

“Holding a club in my hand, I prevented [Aura Minerals] from depositing my father’s remains in another tomb” ~ Floresmira Lopez & the dead v. Aura Minerals & the Honduran regime

(Read/Share: <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/holding-a-club-in-my-hand-i-prevented-aura-minerals-from-depositing-my-fathers-remains-in-another-tomb>)



(Aura Minerals workers forced to take break from digging up graves due to courage and dignity of Floresmira Lopez. More repression feared, as Aura has benefited in the past from Honduran regime threats and repression.)

The Canadian government is dismissive of human rights violations and political prisoners in Honduras, again turning a blind eye to mining conflicts, as ...

Conflict Created by Aura Minerals/ MINOSA Digging Up Bodies in Honduras

April 14, 2018, by Editorial Staff CRITERIO, redaccion@criterio.hn
<https://criterio.hn/2018/04/14/empresas-mineras-aura-minerals-y-minosa-generan-conflicto-al-desenterrar-cuerpos-en-la-union-copan/>
(Translated for Rights Action, by Lori Berenson)

Tegucigalpa. – On April 10, 2018, Floresmira López, wielding a club, prevented her father’s body –his name: Céleo Villanueva Rodríguez- from being dug up by the Canadian mining company Aura Minerals from the 200 year-old Azacualpa cemetery. Aura attempted to carry out the exhumation without the consent of Floresmira López and her siblings. MINOSA (“Minerales de Occidente S.A.”), a subsidiary of Aura, wanted to move the remains elsewhere. However, she did not allow it. The second wife of Mr. Céleo authorized the exhumation, without the permission of the rest of the family.

Aura/MINOSA has divided families and communities in its effort to expand its gold mining in the area where the 200-year-old cemetery is located. The Villanueva family is resisting; they don't want their father's remains to be moved. "Holding a club in my hand, I prevented them from depositing my father's remains in another tomb" stated Floresmira López to the media. Faced with her demand, the coroners had to rebury the remains of Mr. Céleo. There are many more families that are also fighting to prevent them from moving their dead.

The community members are denouncing this, and demand respect for their relatives, and to stop disrespecting their dead.

Read more: [Foro sobre minería concluye que pobladores de Azacualpa, Copán son víctimas de violaciones sistemáticas \(Forum about mining concludes that community members from Azacualpa, Copán are victims of systematic violations\)](#)

Last week, the Forum On Human Dignity and Mining Exploitation concluded that community members from Azacualpa, Copán, are victims of systematic human rights violations related to mining. During the forum, community members shared testimonies and narrated how their rights have been violated in the dispute for a cemetery that Aura/MINOSA wants to exploit for gold, silver and bronze.

The cemetery related mining problems began in 2012, when the company made public its intention to exhume and remove some 400 skeletons from the 200-year-old cemetery that belongs to Azacualpa and other neighboring communities.

A group of lawyers at the forum explained the legal perspective, as well as the problems faced due to the violation of their human rights. "It is not just a cemetery, which has physical or psychological implications. There are direct concerns that include the safety of community members. The situation in the community is very serious" explained Diego Aguilar of MADJ.

In the Honduran capital city of Tegucigalpa, community members denounced that they have been victims of acts of intimidation, persecution and psychological warfare on behalf of local authorities, the army and representatives of the Canadian company, who try to force them to sign a settlement. "In 2012, the Azacualpa community was coerced to sign an agreement with the Canadian company Aura Minerals, that provided for the construction of 396 homes, the implementation of social projects and the commitment to not go within a 200-meter radius of the local cemetery where the remains of family members are found. Nevertheless, the company is currently exploiting at 50, 23 and 27 meters of the cemetery, an action that violates the agreements signed."

Rights Action update, April 16, 2018: Pending destruction of the village of Azacualpa

Not only do most community members want the destruction of their cemetery to stop – there are hundreds of loved ones buried there - but they know that Aura Minerals wants not only the gold under the cemetery, but also on the other side of the cemetery, up the mountain ridge, including – a few kilometers away – the village of Azacualpa.

Another Canadian mining –versus- community and environmental defense struggle

Bullets fired at Hondurans rallying against illegal gold mine "owned" by Canadians; Canadian "owners" label community members "terrorists" (Read/Share: <https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/bullets-fired-at-hondurans-rallying-against-illegal-gold-mine-owned-by-canadians>)

Support needed

Since 2014, Rights Action has supported the Azacualpa Environmental Committee and their environmental, community, human rights and cemetery defense work. (More information, see below.)

Outcry?

How grotesque and harmful does Canadian-backed mining have to be, before Canadian politicians, media, investors and the industry say enough? In the name of the dead and the living in Azacualpa, share this information with family, friends, media, your politicians, etc., to keep on exposing how Canadian companies operate in other countries.

Until the people of the home country of the mining companies – Canada, in this case – hold their companies, investors and governments legally and politically accountable for environmental harms, human rights violations and repression caused by mining, these abuses – including the desecration of the dead - will continue.

Write/Contact

Call on Canadian authorities to support the Azacualpa community calls for a stop to the exhumations of their dead, and a suspension of all mining expansion.

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau: justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca
- Minister Chrystia Freeland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Global Affairs Canada, chrystia.freeland@parl.gc.ca
- Ambassador James Hill, Embassy of Canada in Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua, James.Hill@international.gc.ca, tgipa@international.gc.ca
- Canadian embassy for Honduras: Bertrand-Xavier Asselin, Bertrand-Xavier.Asselin@international.gc.ca; Isabelle Solon Helal, Isabelle.SolonHelal@international.gc.ca; Kyle Sundstrom, Kyle.Sundstrom@international.gc.ca

Contact your Member of Parliament and pressure them to write to make write the above offices as well: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>

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- **Matching donor:** Anonymous donors will match donations made to Rights Action (U.S. and Canada), up to a total of \$30,000, made by May 15, 2018.

To support the development, human rights, environmental defense and emergency relief work of these, and other community groups in Honduras and Guatemala, 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

(Contributions can be made anonymously)

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