

Rights Action
June 16, 2014
info@rightsaction.org

Why Was Tahoe Resources Following And Monitoring Visiting Canadian and American Citizens?

- Please re-send and share this letter, on-down the line. Please send to your own elected politicians and media, in Canada and the U.S.

Rights Action funding appeal (We have a Matching Donor, until June 30)

<http://www.rightsaction.org/action-content/funding-work-and-struggle-land-community-development-and-mother-earth-unjust-global>

- “Getting funds directly to community groups, that are carrying out environmental and human rights defense work, emergency response work, and their own community development projects, is a fundamental part of work and activism.”

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Why Was Tahoe Resources Following And Monitoring Visiting Canadian and American Citizens?

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To whom it may concern:

As Canadian and American citizens, we write to ask why, on June 4, 2014, we were followed by a vehicle belonging to Tahoe Resources Inc., presumably driven by Tahoe personnel (though no one identified themselves to us), while we were meeting with residents of the municipality of San Rafael Las Flores in Guatemala, adjacent to your El Escobal mine?



In June 2014, Rights Action (a Canadian and American not-for-profit organization) led a delegation of North Americans, including members of the Sustainable Mining Alliance of the Kootenays, who had come to Guatemala to learn more about illegal (and often violent) evictions, environmental harms and human rights violations caused by Canadian and American mining companies, including Tahoe Resources, Goldcorp Inc, the Guatemalan Nickel Company (formerly owned by Hudbay Minerals), Kappes, Cassidy and Associates and Radius Gold.

Upon arrival in the town center of San Rafael Las Flores, and before even meeting the citizens who had invited us, it became clear that a white, double-cabin Toyota “Hi-Lux” pickup truck (with darkened windows) was monitoring us. (See photo) This truck (and/or others similar to it), owned by Tahoe Resources’ that is operating the widely opposed and apparently illegally operating silver, gold, zinc and lead mine, followed us at every step this day, as we met with environmental and human rights defenders, as we visited families whose property, water sources and lives have been harmed by the mine operation.

As this visit was finalized only the night before, it seems quite probable that Tahoe employees (working for your Guatemalan subsidiary) learned of our visit by intercepting a cell phone call to one of the community leaders late the night before, and were therefore waiting for us when we arrived.

While the people of San Rafael Las Flores (as well as every mining affected community we visited in Guatemala) invited us and welcomed us graciously into their homes and communities, a company incorporated in our home countries, acting on behalf of directors, shareholders and investors in our home countries followed us around as if we were criminals.

While this action was slightly intimidating to some of our group, it was abundantly clear that the real targets of this harassment are the local folks who invited us to visit San Rafael.

What Does Tahoe Fear?

Tahoe claims to have the “consent” of the communities surrounding San Rafael Las Flores to operate the El Escobal mine. Were this true, why are you following Canadian and American visitors around? Tahoe claims to have the right to operate this mine despite numerous legally binding community consultations over the past 2 years which saw nearly 300,000 community members vote 98% against mining in this region. If Tahoe has the right, what threat does a delegation of North Americans pose to you?

Not only did we receive testimony, from local citizens, about Tahoe's lack of social license, about the multiple criminal trials and administrative lawsuits involving Tahoe Resources, about repression and violence, about water shortage and possible future evictions, about the recent killing of a 16 year old girl and the hospitalizing of her father in an ambush, we also experienced – in however minor a fashion - Tahoe's tactics of intimidation against people who are acting peacefully, democratically and within their legal rights.

Please explain:

Why Tahoe Resources used company vehicles (and presumably company personnel, or contracted workers) to follow around and monitor foreign visitors and local residents? What criteria does Tahoe use to take such decisions? What does Tahoe do with the information it gathers about the foreigners and Guatemalan citizens it follows?

We look forward to hearing from you within two weeks.

Thank-you.

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Matching Donor: Until June 30

Rights Action is grateful to have an anonymous supporter agreeing to match all donations (up to \$50,000) until June 30. Please send your tax deductible donations for the work and struggle of these community organizations.

Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada / U.S.)

Make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

- United States: Box 50887, Washington DC, 20091-0887
- Canada: (Box 552) 351 Queen St. E, Toronto ON, M5A-1T8

Credit-Card Donations (Canada &U.S.): <http://www.rightsaction.org/tax-deductible-donations>
