

**Rights Action – January 18, 2011**  
**Goldcorp Impunity Watch**

**BELOW: A letter from the CAW (Canadian Auto Workers) to the Canadian Prime Minister** and other government officials. The letter calls on the Canadian government to help ensure that Goldcorp Inc. suspends its mining operations in Guatemala & Honduras, until it has the free, prior and informed consent of the local populations.

- Please re-post & re-publish this article, citing authors and source
- To get on/ off RA's listserv:  
<http://visitor.constantcontact.com/d.jsp?m=1103480765269>
- What to do: see below

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, ENGLISH & ESPANOL:**

Annie Bird, Washington DC, 202-680-3002, [annie@rightsaction.org](mailto:annie@rightsaction.org)  
Grahame Russell, Connecticut, 860-352-2448, [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)  
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December 13, 2010

Hon. Stephen Harper,  
Prime Minister  
Fax 613 941 6900

Hon. Lawrence Cannon  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Fax: 613 992 6802

House of Commons Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development  
Fax: 613-992-7974

House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Subject: Goldcorp mining operations in Guatemala and Honduras

Greetings,

I am writing you as the president of CAW Local Union 1285, a local union representing 5,000 members working in auto, auto parts, other manufacturing, transportation, food processing and other industries in the Brampton area.

On May 19th, 2010, my local union had the honour of hosting a well attended public forum on concerns raised by Guatemalan and Honduran communities about the harmful impacts from the mining activities of Gold Corp, a Canadian based transnational corporation.

We heard first hand from a community leader whose village in Guatemala is directly impacted by Goldcorp's Marlin open pit, cyanide leach mine, and a community leader in Honduras, whose town is 15 km from Goldcorp's San Martin open-pit, cyanide leach mine.

I am pleased to learn that Canada endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Mayan communities affected by the Marlin mine have asserted that they never gave their consent to the mine, a right protected under international law. Article 32 of the UN Declaration is directly relevant to the issue. Article 32 states:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources.
2. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.
3. States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

I am writing to demand the Government of Canada take the steps necessary to protect our nation's honour and compel Gold Corp, a Canadian based transnational mining corporation, to suspend its operations in the western highlands of Guatemala and Honduras until it has the free, prior and informed consent of the local populations.

Since our public meeting, evidence only continues to mount of human rights violations and health impacts of these mining operations.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), a highly respected, independent body of the Organization of American States (OAS), has called on the government of Guatemala this year to suspend mining activity at the Marlin mine and take steps to protect the health of the surrounding indigenous communities. The decision of the IACHR was in response to a petition submitted in 2007 by the communities affected by the Marlin mine.

The decision by the IACHR echoes the finding of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which earlier this year called for suspension of mining activities at the Marlin mine until the consultation and studies required by ILO Convention No. 169 are conducted.

A study released by Physicians for Human Rights and scientists at the University of Michigan found that a sample of residents living near the mine have higher levels of mercury, copper, arsenic and zinc in their urine, and of lead in their blood, than a sample of persons living seven kilometres away.

Goldcorp's own Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) recommended that Goldcorp halt all land acquisition, exploration activities, mine expansion projects, or conversion of exploration to exploitation licences. The HRIA, which was conducted without the support

or participation of the communities affected by the Marlin mine, found widespread human rights abuses at the mine, including the right to consultation, right to property, right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, and failure to create effective grievance mechanisms for its employees and community members.

Goldcorp came under intense criticism at its annual shareholders meeting from representatives of communities directly affected by its mines. Goldcorp CEO Charles Jeannes simply ignored the evidence when he said it was a "physically impossible" for the mine to be contaminating the surrounding community.

Similar concerns were raised in a complaint to the Canadian National Contact Point, submitted by community members in December 2009. The complaint was submitted under the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. National Contact Point has determined that the complaint merits further examination.

In April, CTV aired a W5 documentary "Lost Paradise" addressing many of the environmental and health harms and human rights violations being caused by Canadian nickel and gold mining companies in Guatemala. To view: go to [www.ctv.ca](http://www.ctv.ca) (and search for W5's April 17 presentation of "Lost Paradise"), or go to: [http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20100415/w5\\_paradise\\_lost\\_100415/20100417](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20100415/w5_paradise_lost_100415/20100417)

Your speedy action on this serious matter of human rights and our national honour would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Leon Ridout  
President  
CAW Local 1285

cc  
Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Opposition, Fax 613 947 0310  
Gilles Duceppe, Leader, Bloc Québécois, Fax 613 954 2121  
Jack Layton, Leader, NDP, Fax 613 995 4565  
Ken Lewenza, CAW President , Fax 416 495 3778  
Annie Labaj, CAW International Director, Fax 416 495 6554

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**WHAT TO DO:**

Please continue to send letters and articles, like this one, and other information (available on request, on [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org)), to your own unions, your own pension funds, to your own members of parliament, congress, senators & government officials.

Goldcorp Inc. – and many similar companies – operate harmful mines in places like Guatemala and Honduras with the support of the Canadian and US governments and with immunity from prosecution that our countries provide them.

When you send your letters, request a response from who you write to. If you do not get a response, write them again.

**TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS**

To support community development, human rights and environmental justice projects in mining affected communities in Central America, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- CANADA: 552 - 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8
- UNITED STATES: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887

CREDIT-CARD DONATIONS: Go to [www.rightsaction.org](http://www.rightsaction.org), or directly to:  
<http://rightsaction.org/contributions.htm>

DONATION OF STOCK?: Contact Grahame Russell, [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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**Comments, questions, suggestions?****FOR MORE INFORMATION, ENGLISH & ESPANOL:**

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