

## PHOTO ESSAY: Gold mining and health harms in Honduras

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**SAME COMPANY:** Goldcorp Inc

**SAME ALLEGED PROBLEMS:** Health harms suffered by local, poor campesinos

**SAME TYPE OF MINING:** Open-pit, cyanide heap-leach gold mine

**DIFFERENT COUNTRY:** This time in Honduras

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### AIDA GREGORIA CRUZ (65 years old)



Photo 2. Aída Gregoria Cruz: lives in the Escanito community, 3 km from Goldcorp Inc's "San Martin" mine in the Siria Valley. Her illness appeared three months ago. During the day, her rash itches; she scratches. She feels desperate because the rash falls off in flakes, which causes it to itch more.

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### GOLDCORP'S "SAN MARTIN" MINE – HONDURAS

This Photo-Essay was prepared by the Siria Valley Regional Environmental Committee and Rights Action. Except for photo #1, all photos were taken between 12-13 March, 2009, by Carlos Amador ([piviamador@yahoo.com](mailto:piviamador@yahoo.com)), member of the Environmental Committee.

On February 20, 2009, Rights Action published a similar Photo-Essay: "Health harms in San Miguel Ixtahuacan where Goldcorp Inc. operates an open-pit, cyanide leaching gold mine": [http://www.rightsaction.org/articles/San\\_Miguel\\_022009.htm](http://www.rightsaction.org/articles/San_Miguel_022009.htm)



Photo 1 (Rights Action): Goldcorp Inc. uses this irrigation system to soak the massive pile of rock and earth with cyanide, which soaks through, attaches to and then separates off the gold from other materials.

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Since 2000, Canadian mining company Goldcorp Inc. operates the "San Martin" mine in the Siria Valley, via its Honduran subsidiary Entremares S.A.

Along with many people and groups in Honduras and Central and North America, we are convinced that the "San Martin" mine – like the "Marlin" mine in Guatemala - is the direct and indirect cause of the multiple health problems to the inhabitants of the communities close to the mine.

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**LICCY AMALIA CRUZ (4 years old)**



Photo 3. Licky Amalia Cruz: lives in the Escanito community. Her mother explains that a month ago Lucy began having itchy blisters on her head, which she scratched. Then, she began to lose her hair and have a constant itch on her scalp. She has been to the Health Center where they stated that her condition is the result of the region's contamination caused by mining.

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**JOSE ESCOTO (5 months old)**



Photo 5. José Escoto: lives in Palo Ralo, a community displaced by Goldcorp Inc., within 1 km of the mining activities. According to his mother Juana, José has bumps on his skin that itch a great deal. He scratches a lot during the night. He has been given medication, which allowed him to improve for a bit until the bumps reappeared.

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### **CHRONOLGY OF INDIFFERENCE AND IMPUNITY**

42,000 people live in the Siria Valley municipalities closest to the mine -- San Ignacio, El Porvenir and Cedros. Since 2000, the Siria Valley Environmental Committee has resisted the mine expansion into other municipalities and has denounced and demanded justice for the health and environmental damages. Rights Action has been supporting and working with the Environmental Committee since 2003.

To date, no justice or compensation has been achieved for the harms and violations. Goldcorp Inc. has the unconditional support of the governments of Honduras, Guatemala and Canada.

Almost every legal and administrative procedure and petition initiated by the Environmental Committee has been ignored or improperly dealt with by the legal system in Honduras. The government of Canada and mining industry reject every effort to pass legislation in Canada to establish even minimal criminal and civil legislation that could be used to hold companies like Goldcorp accountable in Canadian courts.

Goldcorp Inc is operating with almost complete impunity, and denies any connection between its mining operation and health and environmental harms and human rights violations.

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### **VELKI CAROLINA CRUZ CASTILLO (9 years old)**



Photo 6. Velki Cruz: has skin discoloration problems. She lives 3 km from the mine in Escanito. She has had this problem for the past three months and each day it spreads.

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**NORMA YOLANDA CRUZ (2 years old)**



Photo 7. Norma Yolanda Cruz: lives in Escanito. Her mother states that this young girl has pimple-like bumps on her skin that itch and cause her to scratch. Her scratching has led to bleeding which triggers more pimple-like bumps. Her mother is troubled by Norma's health condition. Her problem continues with no hope for improvement.

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**BRAYAN AVILA (17 months old)**



Photo 8. Brayan Ávila: lives in El Pedernal, located 1 km from the mine. His mother states that a month ago, small bumps began to appear on Brayan's skin. Upon scratching, a liquid appeared which upon contact with other parts of his body causes new bumps to emerge. This bumps now cover his entire body. Unable to withstand the pain and itch, Brayan scratches day and night.

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**ROSELIN MARIA ARTEAGA (5 years old)**



Photo 9. Roselin Maria Arteaga: lives in El Pedernal, 1 km from the mine. She has itchy skin wounds. Her mother states that they started as small pimple-like bumps that after having scratched herself have increased. Roselin cannot bear the itching caused by these bumps.

