

Rights Action – March 23, 2011
Goldcorp Impunity Watch

WHO IS REALLY “GENERATING CONFLICT” IN RURAL COMMUNITIES?

LETTER CONCERNING GOLDCORP ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

BELOW

Final copy of a letter to the Government of Guatemala about insinuating remarks Goldcorp made, accusing 4 international human rights and solidarity organizations of “generating conflict in the local communities”: Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (USA), Collectif Guatemala (France), Breaking the Silence (Canada), Rights Action (USA & Canada).

Goldcorp is very aware of Guatemala's lack of democracy and rule of law. In the context of historic and on-going Guatemalan violence, repression and impunity, Goldcorp's comments increase the chance of violence and repression against human rights defenders.

DENIALS, IMPUNITY & MASSIVE PROFITS

Goldcorp made these comments after violence was carried out, February 28, 2011, against villagers protesting the environmental and health harms and human rights violations caused by Goldcorp's “Marlin” mine since 2004. (At www.rightsaction.org, find information about the February 28 protests and violence).

Since 2004, Goldcorp has denied any responsibility for any harms and violations linked to its mine, including: initial lack of local consultation; repression against protesters, including killings; forced and illegal land sales; cracked houses (due to massive use of explosives); water depletion and contamination; health harms to animals and humans; filing of trumped up criminal charges against community human rights defenders; violence and repression against local citizens; etc.

With gold near \$1,300/ ounce, Goldcorp directors, officers, shareholders and investors are making approximately 8 times as much profit, from this mine, as they initially predicted.

WHAT TO DO

Please keep on keeping on sending copies of this information, and your own letters, to Canadian and American (and Guatemalan) politicians and government officials. Goldcorp – like most North American resource extraction companies around the world – are operating with the full support of North American governments. Please send copies to pension funds across North America – like the Canada Pension Plan – that are invested in Goldcorp Inc, and most North American resource extraction companies around the world, with no concern for environmental, health or human rights concerns.

- Please forward this information and re-post
- To get on/off Rights Action's listserv: www.rightsaction.org

FOR QUESTIONS & INFORMATION about Goldcorp's mining related environmental and health harms and other human rights violations in Guatemala & Honduras, contact: info@rightsaction.org.

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WHO IS REALLY “GENERATING CONFLICT” IN RURAL COMMUNITIES?

LETTER CONCERNING GOLDCORP ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

TO: Álvaro Colom, President of the Republic of Guatemala

COPIES:

Director, COPREDEH, (Presidential Human Rights Commission)
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Embassy of Guatemala in Sweden
Embassy of Sweden in Guatemala
Embassy of Canada in Guatemala
Embassy of the United States in Guatemala
Office of the UN High Commission on Human Rights in Guatemala
EU Delegation in Guatemala
Centre for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)
Chair, Swedish Pension Fund Ethics Council
President, Goldcorp Inc.

RE: CONCERNS REGARDING ACCUSATIONS AGAINST INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS AND THE SECURITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN SAN MARCOS, GUATEMALA

We, the signatories of this statement, express our profound concern regarding accusations made by the Goldcorp Inc. company against four international human rights organizations working in Guatemala: the Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, Collectif Guatemala, Breaking the Silence and Rights Action.

The following is an extract from a March 1, 2011 letter [1] in which Goldcorp Inc. made serious accusations against these organizations:

"[...] On Monday, February 28, 2010, a group of approximately 200 individuals reportedly led by Aniseto López of FREDEMI, ADISMI, and other opponents of the Marlin Mine, blocked three public roads that provide access to the communities of Siete Platos and San Antonio as well as the Marlin Mine. The protestors, who were not members of the local communities, indicated that their purpose was to protest the Government of Guatemala's failure to suspend operations of the Marlin Mine. As of this morning, the blockades are no longer in place and the public roads are fully accessible.

"In a blog posting dated February 28, 2011, representatives of La Red de Solidaridad con el Pueblo de Guatemala, Collectif Guatemala, Breaking the Silence, and Rights Action asserted that the human rights of the protest leaders were being violated by their being detained. As explained in this message, this information is incorrect and the prompt posting of the blog strongly suggests that the actions in Guatemala and by these organizations were planned with the intent of generating conflict in the local communities. [...]"

The defence of human rights is recognized by the United Nations in its Declaration on Human Rights Defenders as an important and legitimate activity that merits protection from UN member countries.

The organizations mentioned in the Goldcorp Inc. letter, all recognized for their many years of solidarity work in defence of Guatemalan human rights, have been threatened and harassed because of their work to protect human rights in Guatemala.

We believe that Goldcorp's statement concerning events of February 28, 2011, poses a risk to the security of these organizations. As well, we consider the accusation that these organizations are "generating conflict" to be very serious. We are deeply concerned about this assault on the reputation of these international human rights organizations.

