

GUATEMALA: Hudbay Minerals (Canadian mining company) linked to one and possible two deadly shootings (at least 20 more injured), on September 27 & 28.

FOR INTERVIEW & MORE INFORMATION

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HUBBAY MINERALS (CANADIAN MINING COMPANY) LINKED TO ONE & POSSIBLY TWO DEADLY SHOOTINGS (AT LEAST 20 MORE INJURED), ON SEPTEMBER 27 & 28

(By Rights Action, September 28, 2009)

It is reported that two people have been killed and over twenty injured in two attempted massacres, hours apart, of Maya Qeqchi people from communities attempting to defend their lands against Canadian nickel mining company HudBay Minerals.

On Sunday, September 27, 2009, Adolfo Ich Chub, a Maya Qeqchi teacher from the community of La Union, El Estor, was killed by members of security guards hired by CGN (Compania Guatemalteca de Niquel), a Guatemalan subsidiary 98.2% owned by HudBay Minerals, a Canadian Nickel company. (The Canada Pension Plan, as of March 2009, owns 882,000 shares of Hudbay, worth \$5,000,000.)

Also seriously wounded in that attack are: Samuel Coc, Ricardo Tec, Alfredo Xi, Arnoldo Cucul, Alejandro Acte, Luciano Choc, Hector Choc, and Guzman Chub, all campesinos from the community of La Union.

Coincidentally, Rights Action had scheduled a disaster prevention workshop in Coban, Alta Verapaz, for Monday, September 28.

At 2am today (September 28), a mini-bus of Maya Qeqchi leaders of communities in El Estor, that neighbor and support the La Union community, were driving from El Estor to the workshops in Coban, along with Raul Caal, a Rights Action regional coordinator who helped to coordinate the 'disaster preparedness' workshops.

At a place, known as the Devil's corner, on the road between La Tinta and Tucuru, men armed with machine guns opened fire on the mini-bus from all sides.

Martin Choc, auxiliary mayor of the "Lote 8" community, has been apparently killed. Raul Caal, the Rights Action promoter, has been shot three times and is in serious condition..

UPDATE FROM Martha García (Rights Action in Guatemala)
Sent: Monday, September 28, 2009 12:18

"Compañeros, I spoke with Cuban doctor who attended to the wounded in the La Tinta Hospital. He reports on the following:

"9 men were emitted with bullet wounds, 3 of them seriously wounded. Of the 3: 1 was moved to Coban, has lost his left eye and is in serious condition; Raul (Rights Action) was hit in the neck but the bullet passed through. He has been operated on and is in bad condition; Alfredo was shot in the stomach and has been operated on. The other 6 had less serious bullet rounds."

BACKGROUND

Since the 1960s, Canadian nickel companies have been working on what could one day become one of the world's largest nickel mines. The initial concession was obtained in 1962, in the wake of the United States-CIA sponsored 1954 military coup that initiated 40 years of military governments and extreme repression.

The area that the Canadian nickel giant INCO obtained would have been subject to agrarian reform had the 1954 military coup not taken place.

There are historical Maya Qeqchi land claims to all the land that INCO "bought", putting in question the ownership question going back to well before the arrival of nickel mining companies.

The prime nickel deposits were located in and also north of the lands INCO allegedly purchased, so INCO unilaterally and illegally re-drew their land title map to include an area known as the "Lotes", to the north of the land they "purchased".

The "Lotes" are thus called because the large swath of land had been measured into lots for the purpose of giving legal title to Maya Qeqchi communities (each one with its own lot) that traditionally had possessed the lands but which never had been properly titled.

In the 1970s, INCO's illegal usurpation of the lands, that communities had struggled for decades to acquire title, resulted in high levels of tension between the Maya Qeqchi communities, INCO and local cattle ranchers that INCO maintained close relations with – INCO 'leased' land to cattle ranchers.

(This strategy of leasing land to armed cattle ranchers has been implemented in different countries and is one of the origins of paramilitary organizations, like the AUC in Colombia. In Guatemala, this is the origin of some of the strongest organized crime networks.)

As the tensions grew, and community resistance grew to being forcibly evicted by INCO, INCO resorted to repression in collaboration with the Guatemalan regime.

