

People are dying because of [Canadian] mines. It's time for the killing to stop

(Globe & Mail "Report on Business" magazine)

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/people-are-dying-because-of-canadian-mines>

"Between 2000 and 2015, 44 people died as a result of violence surrounding Canadian-owned mines in Latin America. ... These atrocities rarely make headlines in Canada. The victims are poor and live in faraway ... countries. ... But despite the distance, these deaths can be the ... effect of planning decisions made in Vancouver and Toronto."



The Globe & Mail has published a major "Report on Business" report about harmful actions of Canadian mining companies over the course of decades. Below, the introductory article.

While Rights Action can correct certain aspects of this introductory piece, the fact that the Globe & Mail published this is proof that the work and activism of thousands of Canadians, and dozens of NGOs and solidarity groups is working. The impetus for positive change in Canada is not coming from our political parties, corporate and investor elites and (with exceptions) mainstream media; it is coming from citizens, solidarity groups and NGOs.

Rights Action's work: With your support, Rights Action is funding and involved with the territorial defense and justice struggles of the Huby Minerals/Skye Resources harmed Mayan Q'eqchi' communities (since 2004), and Tahoe Resources/Pan American Silver harmed communities (since 2012), highlighted in the Globe & Mail article and report.

There is a long way to go ...

People are dying because of our mines. It's time for the killing to stop

By Duncan Hood, February 18, 2019

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/rob-magazine/article-people-are-dying-because-of-our-mines-its-time-for-the-killing-to/>

Most of us don't associate Canadian businesses with assault and murder. But between 2000 and 2015, 44 people died as a result of violence surrounding Canadian-owned mines in Latin America. The stories behind those killings, some of which are documented in a 2016 study by Shin Imai, a professor at York University's Osgoode Hall Law School, are harrowing.

According to his report, mine protesters in Guatemala have reportedly been beaten, arrested, kidnapped and shot. Women living in communities surrounding the mines have been raped. In 2009, a political activist who opposed a Canadian mine in El Salvador was found dead in a well, his fingernails removed.

These atrocities rarely make headlines in Canada. The victims are poor and live in faraway developing countries. The attacks are rooted in conflicts that existed long before the mines arrived on the scene, and the links to Canada can be circuitous.

But despite the distance, these deaths can be the unfortunate side effect of planning decisions made in Vancouver and Toronto. Not that mining executives are looking for this kind of violence—it's bad for business and it puts them in an ethical quandary. But after decades of brutality, complacency can set in. The problems seem intractable and become part of the cost of doing business.

There is cause for hope. As this issue's cover feature documents on page 22, there have recently been some major developments that could result in real change.

“Canadian mines have wreaked havoc in developing countries for decades. Finally, there's hope for a solution”, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/rob-magazine/article-people-are-dying-because-of-our-mines-its-time-for-the-killing-to/>

One is that countries like Guatemala and Chile are now doing more to protect Indigenous peoples and their land. In 2017, Guatemala's supreme court surprised many by suspending operations at Escobal, a massive silver mine built by Vancouver-based Tahoe Resources, ruling that the government did not adequately consult locals before approving the mine. Tahoe's share price plummeted by 33% in one day, and before long, the company became a takeover target for Vancouver-based Pan American Silver.

Investors were similarly shocked when Chile's environmental regulator ruled that Barrick Gold had to shutter the Chilean portion of its Pascua-Lama mine, which straddles the border between Chile and Argentina, partly because of problems with its water management system. The mine was once one of Barrick's most promising projects, and the shutdown forced the company to write down almost half a billion dollars.

More important, for the first time ever, Indigenous peoples are now suing Canadian mining companies through Canadian courts, rather than relying on the local justice system. Cases against Tahoe, Toronto-

based Hudbay Minerals and Vancouver-based Nevsun Resources (which was recently acquired) are now being heard in Toronto and Vancouver. If any of those companies lose, the ramifications will be huge. It will essentially mean that Canadian operations in developing countries can be held to the same human rights standard we have here at home, rather than the weaker standard found in many Latin American, South American and African countries.

That will be hard on some mining companies. Having to meet the Canadian standard will put them at a competitive disadvantage to mining companies based in China or Russia, where the injured are unlikely to have such recourse. But there could be benefits as well. As Canada gets a reputation for operating safe, sustainable mines around the world, we may become the preferred source of minerals for more progressive manufacturers and the preferred partner for more progressive investment funds.

The world is changing. Indigenous land claims, environmental standards and protection for human rights will continue to grow stronger in Canada and overseas. Some mining companies will ignore the shift and continue to conduct business as usual. But that approach is starting to get expensive. Just ask Tahoe.

(Duncan Hood is the editor of Report on Business magazine. He can be reached at: robmagletters@globeandmail.com. Follow us on Twitter @globebusiness)

WHAT TO DO ABOUT CANADA, mining impunity capital-of-the-world, exacerbating and benefitting from refugee producing crisis in Guatemala, Honduras, ...

Share this Globe & Mail "Report on Business" intro article and report with your elected MPs, government officials, asking why the Canadian and U.S. governments, and North American businesses (hydro-electric dams, mining, African palm, tourism, cattle, fruit, etc.) and investors (pension funds, trusts, endowments, etc.) maintain profitable relations with corrupt, repressive governments in Honduras and Guatemala, benefitting from repression, environmental devastation, human rights violations, corruption and impunity.

- Contact your MP: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members>
- Minister Chrystia Freeland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 613-992-5234, 1-343-203-1851, chrystia.freeland@parl.gc.ca, chrystia.freeland.c1d@parl.gc.ca, chrystia.freeland@international.gc.ca
- Canadian Ambassador to Guatemala, Deborah Chatsis, 502 2363-4348, gtmla@international.gc.ca

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To support courageous, difficult community / environmental/ territorial / human rights defense struggles in Honduras and Guatemala, many related to mining company harms and violence, make check payable to "Rights Action" and mail to:

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