabilidades.

[Escuche declaraciones completas del fiscal del ambiente, ante medios de comunicación](#)



Carlos Amador, secretario del Comité Ambientalista del Valle de Siria manifestó que "si hay problemas de contaminación en el Valle de Siria y los exámenes practicados fueron realizados por el mismo Estado y los estudios demuestran lo que nosotros habíamos denunciado".

Hay Arsénico, mercurio y hay plomo, nos dijo el fiscal Aldo Santos. En el estudio se revela que sí hay presencia de arsénico y plomo en el Valle de Siria, expresó Amador. Desde el año pasado hemos denunciado que se ha tardado mucho el Estado en dar los resultados, y hemos tenido algunas dudas no de la Fiscalía del Ambiente.

Vamos a hacer movilizaciones a nivel de Tegucigalpa y vamos a interponer una demanda a nivel nacional e internacional para que la empresa pueda responder por los daños ocasionados por la empresa, los cuales vamos a desenmascarar.

Amador dijo que van a buscar un equipo técnico que analice los resultados de los análisis.

Me siento muy mal dice pobladora cuando buscaba ayuda médica. Modesta Arteaga de 54 años y Andrés Velásquez Turcios de 74 años, llegaron en busca de ayuda médica del doctor Juan Almendares Bonilla, porque dijeron que se sienten muy mal de su piel y tienen dolores en sus huesos.



Ellos son de la comunidad de El Pedernal, El Porvenir, donde han vivido desde que nacieron, pero su vida cambió radicalmente según dicen desde que se estableció en el Valle de Siria, la minera Entemares [Goldcorp Inc.] Sus miradas cansadas piden a gritos que las autoridades tomen cartas en el asunto.

Ellos temen que los altos costos de las medicinas que tienen que comprar para poder aplacar un poco los problemas de piel y dolores de huesos, entre otros, les eviten comprarlos.

Modesta dijo que tiene tres años de estar enferma de una alergia. Primero me pegó en la cara, en los brazos y en el cuello, los doctores me decían que era por el sol, pero la verdad que yo me asusto porque ahora yo no me asoleo.

Andrés Velásquez Turcios y Modesta Arteaga (comunidad de El Pedernal, El Porvenir)

Yo soy madre soltera y he criado a mis hijos trabajando duro bajo el sol sin protección alguna, recogiendo maíz o lavando ropa en el río y nunca antes tuve este tipo de problemas, relató muy angustiada.

Describió que el dolor en sus huesos no le permiten permanecer ni acostada, "es un dolor debajo de las costillas y yo ni trabajo, he tenido pérdida de memoria y soy impotente ya no puedo trabajar por este problema y tengo que tomar muchas medicinas".

Prosiguió diciendo que "esto para nosotros ha sido un descalabro para nuestras vidas, yo me pregunto dónde está la medicina que es tan cara, cómo vamos a quedar nosotros porque la empresa minera ya se va y qué será de nosotros".

Con respecto a otras personas afectadas señaló que toda su familia está afectada, "yo tengo una hija que está en la capital estudiando y se va allá a pasar vacaciones y dice que cuando está en la casa no aguanta la picazón en la piel, tengo una nuera que no es de allí y también anda con giotes".

Nosotros antes éramos bastante pobres pero sanos, yo crié a mis hijos hasta que me comiera el sol y no tuve problemas, trabajo desde la edad de 14 años bajo pleno sol, se lamentó.

Denunció que en la comunidad de El Pedernal, todo mundo está enfermo, "las aguas están contaminadas, yo puedo comprar agua purificada para tomar pero no para todas las otras tareas como el lavado de los alimentos lo hago con el agua de la zona".

ME HAN SALIDO COMO HONGOS EN LA CARA

Modesto tiene la piel de su cara de color negro oscuro y manifiesta que el problema se le agudizó desde la navidad del año pasado.

Mire, dice, señalando sus tobillos, tengo arruinado todo esto, me pica y me arde, eso ha sido duro para mí.

Tanto modesta como don Andrés manifestaron que la minera hace descargas todos los días y cuando eso sucede el agua queda con una nata de color mandarina.

Varios miembros del Comité Ambientalista del Valle de Siria, llegaron este martes a la Fiscalía del Medio Ambiente a entrevistarse Aldo Santos, el titular de la misma, para conocer los resultados de los exámenes realizados desde julio del año pasado a varios pobladores de esa zona, con la intención de comprobar si hay contaminación producto de la presencia de la minera Entremares [Goldcorp Inc.] en la zona.

Con el expediente 4038-06, Santos les leyó a los representantes del Valle de Siria, las conclusiones preliminares a que ha llegado la Dirección de Medicina Forense, las cuales fueron entregados a esa fiscalía hasta finales del año pasado.

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Para comunicarse en español con el Comité Ambientalista de la Valle de Siria, escriben a Carlos Amador: piviamador@yahoo.com.

Para comunicarse en español con la ong Madre Tierra, escriben al Dr. Juan Almendares:.

WHAT TO DO: info@rightsaction.org, www.rightsaction.org

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE ... EVERY DAY

Rights Action (a tax-deductible organization in Canada and USA) funds and works with community-based development, environment and human rights organizations in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and southern Mexico (Oaxaca, Chiapas); and educates about and is involved in activism related to global development, environmental and human rights struggles.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about Canadian mining companies operating globally (www.miningwatch.ca) or in southern Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras (info@rightsaction.org).

EDUCATIONAL SPEAKING TOUR: In March-April 2008, Rights Action is organizing an educational speaking tour in Canada (and parts of western USA) on the global mining industry, the interests of North American investors, and human rights violations and environmental and development harms caused by the mining industry in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras.

EDUCATIONAL DELEGATIONS: In July, and possibly April 2008, Rights Action is hosting an educational delegation to Guatemala to learn more about community based resistance to the harms of Canadian/ US mining companies.

MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS for indigenous and community-based organizations – like the Siria Valley Environmental Committee - that are working to mitigate the harms caused by North American mining companies and implement their own development, human rights and environment projects. Make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to: UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887; CANADA: 422 Parliament St, Box 82552, Toronto ON, M5A 4N8. **CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS:** www.rightsaction.org.

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LISTEN: to the www.democracynow.org news program every day.

READ: Eduardo Galeano's Open Veins of Latin America; Naomi Klein's The Shock Doctrine.