

"WE ARE ALL CRISANTAS": POPULAR REJECTION OF THE 'GOLDCORP 5' TRIAL

(September 14, 2009)

On September 7, the "trial" of 5 Maya Mam villagers was to begin, whose "crime" is resisting and defending their indigenous, human & land rights, violated by the Guatemalan State & by Goldcorp Inc. that operates an open-pit, cyanide-leach mine in their territories of San Miguel Ixtahuacan, department of San Marcos, Guatemala.

The "Goldcorp 5" did not present themselves ... but 600 indigenous villagers did.

("No to mining". This flag was hung in the central park of San Marcos, next to the courts where the criminal trial against the "Goldcorp 5" was supposed to proceed. All photos by Francois Guindon)

BELOW: An article, "Resistance to Goldcorp's repressive legal strategies", by Francois Guindon (Rights Action, in Guatemala).

SPEAKING TOURS IN CENTRAL & EASTERN CANADA, AND NORTH-EAST USA

In October, activists with Rights Action will be on speaking tours in Ontario, Quebec and eastern Canada (and parts of north-east USA), showing slides and short documentaries and speaking

- about the on-going pro-democracy, anti-coup movement in Honduras, and
- about indigenous and community resistance to Goldcorp Inc.'s open-pit, cyanide leach mines in Guatemala and Honduras.

Karen Spring will be travelling in Ontario; Francois Guindon will be travelling in Quebec and eastern Canada; Grahame Russell will be in the north-east USA. For more information: info@rightsaction.org.

Please re-distribute this information all around

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"WE ARE ALL CRISANTAS": POPULAR REJECTION OF THE 'GOLDCORP 5' TRIAL

(September 11, 2009, by Francois Guindon, francois.guindon@gmail.com)

On September 7th, 2009, some 600 indigenous campesinos from San Miguel Ixtahuacán and other municipalities came to the city of San Marcos to denounce the lack of impartiality in the national judicial system and to denounce the use of the legal system as a strategy of "criminalization of the struggle for human rights" by Montana Exploradora (subsidiary 100% owned by the Canada's Goldcorp Inc.)

"TODAS Y TODOS SOMOS CRISANTA" ("WE ARE ALL CRISANTAS")

Early on September 7, 100s of Mayan Mam villagers marched through San Marcos to the beat of marimba music. The theme of the day was solidarity with Gregoria Crisanta Perez Bámaca: "Todas y todos somos Crisanta" ("We are all Crisantas").

Crisanta Perez is part of the "Goldcorp 5" whose trial is supposed to begin today. Crisanta Perez also has other charges pending against her for her participation in previous activities in defense of human and indigenous rights that are being violated by Goldcorp's open-pit, cyanide-leach mine.

Using the legal system to lay frivolous or fraudulent charges against community leaders ("criminalization for the struggle for human rights") is a common tool of repression, used to weaken opposition to its mine.

Marching into the Central Park of San Marcos, the demonstrators arrived as Goldcorp's (Montana Exploradora) lawyers were leaving the court. 15 minutes later, the lawyers flew away in a helicopter over San Marcos.

The day's protest began with a denunciation of the Guatemalan judicial system. In a declaration, the Frente de Defensa Miguelense (FREDEMI, whose members are ADISMI, the local parish and the Casa del Pueblo indigenous leadership) declared: "The Mayan Mam people of San Miguel Ixtahuacán [...] denounce that we continue to be submitted to a state of historical exclusion, racism and discrimination that has occurred since the Spanish invasion through to today. Recently, under the influence of neo-liberalist ["development" projects], such as mining activity, we continue being victims of abuse and violence. Our individual and collective well-being have been taken away by the failure of the State to guarantee our rights."

"We do not believe in this so-called justice; it serves the interests of a powerful transnational while we are treated like criminals for defending our rights".

A time of mourning was called for; everyone kept silent. Then, a community leader said: "Rest in peace, western justice. May real justice prevail from now on." There followed a prayer for peace, respect for Mother Earth and justice for the violations caused by Goldcorp's operations in San Miguel Ixtahuacán.

Demonstrators pray for justice and Mother Earth in front of the courts in San Marcos.

Lawyers defending the "Goldcorp 5", and involved in other cases related to Goldcorp's mining operations, have concluded that judges have not been acting in an impartial manner. Justice cannot be achieved in San Marcos according to these lawyers. The legal processes were flawed from the beginning and legal procedures and principles are being violated by government and judicial officials.

None of the "Goldcorp 5" presented themselves before the judges. "In these legal conditions, the only guarantee we have is that we will lose our case," explained one of the lawyers defending Crisanta and the others. Rather, a motion was submitted, accusing the judge of partiality, in order to pressure for fair legal processes in upcoming cases.

"We are all Crisanta ... if she is guilty, we are all guilty of defending our rights"

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BACKGROUND INFO

Go to www.rightsaction.org / info@rightsaction for background info about Goldcorp caused and related harms and violations at its gold mines in Guatemala and Honduras

SEND MESSAGES

Please send your own message, concerning on-going abuses of legal power and on-going health and environmental harms and human rights violations caused by Goldcorp, to the people and offices listed below ... BUT ... be sure to write first to your own politicians and investors and/or pension fund managers.

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Dina Aloï, Goldcorp - VP of Corporate Social Responsibility, Dina.Aloï@goldcorp.com

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Jeff Wilhoit, Goldcorp - investor relations, Jeff.Wilhoit@goldcorp.com

Board of directors, Goldcorp - Directors@Goldcorp.com

Jim Schenck, Goldcorp-Guatemala - james@montana.com.gt

Lisa Wade, Goldcorp-Guatemala - lisa.wade@montana.com.gt

CANADIAN OFFICIALS

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Bev Oda, Minister of International Cooperation
509-S Centre Block, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

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Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs
509-S Centre Block, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Leeann McKechnie, Canadian Ambassador to Guatemala
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CANADA PENSION PLAN Investment Board

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Babak Abbaszadeh, Director, Stakeholder Relations, CPP Investment Board, 1 Queen Street East, Suite 2600, Toronto, ON M5C 2W5, Direct: (416) 868-6612, babak@cplib.ca

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

about and/or how to get involved in efforts in the USA and Canada, to hold Goldcorp Inc, investors in Goldcorp (like the Canada Pension Plan, and numerous pension funds across North America) and other global companies and investors accountable for the harms and violations caused by their companies: info@rightsaction.org, www.rightsaction.org

TO DONATE FUNDS

to indigenous and campesino groups resisting the harms and violations of mining & hydro-electric dams, make tax deductible donations 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://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

Upon request, Rights Action can provide a proposal of which community organizations resisting the harms and violations caused by mining in Guatemala and Honduras we are working with and channeling your funds to.

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JOIN our quarterly newsletter list: info@rightsaction.org

CREATE YOUR OWN email list and re-distribute this and other information

DAILY NEWS: Watch, listen to and read: www.democracynow.org /

www.upsidedownworld.org / www.dominionpaper.ca

READ: 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"

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