

Urgent Action

INCO Mine Threatens Guatemalans

Taken from files of Rights Action

An invitation by INCO Canada to host the mayor of a Guatemalan town on a visit to Ontario highlights the urgency of an appeal to the public to protest INCO's current activities in Guatemala.

The multinational mining company has invited Rigoberto Chub, the mayor of El Estor in northeastern Guatemala, for a ten-day tour of Ontario that will include visits to INCO's mining facilities. INCO cites Chub's receptiveness to its reopening mining activity in El Estor as the reason for the visit.

El Estor's Mayan Q'eqchi communities and local human rights activists are opposed to this, stating that INCO's exploitation of the El Estor Region in previous decades resulted in environmental damage and forced displacement of the local population. These groups say that Rigoberto Chub, once an officer in the Guatemalan army who had organized the forced recruitment of young indigenous men into the Guatemalan military, has since been suspected of vote-buying and misappropriation of public funds.

The public can write to INCO to ask that the company: fund and support an independent investigation into human rights abuses that occurred when INCO was active in Guatemala (1960-82); fund and support an investigation into the negative environmental and health effects caused by INCO's previous operations in El Estor with the goal of repairing related damage; respect Guatemalan and international laws protecting the rights of indigenous peoples who inhabit the land INCO wants to mine.

Letters should be addressed to: Mr. Scott Hand, CEO, INCO Ltd, 145 King St. W. #1500, Toronto ON M5H 4B7.

For information: www.rightsaction.org

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