

June 19, 2010

GOLDCORP MINE IN GUATEMALA: AN ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER WE CAN AVOID: CANADIAN MINING IN GUATEMALA

FOR MORE INFORMATION about efforts to stop the environmental and health harms and other human rights violations caused by Goldcorp's cyanide leaching gold mines in Guatemala and Honduras: Grahame Russell (info@rightsaction.org, 860-352-2448) and Annie Bird [begin_of_the_skype_highlighting end_of_the_skype_highlighting \(annie@rightsaction.org](mailto:annie@rightsaction.org), 202-680-3002)

WHAT TO DO, TO SUPPORT gold & nickel mining affected communities in Guatemala & Honduras - see below.

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AN ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER WE CAN AVOID: CANADIAN MINING IN GUATEMALA

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/emma-rubysachs/an-environmental-disaster_b_617155.html

by Emma Ruby-Sachs, Attorney, June 18, 2010

IMAGE: A young child exposed to water near the Marlin mine, run by Canada's Goldcorp, in Guatemala

Canadian mining giant, Goldcorp, has been ordered to suspend mining operations in Guatemala. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found evidence that a mine in an indigenous region outside of Guatemala City was poisoning the water supply essential to agricultural development and human survival in the region.

But the Guatemalan government is ignoring the ruling.

The Inter-American Commission is an international body relying on voluntary nation participation. Its rulings are supposed to be binding on member countries, but in reality, compliance is more about political will than international legal obligations.

Guatemala has an investment agreement with Goldcorp that is lucrative for the country.

The mine employs over 2000 people in a generally poor area of Guatemala. In the face of immediate financial consequences, long term environmental concerns are taking a back seat.

This is not the first time Goldcorp has run into trouble in Guatemala. Veteran news reporter, CTV's Paula Todd, spent two weeks in Guatemala last month reporting on the human rights abuses inflicted by the company upon the rural community. These abuses include allegations that Goldcorp and/or the Guatemalan government murdered a local activist because of his objection to the environmental destruction caused by the mining operation. The International Labour Organization has already called on the Guatemalan government to close the Goldcorp operation because of human rights abuses in the area. Even Goldcorp's own Human Rights Impact Assessment called for a halt to mining activities because of serious human rights abuses at the mine.

Still, the Guatemalan government has not supported the international community's call to suspend Goldcorp's operations while further investigations are conducted.

The disaster of BP should be a lesson to the world: stop environmental abuses before they escalate to unmanageable levels.

Predictions of environmental disaster in the Gulf were not only possible, they were inevitably 100% accurate. Spills in the past meant spills in the future and there was no movement to change drilling practices substantially so that risks would be eliminated.

In other industries, the same inevitable environmental destruction must be avoided.

Decisions like the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ruling to suspend mining operations in rural Guatemala are an attempt to do just that. When mining has, in the past, contaminated essential water supplies and there is evidence that it is continuing to contaminate, the operations must be suspended. Without this kind of pre-emptive action, disaster grows, swells to unmanageable levels and wildlife and human life is severely threatened.

Both the Canadian Prime Minister and the Guatemalan Prime Minister need to step up and enforce the ruling. The protection of essential water supplies depends on them.

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WHAT TO DO

TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS for indigenous and campesino communities resisting the harms and violations of mining projects and carrying out their own environmental justice, community development and human rights projects in Guatemala and Honduras, 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://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

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WRITE YOUR OWN LETTER OF COMPLAINT AND DENUNCIATION to your own politician and to the offices below, denouncing the environmental and health harms and human rights violations at Goldcorp's mines in Guatemala and Honduras, demanding:

- 1- a suspension of the mine in Guatemala
- 2- a public international inquiry into the harms and violations caused by Goldcorp's mining in Guatemala
- 3- compensation and reparations for Mayan communities harmed by gold mining victions and repression.

-4- the passing of comprehensive criminal and civil law reform in Canada, so as to be able to hold Canadian companies and investors accountable for environmental and health harms and human rights violations

EDUCATIONAL DELEGATIONS TO CENTRAL AMERICA: Form your own group or join one of our delegations to learn first hand about community development, human rights and environmental struggles (info@rightsaction.org)

EDUCATION IN YOUR HOME COMMUNITY: Contact us to plan educational presentations in your own community, school, place of worship, home (info@rightsaction.org)

WWW.RIGHTSACTION.ORG

- JOIN our listserv. Click: <http://www.rightsaction.org/lists/?p=subscribe&id=3>
- JOIN our newsletter mail list. Send name and address to: info@rightsaction.org
- CREATE YOUR OWN email and mail lists and re-distribute our information
- RECOMMENDED DAILY NEWS: www.democracynow.org / www.upsidedownworld.org / www.dominionpaper.ca
- RECOMMENDED 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"; Dr Seuss's "Horton Hears A Who"

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CANADIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

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CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

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