

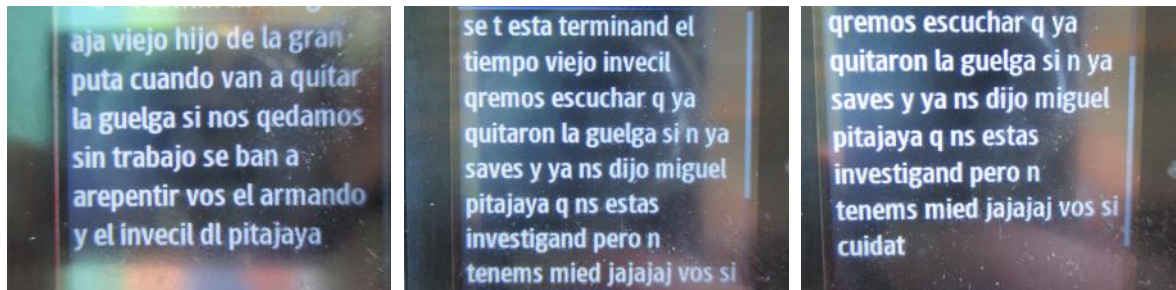
Aura Minerals Set To Start Destruction of 200 Year Old Cemetery In Honduras

Rights Action update

(View in browser: <http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=ea011209a243050dfb66dff59&id=d3523d3fc2>)

“Ha, you old son of a bitch, when are you going to stop your protests. If we lose our jobs, you will be sorry – you, Armando and that imbecile Pitajaya. Your time is running out, old imbecile. We want to find out that you have ended your protests – if you don’t, you know what will happen. Miguel Pitajaya told us that you were investigating us, but we are not afraid – hahaha – but, you, you better be careful.”

These are threats Genaro Montoya Rodriguez received on his phone in 2016, against himself and other community and environmental defenders from Azacualpa, in western Honduras.



The general population in Honduras - murder capital of the world, repression and corruption capital of the Americas since the U.S. and Canadian-backed military coup in 2009 - takes these threats very seriously. In this case, the threats came from an identifiable number. Genaro made a formal complaint to the police. No investigation was carried out.

On February 28, 2017, Javier Romeo - of Aura Minerals' subsidiary company MINOSA - informed local communities that, starting in April 2017, Aura/MINOSA will begin digging up their loved ones from their 200 year old cemetery, so as to continue with Aura's open-pit, cyanide leaching gold mining operation. Part of MINOSA's management, Javier Romeo works for Monty Reed, general manager of Aura's "San Andres" mine.



200 year old cemetery, in use since before Honduras was created as a nation state, sacred burial grounds of family members from communities of Azacualpa, San Andres Minas, El Cedo, Las Toreras, La Ceiba and El Esquin.

Family members and communities are utterly opposed to this on religious, spiritual and ethical grounds. Also, it is illegal. In the context of Honduras' corruption and repression, will the local population suffer repression, or even be killed, resisting the illegal digging up of their dead?



Some 40-50 meters from the edge of the cemetery, Miguel Angel Lopez stands on a precipitous edge looking down over where Aura has been open-pit mining for years, mowing down 1500 foot mountains, and higher. Far below, the now relocated village of San Andres Minas that was moved to this spot to make way for the initial mining.

A member of the Azacualpa Environmental Committee, Miguel Angel Lopez is one of 19 locals who were “criminalized” with trumped up charges by the police and judicial authorities working in concert with Aura Minerals. They have spent two years and scarce financial resources defending themselves against this “criminalization” tactic.



Genero Montoya Rodriguez, also with the Azacualpa Environmental Committee, stands further along the mountain top edge, looking down over another sector of Aura's mine operation.



Further up the mountain from their cemetery lies the village of Azacualpa. The gold Aura is pursuing lies not only under the cemetery, but also under Azacualpa and this entire mountain.

No digging up the dead for gold; no more environmental devastation for gold.

On-going financial support is needed for community organizing, legal work and mobilizing peaceful resistance to Aura's obscene plans. More advocacy and activism is needed across Canada, and in downtown Toronto (where Aura is based), to hold them accountable for the harms and violations already done, and to put an end to this destructive and repressive mining operation.

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Background

"Mining in a State of Impunity: Coerced Negotiations and Forced Displacement by Aura Minerals in Western Honduras", by Karen Spring, published by Mining Watch and Honduras Solidarity Network

- <http://miningwatch.ca/publications/2016/6/29/mining-state-impunity-coerced-negotiations-and-forced-displacement-aura>

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To support community, human rights and environmental defense organizations (like Azacualpa Environmental Committee) in Honduras and Guatemala, working and struggling for justice and for fundamental change from the local to global levels, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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