

August 18, 2006

HONDURAS: Independent Study Reveals Dangerous Levels of Heavy Metal Contamination in Water and Blood Samples in the Communities Affected by Glamis Gold's Mining Activities in the Siria Valley.

- This alert prepared by Rights Action's Sandra Cuffe
- Please re-distribute this info far and wide

To get on/ off this elist, or to get more involved in work to promote the community development and environment rights of mining-affected communities, contact Rights Action: info@rightsaction.org.

WHAT TO DO: see below.

FOR CANADIANS: Get involved in education and activism related to the forth coming "Toronto Roundtable discussions", September 12-14, 2006, Hotel Radisson Admiral - Harbourfront (249 Queen's Quay West). For more info on the Roundtable: www.halifaxinitiative.org/index.php/Issues_CNCA. To get involved locally in Toronto, contact: -1- GlobalAware, 416 596 0138, 416 352 6160, www.GlobalAware.org, cooperative@GlobalAware.org, and -2- www.kairoscanada.org, Ian Thomson, 877 403 8933 x229, ithomson@kairoscanada.org.

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HONDURAS: Independent Study Reveals Dangerous Levels of Heavy Metal Contamination in Water and Blood Samples in the Communities Affected by Glamis Gold's Mining Activities in the Siria Valley

This past Thursday, August 17th, the Siria Valley Environmental Committee (a community-based organization supported by Rights Action) held a press conference in the Honduran capital, Tegucigalpa, to present the alarming results of the latest investigations into the ongoing health crisis in the communities affected by Glamis Gold's San Martin gold mine in the Siria Valley.

Biologist Flaviano Bianchini gathered a series of water and blood samples in the Siria Valley in early May 2006. The results of the laboratory analyses confirm the contamination that the regional Siria Valley Environmental Committee has been denouncing for years.

Among the five water sources tested - including a mine run-off, a stream and a community well - all contained heavy metals and/or cyanide concentrations above the international legal norms for potable water and approximately half of the results are also above the internationally accepted limits for waters discharged by mining activities. Presence of cyanide, arsenic, lead, chromium, mercury, copper, zinc and aluminum contamination was confirmed.

More unsettling still are the results of the analyses of the blood samples taken from residents - mainly children - of the mine-affected communities of El Pedernal and Nuevo Palo Ralo. Both arsenic and lead concentrations were analyzed, revealing in each case levels higher than those considered high and DANGEROUS by the World Health Organization (70mg/L). In three cases, arsenic levels surpassed, by triple, WHO-defined dangerous levels. Both arsenic and lead are linked to a series of illnesses, including the skin and eye conditions that have been consistently documented and denounced by the medical brigades carried out in the Siria Valley, led by well-known Honduran ecologist and medical professional Dr. Juan Almendares.

Below is an English translation of the Siria Valley Environmental Committee's press release. In the next week, Rights Action will distribute more information concerning the contamination in the Siria Valley, an English translation of the complete results of the study, and a series of suggested actions.

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Siria Valley Environmental Committee - PRESS RELEASE

With a sense of urgency and great concern, today our Siria Valley Environmental Committee shares the results of the recent independent studies carried out by Dr. Juan Almdares and biologist Flaviano Bianchini, proving the real danger of the high levels of heavy metals in our waters sources and in the blood of local community residents.

The laboratory analyses do not leave room for doubt: all ten blood samples reveal arsenic and lead concentrations beyond the levels considered dangerous by the World Health Organization and in some cases higher than triple these norms.

For years, the population of the Siria Valley has been denouncing the contamination of water in the region and the serious illnesses suffered by the communities affected by the open pit San Martin gold mine, owned by Entre Mares, a subsidiary of the Canadian transnational Glamis Gold.

Both the company and the government of Honduras have ignored the health crisis in the Siria Valley, denying the true situation, just as we have been witnessing in the mining industry's paid ads and spots that have flooded diverse communications media in the last few days.

For all of these reasons, we demand the immediate closure of the San Martin mine; to continue the mining activities knowing the impacts being caused is to condemn us to a gradual and silent death. Clear evidence exists, more than is necessary for the State of Honduras to cancel the contract of concession with Entre Mares, according to the contract's tenth clause.

Of the Entre Mares (Glamis Gold) mining company, we demand the integral recuperation of the entire affected zone, not to be interpreted as the planting of eucalyptus trees and grasses, with which the company claims to have recuperated the area already. We demand the de-contamination of our waters as soon as possible, as the already existent contamination will only continue with long-term acid mine drainage if measures are not taken to mitigate the contamination.

In the same vein, we demand that as guarantor of the public health in Honduras, a right enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic, the State determine responsibilities for the health crisis and compensate all damages and detriment to the health of the communities. While the governmental institutions continue to prolong their supposed investigations on the subject, the chronicle of a death foretold in the residents of the Siria Valley is demonstrated in this latest scientific study.

If the absence of an adequate response from the government continues, we will respond with concrete and legal actions to defend our rights.

Siria Valley, Francisco Morazan, August 17th, 2006.

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WHAT DO TO?

Please send this information and your own cover letter to your politician.

Canada and the U.S. are the principal mining companies in the western hemisphere and work in conjunction with North American mining companies to get access to and control over mineral resources throughout the Americas; Canada and the U.S. have no civil or criminal legislation that can be used to hold our companies accountable for environmental and human rights violations caused by their operations.

Contact your own investment fund [including the CPP - Canadian Pension Plan] and ask them why they invest in mining companies that contribute to environmental destruction, bad development and human rights violations? The CPP currently holds 1,826,000 shares in Glamis Gold, valued at \$34,287,000.

CANADA PENSION PLAN: www.cppib.ca, csr@cppib.ca, t: 416-868-4075, Toll Free: 1-866-557-9510, Fax: 416-868-4760

RIGHTS ACTION

Rights Action is a development, enviro- and human rights organization. We channel your tax-deductible donations to over 50 community development, environment and human rights organizations in Guatemala, Chiapas, Honduras, El Salvador and Haiti. We carry out education & activist work in the USA and Canada (and take educational delegations to these countries) to learn about and get involved in good work for global human rights, a healthy environment and a just economic development model.

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

Make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

* United States: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887.

* Canada: 552 - 351 Queen St. E., Toronto ON, M5A-1T8.

On-line donations: USA and Canada: www.rightsaction.org.

Wire funds to Rights Action: contact info@rightsaction.org.

For more info and to get on our email and snail-mail lists:

info@rightsaction.org, www.rightsaction.org

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