During the 1970s, community leaders were kidnapped by death squads and tortured in INCO offices. Repression against nickel-mining affected communities grew through the late 1970s, until the country-wide violence and genocidal massacres of the 1980s contributed to the closing (moth-balling) of INCO's mining operations. They maintained their (ill-gotten) mining liscence and (questionable) ownership of the land.

After the signing of Guatemala's so-called "peace accords" in 1996, executives associated with the INCO project in the 1970s purchased from INCO the rights to the concession and land, and formed a new company, Skye Resources Inc, and began to reactivate the mining operations in El Estor, which they called the Fenix Project.

The Fenix Project, as it is currently proposed, would be one of the world's largest nickel mines, and small Skye Resources – not a major company - seemed unlikely to develop it. In 2008, Skye was purchased by HudBay Minerals, which maintains the project as a high profile in their portfolio (<http://www.hudbayminerals.com/index.php>), though the project is on hold while project financing is being developed.

Tensions mounted in 2005-2007, as then-Skye began to prepare the moth-balled nickel mining plant and terrain for a new beginning. In 2006 and 2007, there were 5 very violent, illegal forced evictions of local Maya Qeqchi communities, including deaths and gang rapes, that were carried out by the Guatemalan military and police, by CGN security forces and off-duty CGN employees, and contractors.

On request, Rights Action can provide links to articles, reports, urgent actions and documentary films that give broad coverage to and analysis of the mining-related conflicts from 2005 on.

Since that time, many other communities continued to live under constant threat of eviction. Two such communities are La Union and Las Nubes, those affected in the attempted massacre, assassination and forced disappearance that occurred yesterday, September 27.

The mini-bus that Rights Action had rented, that was shot up by automatic weapons early today (September 28), was carrying leaders from communities that have been in conflict with Hudbay Minerals/CGN as they attempt to defend their land rights.

Though this kind of highway attack is also the kind of attack carried out by organized crime, Rights Action believes that this morning's attack may well be related to yesterday's attack and killing.

The crimes and repression carried out in the past by INCO together with the army and death squads, have never been investigated or tried in any court, though some of them were reported on in the 1999 United Nations Truth Commission. Does CGN (Hudbay) today have relations with some of the same state elements and hired thugs and killers as INCO in the past?

Rights Action is extremely concerned about the actions of HudBay Minerals and demands an immediate investigation and criminal prosecution of those involved in the September 27th attack and the relationship that may have to the attempted massacre on September 28.

WHAT TO DO

WRITE TO HUSBAY MINERALS – WITH COPIES TO YOUR OWN POLITICIANS – ASKING THEM:

To suspend all work at the Fenix Project mine site;
To make public which of their private security forces were involved in the one attack,

and possibly both attacks;

To fully cooperate with any and all investigations – legal or otherwise – that look into these crimes.

HUBBAY MINERALS

C/O Manager Investor Relations
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1 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario, M5C 2V9, Canada

Peter R. Jones, Chief Executive Officer and Director
Michael D. Winship, President and Chief Operating Officer

MEDIA INQUIRIES:

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CANADA PENSION PLAN

(As of March 2009, CPP owned 882,000 shares, worth \$5,000,000)

Write to the CPP – with copies to your own politicians – asking them:

What is their policy in terms of investing in companies operating in violent and repression situations (as nickel mining in Guatemala has been for years)?
To withdraw their investments from the CPP;

CANADA PENSION PLAN Investment Board

csr@cppib.ca, 416-868-4075, Toll Free: 1-866-557-9510
Babak Abbaszadeh, Director, Stakeholder Relations
CPP Investment Board
1 Queen Street East, Suite 2600
Toronto, ON M5C 2W5
Toll free: 1 (866) 557-9510, (416) 868-6612, babak@cppib.ca

Write to your own pension fund, and ask whether they are invested in Hudbay.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION about and/or how to get involved in efforts to support human and indigenous rights defenders in Guatemala, and in efforts in the USA and Canada to hold accountable North American mining companies and investors:
info@rightsaction.org, www.rightsaction.org

TO DONATE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE FUNDS to indigenous and campesino groups promoting their own community development projects and 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"