

## **Call Aura Minerals (Toronto company) – Stop the Illegal & Military-backed Removal of Cemetery in Honduras**

- **Below:** Statement by Azacualpa Environmental Committee

### **Call Aura Minerals Today!**

Aura Minerals, Jim Bannantine, President and CEO, William Monti Reed, Honduras mine manager, 155 University Avenue, Suite 1240, Toronto, ON, M5H 3B7; T: 416-649-1033; [info@auraminerals.com](mailto:info@auraminerals.com), <http://www.auraminerals.com/>

### **Talking points**

Aura Minerals' gold mine in La Unión, Copan, Honduras, cannot expand its operation without illegally exhuming and relocating hundreds of family members buried in the historic community cemetery. They can only do this with military and police force.

While community members have many complaints and concerns about Aura Mineral's ongoing operation, with respect to this possible military-enforced cemetery destruction, Aura Minerals and its subsidiary company MINOSA have not complied with even the basic standards for cemetery relocation, including carrying out a public, transparent community consultation; then receiving legal permission from the next of kin based on an agreed upon relocation strategy that is fair and acceptable to the local communities, and providing adequate monetary compensation to the affected families and communities.

The communities deeply value their cemetery and plan to continue protecting it. Just two weeks ago, two community members were buried there by their community and loved ones. Aura Minerals is deceiving the public, when suggesting the cemetery is not being used.

Aura Minerals CEO and President James Bannantine told the Canadian Parliament in April 2014, that Aura Minerals abides by basic environmental and human rights standards as outlined in the Equator Principles. This is untrue. Aura Minerals is violating the weak and unenforceable Equator Principles by criminalizing local leaders resisting the cemetery relocation; ignoring, entirely, the communities wishes related to the fate of their cemetery; and not presenting an appropriate cemetery relocation plan for community consultation and agreement.

Call Aura Minerals. Tell them that the cemetery is not to be touched until they meet the demands of the five communities that still utilize it to bury their loved ones. Also mention:

1. Using Honduran security forces like the military, military police, and police, and the corrupt judicial system in Honduras to do their bidding is utterly wrong.
2. Rumours are circulating that Aura Minerals plans to send the Honduran security forces THIS WEEKEND to begin digging up the cemetery. Tell them to stand down. Tell them not to touch the cemetery until ALL of the communities are consulted and an agreement is made.
3. Drop the charges of illicit protesting and usurpation against 25 local leaders that are defending the cemetery.

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## **Community Statement**

San Andrés Minas  
La Unión, Copan, Honduras  
January 24, 2016

The community boards of Azacualpa, San Andrés Minas, El Cedro, La Ceiba, Toreras and Esquin met to discuss and determine actions regarding the Aura Minerals Mining Company's plan to transfer or exhume the corpses from the old cemetery.

Everyone knows that agreements were signed with our communities in 2012, pacts that would bring direct benefits to community development.

Unfortunately, many of these accords have already expired and the company ignored the agreements, thus provoking a rift between involved parties. As a response, we decided to unite efforts to face these challenges, and not allow the imposition of actions that go against the wellbeing of our communities.

Because a harmonious environment does not presently exist due to the policies of intimidation and blackmail used by the company, we make the following pronouncement:

1. As communities located close to the mining project, we reject the pressure our communities have been experiencing on behalf of some authorities who have put themselves at the service of Aura Minerals.  
The mining company claims that these authorities already gave them the necessary permits that will soon enable them to initiate the process of closing and relocating the cemetery.
2. The communities will NOT permit the closing of and the relocation of the cemetery until they comply with the other commitments made with each of the communities.
3. If Aura Minerals attempts to move the cemetery in an abusive and arbitrary manner, without honoring all of the agreements, it will force us to take actions, and file lawsuits

(nationally and internationally), until we have the means to defend the corresponding rights.

4. We denounce the mining exploitation being carried out close to the cemetery. The daily explosions are making the area vulnerable, and in this manner, they seek a justification (for health and security reasons) for some authorities to declare the closure of the cemetery.

We thank the municipal corporation for the support given to each of our initiatives in defense of the rights of our communities.

Finally, we clarify that we are willing to dialogue, as long as real and convincing responses are provided to the demands made by our communities.

Sincerely

Community boards of Azacualpa, San Andrés Minas, El Cedro, La Ceiba, Toreras and Esquin  
& the Azacualpa Environmental Committee

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## More information

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## Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & United States)

Help Rights Action continue support for the Azacualpa Environmental Committee, working for community-controlled development, the environment, human rights and the rule of law in Honduras, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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