

Repression feared in Guatemala as protests continue: Goldcorp Inc. closing mine without paying for 13 years of harms and damages

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Since June 26, 2017, Mayan Mam and Sipakapan people have been peacefully blocking the Canadian owned Goldcorp's cyanide-leaching mine in Guatemala, protesting 13 years of environmental and health harms, and human rights violations.

"The world needs more Canada."

(Propaganda disseminated by all levels of government and private sector partners leading up to the celebration of the "Canada 150" anniversary)

Statement by FREDEMI & Plurijur
July 4, 2017

Government and company repression feared at community protest against harms and losses caused by Goldcorp's "Marlin" mine, from 2004-2017

FREDEMI (San Miguel Ixtahuacan Defense Front), representing communities in resistance to Goldcorp's Marlin mine, and PLURIJUR (Pluricultural justice association of Guatemala) denounce that Goldcorp has, after 13 years of operations, left a legacy of health and environmental harms, family and community divisions and violence, against the collective rights and well-being of the Mayan Mam people of San Miguel Ixtahuacan and Mayan Sipakapan people of Sipakapa.



(Photo @ FREDEMI, July 1, 2017. One of the Goldcorp mine entrance blockades)

We are happy that as of May 30, 2017, mining operations ended, including the use of explosives that so harmed and terrified our communities and children. Moreover, the explosives kept on causing structural damages to our homes and buildings.

But, since the suspension of mining, Goldcorp has refused to pay for harms and losses it has caused since 2005, as corroborated by a Verification Commission set up by the Mayor's office. In April of this year, we formally presented over 200 personal and community files, documenting the harms and losses. Three times – April 5, May 11, June 4-5 – we had meetings, and each time Goldcorp refused to accept any responsibility.

Thus, on June 26, 2017, we began a peaceful blockade of the entrances to the mine, demanding that the Guatemalan government and Goldcorp engage in serious discussions about how to repair the harms and losses they caused.

We have been subject to threats and acts of intimidation by private security hired by Goldcorp and the National Civilian Police, including an incident when a police officer put his pistol to the head of one of our community members. We fear a violent reaction in any moment.

We call on national and international solidarity to support us as we protest peacefully in favour of the complete reparation of all harms and losses caused by Goldcorp, from 2004-2017.

More information

- Aniseto Lopez, FREDEMI, 3164-7183, <https://www.facebook.com/aniseto.lopezdiaz>
- Miguel Angel Bamaca, FREDEMI, 4240-7887
- Carlos Loarca, PLURIJUR, 4481-9147

Why Hondurans and Guatemalans Flee North

The exploitation and poverty, repression, corruption and impunity of Honduras and Guatemala are “American” and “Canadian” issues. The U.S. and Canadian governments, the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, and North American companies and investors (including pension funds), maintain profitable economic and military relations with the Guatemalan and Honduran regimes, turning a blind eye and/or directly contributing to environmental harms, exploitation, repression, corruption and impunity that force so many to flee their homes and country, decade after decade.

Keep on sending copies of this information, and your own letters, to your politicians and media, to your pension and investment funds, asking: Why our governments, companies and investment firms benefit from and turn a blind eye to the poverty, repression and violence, and environmental and health harms in Guatemala and Honduras?

Forthcoming book

“Mining Impunity in the Aftermath of Guatemala’s Genocide: The Violence of Contemporary Predatory Mineral Exploitation” (provisional title)

Co-edited by Professor Catherine Nolin and Grahame Russell, “Mining Impunity in the Aftermath of Guatemala’s Genocide” (to be published in late 2017, early 2018) will analyze the environmental and health harms, human rights violations and repression linked to Canadian (and U.S.) companies INCO-Hudbay Minerals, Goldcorp Inc, Tahoe Resources, KCA-Radius Gold, and the role of governments and investors (private and pension funds) in promoting the relentless expansion of these companies, while ignoring or denying the systemic harms, violations and repression the mining operations cause, and the endemic conditions of violence, corruption and impunity in Guatemala in which the companies are knowingly operating.

Documentary film

Gold Fever

This award-winning film by Northland Films documents how Canadian mining giant Goldcorp Inc. has been mining relentlessly in Guatemala, despite well documented repression, human rights violations, environmental destruction, and endemic corruption and impunity. Gold Fever takes the viewer into the homes and communities of courageous Mayan Mam people resisting harms and violations, struggling for justice and a different “development” model.

Trailer: <http://www.goldfevermovie.com/>

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

To support community, human rights and environmental defense organizations in Honduras and Guatemala – such as FREDEMI -, suffering harms, violations and repression due to mining, and working and struggling for justice and for fundamental transformation from the local to national to global levels, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- U.S.: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

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