

"No! ... Nivea skin cream, Vaseline and Dove soap will not cure the illnesses that the people of Siria Valley are suffering as a result of Canadian-owned Goldcorp's San Martin Mine"

HEALTH HARMS IN HONDURAS DUE TO GOLD MINING

BELOW: An article by Karen Spring, of Rights Action, after a recent visit to the Siria Valley in [Honduras](#).

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WHAT TO DO: see below

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CAN VASELINE AND NIVEA SKIN CREAM CURE MINING-RELATED SKIN PROBLEMS IN HONDURAS?

By Karen Spring (Rights Action, spring.kj@gmail.com), May 2009

On April 2, 2009, the Honduran Ministry of Health held a medical workshop in the Siria Valley to investigate the skin problems, hair loss and other health concerns of approximately 200 local residents.

(Three stations of doctors seeing patients with various symptoms believed to be linked to the mine. Photo: Karen Spring)

For years, many in the community have believed and still believe their illnesses are linked to the contamination caused by Goldcorp's open-pit cyanide leaching gold mine in the region.

This consultation was follow-up to the taking of blood tests of 40 residents from the mining-affected communities, conducted in August 2007. The blood tests were taken by the Public Ministry's Office of Forensic Medicine and then sent to a laboratory in Columbia where the samples were processed.

The residents of Siria Valley still have not seen the results of the blood tests, but have learned that the blood of 28 of the 40 people contains heavy metals including arsenic, lead and mercury. (For more info, see article by Dina Meza "Lead, Mercury, Arsenic Found in Siria Valley Population Living Near to Mine Operated by Goldcorp Inc" at www.rightsaction.org).

With very few answers and no medical results since 2007, the community members had hoped that their mining-related illnesses would be attended to at the medical consultation in the Siria Valley. Children and adults awaited their one-on-one consultation with the doctors.

Walking around the room where the patients were waiting, I could see rashes that dramatically discoloured the skin, large skin growths, red and puffy skin rashes and children with chunks of hair missing from their heads.

(Two local residents – one young and the other elderly – waiting outside in order to see a doctor about their skin problems. Photos: Karen Spring)

During the medical consultation, the Ministry did not take any blood samples from the residents. Instead medical notes containing names of medications, soaps, and creams, including Vaseline, Nivea and Dove soap, were given to those that were seen by the doctors.

(Medical note given to one of the residents recommending a treatment for the patient's skin problems: "1) Bath soap - Dove or Nivea 2) Libriderm." Many locals received medical notes very similar to this. Photo: Karen Spring)

Only a few residents (much fewer than the 28 who are known to have heavy metals in their blood) were given references on their medical notes that their health problem are caused by exposure to heavy metals.

(This man was one of the few individuals given a medical note saying his problems are caused by metals in his blood. Photo: Karen Spring)

One man that suffers from severe skin rashes around his stomach and torso was given a medical note saying that his health problems are caused by metals in his blood and further tests are needed. Unfortunately, this man will have to pay for his own transportation and costs to have these tests done; a process that he most likely cannot afford.

The people of Siria Valley need blood tests and medical diagnosis and need to receive the proper medical care for their health problems caused by the "San Martin" mine. The Public Ministry also must release the results of the blood tests taken in 2007.

Goldcorp's "San Martin" mine is scheduled to close at the end of 2009; however, Goldcorp still denies that their operations are connected to the illnesses in the local population, numerous deaths of animals and the presence of arsenic and cyanide that have been found in the local water sources.

The Goldcorp Annual Shareholder meeting is scheduled to be held in Vancouver, Canada on May 22nd, 2009; the shareholders will be told by a community member from the Siria Valley all about the problems his people have been forced to deal with since Goldcorp started its operations there 9 years ago.

And, no! ... Nivea skin cream, Vaseline and Dove soap will not cure the illnesses that the people of Siria Valley are suffering as a result of Canadian-owned Goldcorp's San Martin Mine. Nor will they stop the animals from dying, replenish the contaminated water supply nor regenerate the trees and vegetation that populated the area before Goldcorp plowed it all to the ground.

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SPEAKING TOUR - "MINING INVESTING IN CONFLICT" - APRIL 26 – MAY 18

Carlos Amador, member of the Siria Valley Environmental Defense Committee (Honduras), and Francois Guindon, Quebecois activist living in Guatemala and working for Rights Action on issues related to mining, are on a speaking tour right now in Canada. To find out where they are, Francois Guindon, c: 819-329-0223 ; francois.guindon@gmail.com

GOLDCORP Inc ANNUAL SHAREHOLDER MEETING - MAY 22

Goldcorp will hold its annual shareholder's meeting in Vancouver, Canada. Solidarity and rights groups (NISGUA, Amnesty, BTS, Rights Action, Mining Watch etc) are gathering to raise mining-caused harms and violations issues at the meeting. For more information, Steve Stewart: sstewart@codev.org

EDUCATIONAL DELEGATION TO GUATEMALA - JULY 6-14

Please join this trip that will investigate DAM "DEVELOPMENT" PROJECTS UNDER-MINING HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. Over 9 days, delegates will meet with development, enviro and human rights experts and activists; visit Chixoy hydro-electric dam affected Mayan-Achi communities; visit Mayan-Q'eqchi communities that may well be harmed by the pending Xalala hydro-electric dam; visit Mayan-Mam communities being harmed by Goldcorp Inc's huge gold mine. INFORMATION: Karen Spring: spring.kj@gmail.com