In a message to human rights organizations working with communities in Guatemala, Claudia Samayoa, Coordinator of the Guatemalan Human Rights Defenders Protection Unit (Udefegua), said:

"International human rights groups are vital to the work of human rights defenders in Guatemala, not only because they accompany us when we are in high risk situations but also because they witness the violence we experience in the context of our work. It is not easy to be a witness; sometimes our authorities are intolerant and try to silence or de-legitimize the voice of our witnesses. However, truth always wins out and today as in the past, the truth will be revealed and protected with the help of international human rights organizations in Guatemala."

According to information published by Amnesty International[2] and Front Line Defenders[3], on February 28, 2011, there were violations of the human rights of members of the organizations, Fredemi (San Miguelese Defense Front) and Adismi (Association for the Integral Development of San Miguel Ixtahuacán), who were participating in a peaceful public protest against the Marlin mine, owned by the Goldcorp Inc. company. These organizations were protesting in favour of precautionary measures imposed by the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights for the people of the municipalities of Sipakapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacán, in Guatemala.

The statement published by Amnesty International and Front Line Defenders, includes the names of Miguel Bamaca, Aniceto López and Alberta López, who were victims of attack, theft, death threats and arbitrary detention, amongst other things.

The statement posted by Goldcorp contains serious accusations against Aniceto López, the members of Adismi and Fredemi and the four international human rights organizations mentioned above. We are extremely concerned about this attempt to criminalize the work of national and international defenders of human rights in Guatemala.

We ask the government of Guatemala to fulfill its obligations, as described in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, in order to ensure that the defenders of human rights in the country can carry out their work without restrictions or reprisals.

We also ask the international community to observe the human rights situation in Guatemala, particularly in the municipalities of Sipakapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacán, where the "Marlin" mine is situated. We ask the international community to insist that the State of Guatemala fulfill its obligation to protect all human rights defenders in the country.

ADDRESSES:

Sr. Ing. Álvaro Colom
Presidente de la República de Guatemala
Secretaría de Comunicación Social de la Presidencia
Palacio Nacional De La Cultura

6 Avenida y 6 Calle, Zona 1
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Correos: webadmin@scspr.gob.gt, cartapresidente@scspr.gob.gt

Sra. Ruth del Valle Cóbar
Presidenta de la COPREDEH
2 Av. 10-50, Zona 9
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Correo: copredeh@copredeh.gob.gt

Sr. Roger Haroldo Rodas Melgar
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
2a Av. 4-17, Zona 10
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Correo: webmaster@minex.gob.gt

Embajada de Guatemala en Suecia
Wittstocksgatan 30
115 27 Stockholm, Suecia

Embajada de Suecia en Guatemala
Apartado Postal 966-A
Avenida La Reforma, Zona 9
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Correo: ambassaden.guatemala@foreign.ministry.se

Embajada de Canadá en Guatemala
13 Calle 8-44, Zona 10
Edificio Edyma Plaza
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Correo: gtmla@international.gc.ca, evelyne.coulombe@international.gc.ca

Embajada de EEUU en Guatemala
Avenida Reforma 7-01, Zona 10
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Correo: AmCitsGuatemala@state.gov

OACNUDH
Edificio Europlaza, Torre III, Nivel 14
5a Avenida 5-55, Zona 14
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Correo: informacion@ohchr.org.gt

Delegación de la Unión Europea en Guatemala
Edificio Europlaza, Torre II, Nivel 17
5a Avenida 5-55, Zona 14
Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala
Correo: delegation-guatemala@ec.europa.eu

El Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional (CEJIL),
<http://cejil.org/contact>

Annika Andersson
Box 3069, 103 61 Stockholm, Suecia

Charles Jeannes
President and Chief Executive Officer
Goldcorp Inc.
dina.aloi@goldcorp.com
david.deisley@goldcorp.com
Directors@Goldcorp.com

