

Rights Action
April 11, 2012

Shots Fired & Tensions Mount At Gold & Silver Mine Site In Guatemala Allegedly Owned By Radius Gold (Of Canada)

Yesterday, Rights Action published articles (see below) about Guatemalan villagers peacefully resisting the forced entry of the gold and silver mining company Radius Gold (of Canada) into their territories, threatening their water sources, forests and economic well-being. They are peacefully insisting on their legal right to a public, transparent consultation. Then, yesterday, the villagers detained two armed security guards, in hire of the mining company, who apparently sneaked onto private property and fired shots into the air, threatening the villagers. The detained men were treated very well.

THIS IS HOW IT STARTS: The Canadian gold and silver mining company did not ask for nor receive the full and prior consent of the local populations. Now, the tensions and risks of serious violence and community divisions increase. There is a real risk that soldiers, police and other armed individuals might move in to violently evict the local villagers, on behalf of the Canadian mining company.

MORE INFORMATION

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- Please re-post and re-publish this information
- Get on-off Rights Action's listserv: www.rightsaction.org
- Follow Rights Action on Facebook: www.facebook.com/RightsAction.org

SAN JOSÉ DEL GOLFO VILLAGERS DETAIN MINING PERSONNEL

Prensa Libre, 10/04/12 (Translated by Rights Action)

http://www.prensalibre.com/noticias/comunitario/Pobladores-San-Jose-Golfo-personal_0_679732163.html?print=1



[Villagers demand a ceasing of mining activities, before releasing the detained. (Foto Prensa Libre: Carlos Sebastián)]

SAN JOSÉ DEL GOLFO – A villager, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals, explained that the security guards were detained because they entered private property and fired shots into the air, threatening the community. The villager explained that the physical integrity of the security guards has been respected and the Justices of the Peace of San José del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc were participating in the discussion concerning the detained agents. Villagers demand the ceasing of mining activities, in the area, and the carrying out of a binding consultation to determine whether the project should proceed or not. Villagers argue that chemicals used in the mining process are harmful to health. For 40 days, villagers have blocked access, by mining personnel, to the installations.

Rights Action – April 10, 2012

**GUATEMALA: 39 DAYS & COUNTING:
Villagers block access to gold & silver mine
allegedly owned by (Canadian) Radius Gold Inc.
Villagers demand right to consultation**



(Prensa Libre newspaper, March 9, 2012)

BELOW

Two articles about farmers and villagers peacefully blocking access by Radius Gold (Canadian mining company) trying to operate a gold and silver without a proper consultation having been carried out, without the consent of the local populations

WHERE

near the villages of San Jose del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc, department of Guatemala, Guatemala

[Article – April 10, 2012]

LOCAL POPULATION CONTINUES BLOCKING ENTRANCE TO GOLD AND SILVER MINE

http://www.prensalibre.com/noticias/comunitario/Guatemala-Mineria-San_Jose_del_Golfo-Protesta_0_679132336.html

Prensa Libre, April 10, 2012 (Translated by Rights Action)

Starting on March 2, 2012, a group of neighbors have blocked access to the entrance of the Progreso 4 mine; mining activities remain suspended. The protesters say they will remain their indefinitely and have begun to build shelters against the rains. The local

population is waiting for a consultation to be carried out, before opening the road to the mine that is in its exploration phase. They are expecting the visit, next Thursday, of officials from the Ministry of Mines, Energy and the Environment who are coming to supervise work at the mine site. Community members hope the officials will receive them.

[Article – March 9, 2012]

COMMUNITY MEMBERS CALL FOR CLOSURE OF GOLD AND SILVER MINE

http://prensalibre.com/noticias/comunitario/Vecinos-piden-cerrar-mina-plata_0_660533970.html?print=1

March 9, 2012 (Translated for Rights Action by Rosalind Gill)

For the past week, a group of people from San Pedro Ayampuc and San José del Golfo have been staging a protest at the entrance to the El Tambor mine, which is located within the two municipalities. They are demanding stoppage of gold and silver exploitation at the site. According to Lilian Montenegro, of El Carrizal, where the mine is located, attempts to suspend the precious metals exploration and exploitation licenses through the legal system have not proven to be viable.

“We decided to stage a protest here because we want them to remove all the trucks and hold a popular consultation to decide what should be done,” he explained.

People from the community bring money and cooking materials to provide three meals a day to the group protesting at the entrance to the mine. María Véliz, a local resident, says that there are three groups providing support, and that every night there are women and children who help out.

STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE MINE

Esperanza Díaz, a local resident said: “I am concerned about the health harms to our children that can be caused by the mine. We live downhill from the mine and we are afraid that our homes will be buried as a result of an accident at the site.” “We are going to keep up our protest as long as we can. This is a peaceful, non-violent protest,” she said.

Johana Morales, a mother, said: “In the future, the mine could contaminate our water supply, which could effect the health of our children, because of the chemicals they use to extract the metals. This is why we are demanding that the project cease operations in our communities.”

SETTING A DEADLINE

Last Friday, a group of community members blocked the road to the mine to stop trucks from entering the mine. They are continuing their blockade. The protesters, members of the Frente Norte del Área Metropolitana, state that they have sent petitions to the Ministry of Mines and the office of the Special Prosecutor for Human Rights but have received no response to their demands.

One of the protest leaders, who wishes to remain anonymous because he has been the target of reprisals, says that they are giving representatives of the mine, owned by Exploraciones Mineras de Guatemala, S.A. (Exmingua) [owned by Radius Gold Inc.], until tomorrow to remove all their machinery. Prensa Libre tried to reach Exmingua [Radius Gold] authorities; but they left a telephone message saying that the representative is out of the country.

WHAT TO DO – WRITE & KEEP ON WRITING

Please keep on keeping on sending copies of this information, and your own letters, to Canadian and American politicians and government officials, and to your local media. North American resource extraction companies operate around the world, often without consulting with or getting permission from local communities, cause health and environmental harms and other human rights violations, and always with the full support of North American governments. Send copies to pension funds across North America that are invested in most North American resource extraction companies around the world, with no concern for environmental, health or human rights concerns.

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HONDURAS EDUCATIONAL SOLIDARITY DELEGATION

MAY 19-28, 2012

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Write to: afgj@afgj.org

GUATEMALA EDUCATIONAL SOLIDARITY DELEGATION

JULY 7-15, 2012

Community well-being, human rights & the environment

= versus =

mining companies that moil for gold (silver & nickel)

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Write to: info@rightsaction.org

TO MAKE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

for courageous community-based organizations in Honduras and Guatemala (indigenous, campesino and NGO organizations) working for community controlled development, defense of the environment, justice and human rights, 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 can be made (anonymously): www.rightsaction.org

- In Canada: <https://www.canadahelps.org/DonationDetails.aspx?cookieCheck=true>

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MORE INFORMATION

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