

Rights Action  
July 17, 2014  
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## **The Depths of Hell in Honduras: Honduran Collapse, Mining and Organized Crime**

Please read this short, powerful commentary on “the depths of hell in Honduras” by OFRANEH, a group that Rights Action has supported and respected since 1998. For now, there is no light at the end of the tunnel of Honduras’ misery and impoverishment, violence and impunity, and despair. While brave Honduran men and women are doing all they can to survive, and to document and denounce the horrific state of affairs, until U.S. and Canadian citizens hold our governments, the U.S. military, companies and investors, the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank to account for how we are contributing to and benefitting from Honduras’ exploitation, impoverishment, repression and despair, there will be no end to “the depths of hell in Honduras”, no end to the desperate exodus of people fleeing north.

- **See Below:** for more information / to get involved.

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### **The Depths of Hell in Honduras: Honduran Collapse, Mining and Organized Crime**

OFRANEH, July 11, 2014

(Translated by Rights Action. Original Spanish version below)

The proliferation of ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ mines across Honduras, prior to and following the passage of the new and totally questionable Mining Law, benefits the prosperity of a minuscule group of transnational companies, organized crime and their political leaders.

The recent accident in a gold mine in San Juan de Arriba, in the village of Cuculmeca Hill (Municipality of Corpus, department of Choluteca), which trapped 11 miners, seized the attention of a country engrossed in World Cup soccer and the apocalyptic violence that a small group of traffickers of misery has subjugated all of Honduras to.

Three of the eleven miners were rescued from the informal mine’s labyrinths, where another fatal mining accident killed two miners in July 2013. To add insult to injury, Mr. Juan Hernandez, current president of the country, demonstrated the executive power’s irresponsibility, writing a “tweet” that announced the rescue of the 11 miners. Unfortunately, that news was false, indicating the level of the president’s disconnection from reality.

President Juan Hernandez called mining “modern slavery”, and indicated that some mining companies “have ties with organized crime”. These companies exist and operate within a framework of maximum exploitation of the labor force and the total destruction of the environment, regardless of whether they are transnational or local, ‘legal’ or ‘illegal’. The code of conduct established by the mining companies is similar to that of drug trafficking cartels. No difference exists between Goldcorp, Five Star, the Templars or their numerous local counterparts.

Mining had governed Honduras since colonial times; it was only in the early twentieth century that swaths of land were given to fruit companies. Unfortunately, everything seems to indicate that during the

twenty-first century, the country will be devoured by transnational extractive companies and international capital, via mafias and hired killers that control political power.

At the same time that the mining labyrinths of the Culcumecca Hill crumble, the social fabric of the country dissolves at breakneck speed. The social disaster reaches unprecedented levels, to the extent that children are leaving in hoards, seeking supposed opportunities or simply fleeing from the prevailing violence.

The scenes captured in the photographs of the San Juan de Arriba mine area, similar to those photos of children catapulting themselves on train tops in Mexico, demonstrate the decomposition of a country that has collapsed, where the satraps in power, crying crocodile tears, persist in lying about the catastrophe that engulfs us.

Everything indicates that the eight buried miners have already died. Nevertheless, their families continue in their hope to find their corpses at the very least. The same occurs with Honduras as a whole, in the middle of the social catastrophe that we are living there are still remnants of hope for Honduran men and women. It is hope founded in the belief that one day we will be able to rid ourselves of the dictatorship of organized crime that has had a steel grip on power for the last decades. In this way, we could neutralize the beast that systemically drives the sad exodus of children who flee from the depths of Hell in Honduras.

Sambo Creek July 11, 2014

Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña, OFRANEH

<https://ofraneh.wordpress.com/2014/07/11/el-derrumbe-de-honduras-mineria-y-crimen-organizado/>

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## **Las Honduras del Infierno:**

### **El Derrumbe de Honduras, Minería y Crimen Organizado**

OFRANEH, July 11, 2014

La proliferación de minas legales e ilegales a lo largo y ancho de Honduras, antes y después de la aprobación de la cuestionada Ley de Minería y su reglamento, contribuye al enriquecimiento de un grupúsculo de compañías transnacionales, el crimen organizado y algunos de sus capataces locales.

El accidente acontecido en la mina de oro San Juan de arriba, en el cerro Cuculmecca, Municipio de Corpus, Departamento de Choluteca, donde quedaron atrapados 11 mineros, logró capturar la atención de un país sumido en los pormenores del mundial de fútbol y de la violencia apocalíptica a la que ha sido condenada Honduras, por un grupúsculo de traficantes de la miseria.

