

## **Tahoe Resources & more violence in Guatemala: Business as usual**

(Share, view in browser: <http://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/tahoe-resources-more-violence-in-guatemala-business-as-usual>)



(Guatemala police fire tear-gas June 21, 2017 at local citizens in the Casillas municipality, southern Guatemala, protesting Tahoe Resources' harmful and illegal gold and silver mining operation. Photo: [www.prensacomunitaria.org](http://www.prensacomunitaria.org))

Tahoe Resources (U.S. & Canadian company, off-spring of Goldcorp Inc.) is again using the violence of Guatemala State forces to attack local community members (men and women, young and old) protesting the illegal operation and expansion of Tahoe's gold and silver "Escobal" mining operation. Since 2012, Tahoe (created by former Goldcorp Inc. CEO Kevin MacArthur; receiving its "Escobal" concession from Goldcorp; operating initially with significant Goldcorp investments) has regularly used Guatemalan police and army violence to force its mining operation on the local communities. Tahoe is facing a criminal trial in Guatemala and a civil lawsuit in Canada for previous cases of company repression.

**Informacion en espanol:** <http://www.prensacomunitaria.org/santa-rosa-desalojan-violentamente-a-la-poblacion-durante-manifestacion-pacifica/>

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**Take Action! Call on Tahoe Resources to stop using violence against peaceful protestors**

(Information by NISGUA, Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, [www.nisgua.org](http://www.nisgua.org))

Since June 7, 2017, communities living near Tahoe Resources' Escobal mine in southeastern Guatemala have been carrying out a peaceful demonstration in the nearby municipality of Casillas, blocking mine-related traffic to the project. Since 2011, communities in the region have carried out 18 municipal and community referenda to express their opposition to the imposition of the project and the negative impacts of the mine on their water, health, agriculture, infrastructure, and social fabric.

On June 21st, the Casillas Police Commander sent a letter to the head of the local health department warning them that "All options have been exhausted and in any moment we will have to use public force, during which time we will use tear gas..." Today (June 22), police carried through on their threats to use tear gas, and carried out a violent eviction of the peaceful resistance encampment in Casillas.

It is imperative that the company take proactive steps to avoid further harm and human rights abuses associated with its operations in Guatemala. Demand that Tahoe speak out against the violent eviction, and stop promoting the use of state armed forces to repress community protest against their project.

Tahoe Resources has a track record of coordinating with local and national security forces and using military counter-intelligence techniques to repress and undermine opposition to its project. In 2012, the company sued the government for not doing enough to combat growing resistance to its project. In 2013, the company helped the government install a pilot project led by the National Security Commission in the area of its project after deeming those opposed to the mine as a threat to national security. Shortly after, a month-long state of exception, or Martial law, was declared in four municipalities around the project. In November 2016, Tahoe's subsidiary sent a letter to the Minister of Defense asking it to take action to control a protest outside the mine over houses that had been damaged due to mine blasting.

In a company press release issued in response to the protest, President and CEO Ron Clayton stated, "We are working diligently to engage government and community leaders to resolve the situation."

On the basis of past experience, when Tahoe works with government actors to resolve conflict as a result of its mine, violence and criminalization of community members has been the result. We are concerned that this situation is set to repeat itself if Tahoe Resources does not actively and vociferously reject the use of force or legal persecution, and urge the Guatemalan state not to repress public protests to their project. Tahoe should listen to and respect the legitimate demands of communities who are exercising their democratic rights to protest.

**Urgent update: Riot police returning to Casillas, Santa Rosa to evict protestors**

(Update from Breaking the Silence, Lisa Rankin, [btscoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:btscoordinator@gmail.com))

We are receiving reports that riot police are on their way back to Casillas, Santa Rosa after an unsuccessful eviction yesterday which was met with prayer and song by the community members.

## Take action and share this information

- Call Tahoe Resources. Ask them to speak out against any use of force or persecution against community members protesting their “Escobal mine”: (775) 448-5800, [investors@tahoeresources.com](mailto:investors@tahoeresources.com).
- Send a pre-written letter to Tahoe Resources or personalize your own: [https://actionnetwork.org/letters/take-action-call-on-tahoe-resources-to-refrain-from-promoting-violence-against-peaceful-protestors?source=direct\\_link#](https://actionnetwork.org/letters/take-action-call-on-tahoe-resources-to-refrain-from-promoting-violence-against-peaceful-protestors?source=direct_link#).
- Contact Guatemalan authorities. If you speak Spanish, call the Ministry of the Interior and demand an end to this violence: +502 2413-8888. Sign letter: [https://actionnetwork.org/letters/police-threaten-violence-against-residents-peacefully-opposing-tahoe-resources-escobal-mine?source=direct\\_link](https://actionnetwork.org/letters/police-threaten-violence-against-residents-peacefully-opposing-tahoe-resources-escobal-mine?source=direct_link)

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### More information:

- In Guatemala, CALAS (Centro de Accion Legal, Ambiental y Social de Guatemala) [www.calas.org.gt](http://www.calas.org.gt)
- In Canada, civil lawsuit against Tahoe Resources, Canadian Centre for International Justice: <http://www.cciij.ca/cases/tahoe/>

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### Global divestments ... but not in Canada and the U.S.

Multiple billion-dollar pension funds in Europe have already divested from Tahoe Resources given concerns about violence and human rights violations in relation to the project. In its 2014 Annual Report, the Council of Ethics for the [Norwegian Pension Board recommended the exclusion of Tahoe Resources from their investments](#), stating the company ran an “unacceptable” risk of human rights violations at the Escobal mine and that acts of violence had resulted from the company’s presence in the region.

Tahoe is also excluded from the Dutch pension fund Pensionenfonds (PGB). In 2016, this fund cited “human rights abuses in Guatemala” as cause for the exclusion. [The fifth edition of Dirty Profits](#) by the German organization Facing Finance listed Tahoe Resources as one of fourteen companies considered a dangerous investment. The article highlights the lack of respect for communities, violence and militarization.

[Divestment information from NISGUA, [www.nisgua.org](http://www.nisgua.org)]

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### Why So Many Central Americans Flee North, Decade After Decade

The exploitation and poverty, violence and government repression, corruption and impunity of Honduras and Guatemala are “American” and “Canadian” issues. The U.S. and Canadian governments, the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, and North American

companies and investors (including pension funds), and the U.S. military maintain profitable economic and military relations with the Guatemalan and Honduran regimes, turning a blind eye and/or directly contributing to environmental harms, exploitation, repression, corruption and impunity that are the norm in these countries, that force so many to flee.

Keep on sending copies of this information, and your own letters, to your politicians and media, to your pension and investment funds, asking: Why our governments, companies and investment firms benefit from and turn a blind eye to the poverty, repression and violence, and environmental and health harms in Guatemala and Honduras?

### **Tax-Deductible Donations (Canada & U.S.)**

To support community, human rights and environmental defense organizations in Honduras and Guatemala, working and struggling for justice and for fundamental transformation from the local to national to global levels, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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

Credit-Card Donations: <http://rightsaction.org/donate/>

Donations of stock? Write to: [info@rightsaction.org](mailto:info@rightsaction.org)

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