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SIGNATURES

1. Elisabeth Lundgren, Secretaria General, Movimiento Sueco por la Reconciliación (SweFOR), Suecia.
2. Anabella Sibrián, Representante en Guatemala, Plataforma Holandesa Contra la Impunidad, Países Bajos.
3. Norwegian Church Aid / Ayuda Internacional de la Iglesia de Noruega (AIN), Noruega.
4. Marianne Gustafsson, Coordinadora Regional, Diakonia, Suecia.
5. Rodrigo Arce, Coordinador Regional para América Latina, Forum Syd, Suecia.
6. Martin Wolpold-Bosien, Coordinador para América Central, FIAN International.
7. Francisco Contreras, Presidente, Solidaridad Suecia-América Latina, Suecia.
8. Peace Brigades International – Brigadas Internacionales de Paz (PBI).
9. Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, AC. Chiapas, México.
10. Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña "Tlachinollan", México.
11. Kelsey Alford-Jones, Directora en funciones, Comisión de Derechos Humanos de Guatemala en Washington, EE.UU.
12. Hermann Klosius, Presidente, Solidaridad de Austria con Guatemala, Austria.
13. CAREA e.V. (Cadena para un Retorno Acompañado), Alemania.
14. Peace Watch Switzerland, ONG para el acompañamiento internacional a defensoras y defensores de derechos humanos, Zurich, Suiza.
15. Lara Barth, Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA), EEUU.
16. La Plataforma de Solidaridad con Chiapas de Madrid, España.
17. Breaking the Silence / Rompiendo el Silencio, Canadá.
18. Felipe de Jesús Toussaint Loera, Coordinador de la Comisión de Apoyo a la Unidad y Reconciliación Comunitaria, a.c. Chiapas, México
19. Alejandro Cerezo Contreras, Acción Urgente para Defensores de los Derechos Humanos AC.
20. Servicio Paz y Justicia en América Latina (Serpaj), Montevideo, Uruguay.
21. Roland Bangerter, Movimiento Internacional de Reconciliación, Austria.
22. MiningWatch, Canadá.
23. Grahame Russell, Rights Action (USA & Canadá).
24. Kathleen Ruff, RightOnCanada.ca, Ottawa, Canadá.
25. Atlantic Regional Solidarity Network, Canadá.
26. Collectif Guatemala, Francia.
27. Hendrik Voss, National Organizer, School of the Americas Watch, EEUU.
28. Frente Miguelense contra la Minería (FREDEMI), Guatemala.
29. Edinburgh-Chiapas Solidarity Group, Escocia, Reino Unido.
30. Red Europea de Comités Oscar Romero.
31. Carmen Salavert, Secretaria de la Coordinadora del Estado Español de solidaridad con Guatemala, Valencia, España.
32. Marcelino Jimenez, Presidente del Centro de Documentación y Solidaridad con América

Latina y Africa (Cedsala), Valencia, España.

33. Consol Camí Adell, Presidenta, Associació d'Amistat amb el Poble de Guatemala, España.

34. Werner Hörtnner, Informationsgruppe Lateinamerika (IGLA), Austria.

35. Ruth Mougel, Presidenta de INTI Solidaridad con los pueblos de Centroamérica y Caribe, Francia.

36. Guatemala Community Network-Toronto, Canadá.

37. Comité Cerezo México. Organización de Derechos Humanos, México.

38. Herbert Wasserbauer, Coordinador Area de Incidencia , Dreikönigsaktion Austria (DKA), Austria.

39. Melik Özden, Co-director, Europe - Third World Centre (CETIM), Geneva, Suiza.

40. Red de solidaridad con el Pueblo de Guatemala en Zurich, Suiza.

41. Red de Solidaridad con el Pueblo de Guatemala en Berna, Suiza.

42. Urs Sekinger, Coordinador, Fondo de solidaridad SOLIFONDS, Suiza.

43. Comité América Latina de Caen, Francia.

44. Julio Cifuentes, Asociación Guatemalteca Canadiense (ASOGUATE), Canadá.

45. Julie Webb-Pullman, Wellington Zapatista Solidarity Group, Wellington, Nueva Zelanda.

46. Society for Threatened Peoples, Austria.

47. Comité de Solidaridad Internacionalista de Zaragoza, España.

48. Emelina Ramos, World University Students of Canada (WUSC), Guelph, Canada.

49. Edmé Domínguez, profesora de Estudios Globales de la Universidad de Gotemburgo, Suecia, y Coordinadora de la red nórdica HAINA de investigadores sobre cuestiones de género en América Latina.

50. Sasha Hanson-Pastran, Co-Chair Oxfam, U of S Campus Chapter, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK, Canadá.

51. Gary L. Cozette, Program Director, Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (CRLN), Chicago, EEUU.

52. Peter N. Jones, Ph.D. Bauu Institute and Press, Winter Park, Colorado, EEUU.

53. David P. Thomas, PhD, Assistant Professor, Politics & International Relations, Director of the International Relations Programme, Mount Allison University, Sackville, Canadá.

54. Harold Garrett-Goodyear, Professor Emeritus, History and Medieval Studies, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA 01075, EEUU.

55. Dr. Charles Simpson, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, State University of New York at Plattsburgh, EEUU.

56. Mary Ann Morris, Nursing Instructor, School of Health and Human Services, Selkirk College, Castlegar, Canadá.

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FOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION & ANY QUESTIONS:

info@rightsaction.org, www.rightsaction.org

ADISMI – Association for Integral Development of San Miguel Ixtahucan

Aniceto Lopez: anisetolopezd@yahoo.es

Javier de Leon: nimjavier@gmail.com

Carmen Mejia: carmenmejiaa@gmail.com

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