

May 7, 2009

In Guatemala, Rights Action supports communities carrying out legally binding consultations related to large-scale "development" projects, including mining. We recently took educational delegations of North Americans to observe consultations in the villages of El Colmito and Eden. Karen Spring prepared this report.

Please re-distribute this information.

To get on/ off Rights Action's email list:

<http://www.rightsaction.org/lists/?p=subscribe&id=3>

WHAT TO DO: see below.

* * *

**POWER IN NUMBERS:
COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS IN SAN MIGUEL IXTAHUACAN SAYING NO TO MINING**

(April 14, El Colmito villagers vote no to mining in their community. Photo: Rights Action)

Legally constituted community consultations are being organized and carried out in towns and villages across the municipality of San Miguel Ixtahuacan (SMI), Guatemala, as a way for mining-affected, Mayan-Mam communities to meet, discuss and determine if they are opposed to, or in favour of Goldcorp's "Marlin Mine" that has been operating an expanding open-pit, cyanide heap-leach mine in this region for four years. (For

information about enviro and health harms and rights violations caused by Goldcorp's mining: www.rightsaction.org / info@rightsaction.org)

Beginning with the Sipakapa municipal consultation in 2005, that said no to Goldcorp's mine, there have been some 30 municipal consultations in Guatemala, mainly in the indigenous highlands. Every one has said no to mining, and to other large-scale "development" projects that are imposed undemocratically and proceed with no community knowledge or permission.

All previous consultations have taken place 'after' the government has illegitimately granted mining licenses, but 'before' mining – or other large-scale "development" projects – get under way.

In San Miguel Ixtahuacan, villagers are carrying out their consultations, on a community-to-community basis, where Goldcorp is already mining. The stakes and tensions are high.

April 14th: El Colmito, a community in SMI, held a community consultation and voted 'no' to mining on their territory. May 2nd: the community of Eden held a consultation and voted 'no' to mining on their territory as well. Eden is the 11th community, so far, in SMI to carry out a consultation about Goldcorp's mining operations in the region.

(May 2, Eden villager signs official community 'acta', after voting no to mining. Photo: Karen Spring)

This wave of community democracy and participation may continue in the months to come, as local organizations are carrying out educational campaigns about the harms

and violations caused by mining and communities are setting the dates to carry-out their consultations.

(May 2, education in Eden about impacts of mining. Photo: Karen Spring)

Prior to initiating mining at the "Marlin Mine" site in 2005, Goldcorp Inc., the governments of Guatemala and Canada, and the World Bank (that invested \$45,000,000 in the "Marlin Mine") did not consult with or get the approval of the affected indigenous communities. So doing, they violated the 1996 Peace Accords and Covenant 169 of the International Labour Organization that require the State, prior to any large-scale "development" project or investment, to enable free, prior and informed consent of the populations to be affected by the project or investment.

Community consultations in SMI are a way for the local Mayan-Mam populations to take democracy into their own hands and reclaim their legally enshrined right to decide the future of their children, to decide what kind of development they want on their land and whether Goldcorp can continue mining operations on indigenous territory in SMI.

* * *

WHAT TO DO

TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS for indigenous and community organizations resisting the harms caused by large-scale "development" projects (mining, tourism, hydro-electric dams) and implementing their own community development projects (schools and scholarships, health clinics, solidarity economy, etc), human rights and environment projects, 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

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: http://www.rightsaction.org/Templates/donations_index.html

JOIN our listserv: <http://www.rightsaction.org/lists/?p=subscribe&id=3>

JOIN our quarterly newsletter list: info@rightsaction.org

CREATE YOUR OWN E-MAIL LIST and re-distribute this and other information

DAILY NEWS: Watch & listen to www.democracynow.org; read

www.upsidedownworld.org, www.dominionpaper.ca

BOOKS: Eduardo Galeano's "Open Veins of Latin America"; Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States"; Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine"; Paolo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"

WWW.RIGHTSACTION.ORG: Based in Guatemala, Rights Action (with tax-deductible legal status in Canada and USA) funds and works with community-based indigenous, development, environment and human rights organizations in Guatemala and Honduras, and also in El Salvador, Haiti, Oaxaca and Chiapas; and educates about and is involved in activism related to global development, environmental and Indigenous and human rights struggles.

* * *

SPEAKING TOUR - "MINING INVESTING IN CONFLICT" -- APRIL 26 – MAY 18

Carlos Amador, member of the Siria Valley Environmental Defense Committee (Honduras), and Francois Guindon, Quebecois activist living in Guatemala and working for Rights Action on issues related to mining, are on a speaking tour right now in Canada. To find out where they are, Francois Guindon, c: 819-329-0223 ; francois.guindon@gmail.com

GOLDCORP Inc ANNUAL SHAREHOLDER MEETING -- MAY 22

Goldcorp will hold its annual shareholder's meeting in Vancouver, Canada. Solidarity and rights groups (NISGUA, Amnesty, BTS, Rights Action, Mining Watch etc) are gathering to raise mining-caused harms and violations issues at the meeting. For more information, Steve Stewart: sstewart@codev.org

EDUCATIONAL DELEGATION TO GUATEMALA -- JULY 6-14

Please join this trip that will investigate DAM "DEVELOPMENT" PROJECTS UNDER-MINING HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT. Over 9 days, delegates will meet with development, enviro and human rights experts and activists; visit Chixoy hydro-electric dam affected Mayan-Achi communities; visit Mayan-Q'eqchi communities that may well be harmed by the pending Xalala hydro-electric dam; visit Mayan-Mam communities being harmed by Goldcorp Inc's huge gold mine. INFORMATION: Karen Spring: spring.kj@gmail.com