

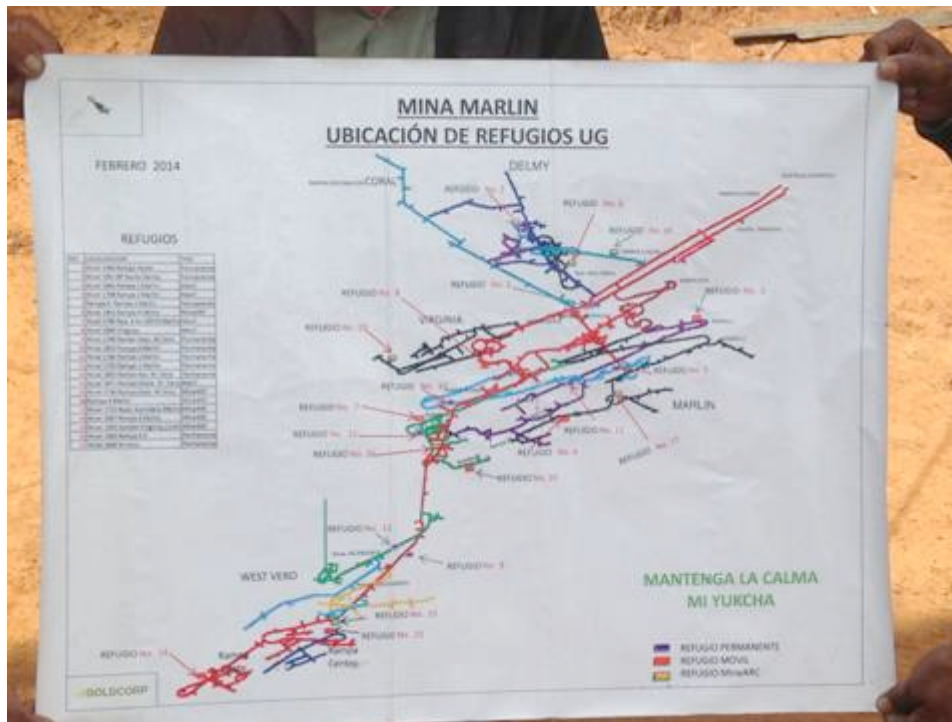
“These Savages Will Soon Be Going”

By Grahame Russell, February 26, 2015

(Visiting Goldcorp harmed communities in Guatemala, January 29, 30)

From January 28 – February 8, 2015, Rights Action travelled with a Canadian journalist and students from the University of Guelph (Canada), to meet with Mayan and campesino communities suffering environmental and health harms, repression and other human rights violations caused by the Canadian-led mining industry in Guatemala. Rights Action provides grassroots funding to the community and environmental defense and human rights protection work of the people we met with.

147 Kilometers of Goldcorp Gold Mining Tunnels Under Mayan Territories



At least 147 kilometers of (probably illegal) gold mining tunnels extend under the Mayan Sipakapan territory (smaller section, lower left) and under the Mayan Mam territory of San Miguel Ixtahuacan (central, upper right), as shown in this Goldcorp map held by Sipakapan campesinos working in defense of community and environmental well-being.

Since 2005, when Goldcorp – with the “protection” of Guatemalan police and soldiers – began cyanide-leaching, mountain-top removal mining and tunnel mining, the Mayan Sipakapan and Mam peoples of Sipakapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacan have suffered 10 years of environmental and health harms, repression and other human rights violations.



“These Savages Will Soon Be Going”

In San Miguel Ixtahuacan, Aniseto Lopez and Patrocina Mejia stand by just one of numerous fissures that have opened in the lands by people’s homes, in both Sipakapa and San Miguel Ixtahuacan.

As there is no way to hold Goldcorp legally or politically accountable in Guatemala or Canada because of impunity and immunity from legal liability, as with all cases of documented harms, repression and violations, Goldcorp simply denies any causal link between these fissures and the 147 kilometers of tunnels underground, and the massive use of explosive in both the tunnels and the open pits.

“These savages will soon be going”, says Aniseto Lopez, “they have stolen all they wanted from our lands and they are not wanted here.”



As Goldcorp continues with cyanide leaching, open pit mining at this “Los Coches” site,



... it is now re-filling the pit at the “Marlin” site with mining waste product ... where once there was a mountain.

Resistance Is The Hope



Gregoria Crisanta – Mayan Mam mother and community leader - explains that after all they have suffered, their remaining “hope”, in continuing with their resistance, is that other communities learn from their struggle and don’t have to suffer what they have suffered in San Miguel.

This Is The “Development”



With her husband tending cows, Diodora Hernandez (translated from Mam to Spanish by Aniseto Lopez) pointed at her prosthetic eye and says “this is the development the company has brought us.”

In 2010, two local men, working for Goldcorp, shot Diodora point blank in the head, trying to kill her because mine workers had been told by Goldcorp mine managers that Diodora did not want to sell her land, limiting Goldcorp’s open-pit expansion. In that meeting, workers said ‘they can take care of that problem.’

Goldcorp soon after acknowledged they know who the workers/ suspected shooters were ... and no justice has been done for this attempt on Diodora’s life.

Miraculously, Diodora survived the assassination attempt, losing her right eye, and hearing in her right ear where the bullet exited, and continues to live on her land.

“Divisions between life-long neighbours and community members is the development they have brought us,” she continues. “No water in our homes and wells is the development they have brought us.”

“I am from here, I was born here. My parents and grand-parents left this land to me. I will leave this land to my children and grand-children. This is how it is. I will die here.”

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Gold Fever

By Northland Films, the award-winning film “Gold Fever” documents gold mining, human rights violations, environmental destruction and impunity in Guatemala. The Canadian mining giant Goldcorp Inc. continues to mine relentlessly in San Miguel Ixtahuacan and Sipacapa, despite 10 years of documented health and environmental harms and other human rights violations.

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