Tres de los once mineros fueron rescatados de los laberintos excavados en la mina artesanal, donde el año pasado en el mes de julio, ya se había dado un accidente que cobró la vida de dos mineros. Para colmo de males y como una muestra de la irresponsabilidad que suele aquejar al poder ejecutivo, el Sr. Juan Hernández, actual presidente del país, escribió un trino (twitt) anunciando el rescate de los 11 mineros, noticia que resultó ser desafortunadamente falsa, pero indica el grado de desconexión con la realidad que afecta al mandatario.

De “esclavitud moderna” calificó a la minería, el actual mandatario, Juan Hernandez, indicando además que algunas mineras “están relacionadas con el crimen organizado”. Indudablemente tanto las empresas

transnacionales, locales, legales e ilegales están enmarcadas en una visión de explotación al máximo de la fuerza laboral y una destrucción total del medio ambiente.

El código de comportamiento establecido por las compañías mineras se asemeja a las prácticas de los carteles del narcotráfico. No hay diferencia alguna entre Goldcorp, Five Star, los templarios o sus innumerables versiones locales.

Honduras desde la época de la colonia ha sido regida por la minería, y es hasta inicios del siglo XX que se implementa la entrega de franjas del territorio nacional a las compañías fruteras. Desafortunadamente todo parece indicar que el país en el siglo XXI será devorado por las empresas extractivas, beneficiando al capital extranjero, a través de la mafia que controla el poder local y sus sicarios.

Mientras los laberintos del cerro Culcumecca se desmoronan, el tejido social del país se deshace a una velocidad inusitada. El descalabro social llega a un nivel sin precedentes, hasta el punto que los menores de edad salen en hordas en búsqueda de supuestas oportunidades o simplemente fugándose de la violencia imperante.

Las escenas registradas en fotografías alrededor de la mina de San Juan de Arriba, al igual que las de los niños catapultándose a los vagones de los trenes en México demuestran el grado de putrefacción de un país colapsado, donde los sátrapas de turno en medio de lágrimas de cocodrilo persisten en desvirtuar la catástrofe en que nos encontramos sumidos.

Todo parece indicar que los ocho mineros soterrados ya fallecieron. Sin embargo sus familiares se aferran a la esperanza de por lo menos poder ver sus cadáveres. Lo mismo pasa con Honduras, en medio del derrumbe social en que vivimos, todavía hay remanentes de esperanza para los hondureños y hondureñas.

Esa esperanza se fundamenta en la creencia que algún día podamos sacudirnos la dictadura del crimen organizado aferrada al poder en las últimas décadas, y de esta forma podamos neutralizar la bestia del sistema impulsora del triste éxodo de los infantes huyendo de las honduras del infierno.

Sambo Creek 11 de Julio del 2014

Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña, OFRANEH

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### **Rights Action**

Since 1983, Rights Action has been funding grassroots organizations in Guatemala and Honduras (and in southern Mexico and El Salvador) working for community controlled development, environmental protection, truth, justice and human rights, and for democracy and the rule of law. Rights Action does extensive education and activism work concerning how the United States and Canada contribute to and benefit from endemic harms and violations in Guatemala and Honduras. Rights Action (Canada), founded in 1999, is independent from Rights Action (USA).

### **Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)**

To support community-based projects for human rights, justice, the environment and community controlled development, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8
- Credit-Card Donations (Canada & U.S.): <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations>

## **Honduras – Murder Capital of the World / Repression Capital of the Americas**

U.S. and Canadian citizens: Keep on, keep on, keep on sharing this information, and sending copies to your MPs, Congress members and Senators, and media. Since the June 2009 military coup, that ousted the last democratically elected government, Honduras has become the ‘Murder Capital of the world’, the ‘repression capital of the Americas’. Repression has reached the levels of the worst years of the 1980s.

Since 2009, the U.S. and Canadian governments have legitimized a succession of illegitimate, repressive regimes. North American companies and investors, and “development” banks (World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank) have increased business activities in African palm production, maquiladora sweatshops, privatized “model cities”, tourism and mining. The Honduran regime remains in power due in large part to its political, economic and military relations with the U.S. and Canada and the “development” banks.

Across Honduras, community based organizations in the pro-democracy movement need considerably more human rights accompaniment, funding, media attention on the harms and violations and education and activism in Canada and the U.S.

### **Contact:**

- Member Of Parliament: <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>
- Congress: <http://www.house.gov/> to get info for your member of Congress, and call: 202-224-3121
- Senate: <http://www.senate.gov/> to get contact for your Senator, and call: 202-224-3121

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