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**KAROL ANAHI ARTEAGA (2 years old)**



Photo 10. Karol Anahi Arteaga: lives 1 km from the mine, in the El Pedernal community. She has an itchy rash all over her body. Her mother has searched for medication but has

none has been able to solve Karol's problem. The medicines cure her momentarily, until the rash again appears.

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**CESAR YOHAN COELLO (7 years old)**



Photo 11. César Yohan Coello: lives in El Escanito. His house is located 1 km from the mine. He has skin wounds. The rash itches a great deal which leads to his vigorous scratching.

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**HENRY DAYOL QUEZADA (9 years old)**



Photo 12. Henry Dayol Quezada: lives in El Escanito. The skin on his entire body is discolored, which causes itching.

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**NELSON HERNANDEZ (1 year)**



Photo 13. Nelson Hernandez: lives 1 km from the mine in El Pedernal. His mother states that Nelson has an itchy skin rash. He scratches during the night. Upon scratching, bumps break open and spread to his entire body.

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**ANDRES VELASQUEZ (70 years old)**



Photo 14. Andrés Velásquez: affirms that he has lived his entire life in this community and he has never had these health problems, until the mine's arrival. He suffers from an illness in which his entire body itches.

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**ERICA GUADALUPE MARTINEZ (4 years)**





Photo 16. Erica Martinez: has a rash on her entire body. Her mother states that her daughter did not have this illness or any problems until the mine arrived. The entire family has skin rashes.

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**PEDRO RODRIGUEZ (65 years old)**



Photo 18. Pedro Rodriguez: lives in El Pedernal. He has a rash on his entire body. The rash itches so much that he scratches until it bleeds. Pedro affirms that he did not have this illness until the mine's arrival.

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**FRANCISCA CRUZ (54 years old)**



Photo 20. Francisca Cruz: has lived in El Escanito her entire life. She stated that she has never had this type of illness. She also mentions that the mine causes a lot of dust in the air.

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**WHAT TO DO?**

## **1- TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS**

for Indigenous and community-based organizations in Guatemala and Honduras that are resisting the harms caused by large-scale mining "development" projects and implementing their own community development projects, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

\* UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

\* CANADA: 552 - 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: [http://www.rightsaction.org/Templates/donations\\_index.html](http://www.rightsaction.org/Templates/donations_index.html)

## **2- MORE INFORMATION**

Read report "Investing in Conflict" about Goldcorp's operations across the Americas: <http://rightsaction.org/Reports/research.pdf>.

See film "All That Glitters Isn't Gold" (<http://www.rightsaction.org/video/gold/>) that documents health and environmental harms related to Goldcorp's "San Martin" mine in Honduras.

Go to [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org) for further reports, articles and photo-essays.

## **3- WRITE YOUR POLITICIANS, MEDIA, INVESTMENT FUNDS**

There is no easy way to help the poor campesinos of the Siria Valley in Honduras (or Mayan Mam villagers in Guatemala) being harmed by these gold mines.

Goldcorp has the full support of the governments of Canada and Guatemala; early on, the World Bank was an investor in and supporter of the "Marlin" mine in Guatemala.

It is fundamental that US and Canadian citizens hold Goldcorp, its investors and shareholders and the American and Canadian governments accountable for the environmental and health harms and human rights violations being caused by Goldcorp in Guatemala, Honduras, and elsewhere.

American and Canadian citizens should write to - and keep on writing to - their politicians, making them aware of these situations, demanding that our governments prioritize global human rights and environmental concerns over global business interests, demanding that our politicians use their power and authority to help hold our corporations accountable if/ when they violate human rights and/or cause environmental and health harms.

Canadians and Americans should write to and keep writing to their own Pension Funds and Investment Brokers – including the Canadian Pension Plan - to find out what types of corporations and businesses they are investing in, to demand that our investors prioritize global human rights and environmental concerns over profits, to insist that investments be withdrawn if/ when profits are being made at the expense of environmental and health harms and/ or human rights violations.

This is slow, long-term work.

We need to make our governments, companies and investment firms accountable to us in all facets of global economic relations and policies.

## ADDRESSES

Send a copy of this photo-essay, along with your own letter, to your own politicians, media, the company and your own investment firms or pension fund, demanding a response to your letters of concern and protest about this corporate and investment activity.

GOLDCORP Inc.

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#### **4- SPEAKING TOUR – “On the Road to Goldcorp’s Annual Shareholder Meeting”:**

On May 22, 2009, Goldcorp will hold this meeting at the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel, Vancouver, BC. Rights Action is organizing a speaking tour in central and eastern Canada with Carlos Amador, of the Siria Valley Environmental Defense Committee, and Francois Guindon, of Rights Action’s office in Guatemala. To host educational events in your community: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org).

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